

The Project Gutenberg eBook of First Love: A Novel. Vol. 1 of 3, by Mrs. Loudon

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: First Love: A Novel. Vol. 1 of 3

Author: Mrs. Loudon

Release date: October 23, 2013 [EBook #44018]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Heather Clark, Norbert Müller and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FIRST LOVE: A NOVEL. VOL. 1 OF 3 ***

FIRST LOVE.

A NOVEL

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1830.

LONDON:
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY-STREET, STRAND.

All the mottoes annexed to the chapters of this work, have been selected from the Author's dramatic and other poetical works, not yet published.

FIRST LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

"No hut shelters Comala from the rain."

A FAMILY of travelling vagrants were overtaken on the high road just leading out of Keswick, on the Penrith side, by a gentleman on horseback. He had observed the same group begging during the entertainments of the regatta which had concluded but the evening before.

"Ho! ho! my good woman," he said, as he passed in a sling trot, "I am glad to see your boy has found his second leg!"

The woman, who appeared to be young, and who would have been handsome, had not dirt and impudence rendered her disgusting, looked behind her, and perceived that a poor, sickly, ragged child, apparently about five years old, who followed her, tired of his crutches, which pushed up his little shoulders almost out of their sockets, had contrived to loosen the bandage of his tied-up leg, and slip it down out of the dirty linen bag, in which it usually hung on the double, and from which it was not always released, even at night, as so doing necessarily incurred the further trouble of tying it up again in the morning. She laid down her bundle, and stood still with her arms a-kimbo, till, with hesitating steps, and looks of suppressed terror, her victim came up; then glancing round, to ascertain that the gentleman was out of sight, she seized the child, snatched both the crutches from his trembling hands, and grasping them in one of hers, she began to flog him without pity. He seemed used to this, for he uttered no sound of complaint; silent tears only rolled down his face. [2]

"Ye villain!" said she at last, with a strong Cumberland accent, and gasping for breath, "it's not the first time, is it? it's not the first time I've beat you within an inch of your life for this. But I'll do for you this time: that I will! You shan't be a burden to me any longer, instead of a profit. If it wasn't for the miserable looks of ye," she added, shaking him almost to atoms as she wheeled him round, "that sometimes wrings a penny out of the folk, I'd ha' finished ye long ago." Then, with her great foot, armed with an iron-rimmed wooden shoe, she gave him a violent kick on the offending leg, continuing thus:—"Its best break the shanks on ye at ance, ye whey-faced urchin ye! and then ye'll tak te yeer crutches without biddin'!" [3]

Finding, however, that though he had staggered and fallen forward on both hands, he had yet risen again, and still contrived to stand, she once more lifted her foot, to repeat the kick with increased force: for she was as much intoxicated by drink as by rage, and really seemed to intend to break the child's leg; but her husband, a sort of travelling tinker, coming up at the moment, and uttering a violent curse, struck her a blow that, poised as she just then was on one foot, brought her to the ground. [4]

During the scuffle which ensued, the poor little sufferer, who had occasioned it all, crept through the hedge of a field by the road side, and hid himself under some bushes. But the woman, soon after pursuing in search of him, jumped the fence, and dropped among the very brambles where he lay. She perceived him instantly, and shook her clenched hand, which so paralysed him, that he did not dare to move, though she for some time delayed seizing him. Finding that the inside of the hedge was covered with clothes for bleaching, she thought it best, the first thing she did, to secure a good bundle of so desirable a booty, and fling it over to her husband. She was just in the act of so doing, when the owner of the linen came into the field, and immediately set up the halloo of "Thieves! thieves!" upon which, dropping what she had collected, and giving up all thoughts of carrying the child with her, she made the best of her way, and disappeared not only from the spot, but from the neighbourhood. [5]

About an hour after, when the poor boy, pressed by hunger, crept from his hiding place, a girl, who was left to watch the clothes, spying him, cried out, "Ha! you little spawn e—the devil! did she leave you to bring her the bundle?" And so saying, she pursued and beat him, till she drove him out of the field, and into the adjoining garden of an old woman, who was standing at the moment with a long pole in her hand, endeavouring to beat down, as well as her failing sight would permit, the few remaining apples from the topmost branches of her single apple-tree: the well laden lower boughs of which had been robbed of their goodly winter store but the preceding night. [6]

On seeing a boy scramble through her hedge, she concluded, of course, that his errand was to possess himself of the said remaining apples, and, accordingly, uttering a yell of execration, she converted her fruit-pole into a weapon defensive and offensive, and hobbling towards the poor child, drove him from her premises; over the boundary of which, long after he had so far escaped, she continued to address to him, at the very top of her voice, every opprobrious epithet of which she was mistress: her shrill tones the while collecting, at the heels of the fugitive, hooting boys, and barking curs innumerable. These, however, did not follow him far; and when they returned to their homes or their sports, he wandered about for the rest of the day, avoiding houses and people, and fearing that every one he met would beat him. [7]

At length, towards evening, he found himself on the borders of the lake of Derwent, and seeing a boat fastened close to the land, he got into it; partly with the idea of hiding himself, and partly [8]

with a vague recollection of having often wished to be a sailor-boy, when begging about with his mother in sea-port towns. He rolled himself up in an old cloak which lay under one of the benches, where, exhausted by pain, hunger, and fatigue, he fell asleep.

Shortly after our poor wanderer had chosen this refuge, in stepped Master Henry St. Aubin, whose pleasure-boat it was, to take a sail *alone*, contrary to reiterated commands, and for no other reason, but because, for fear of accidents, he had been desired never to go without a servant. He pushed from the land, and began to arrange his canvass. He put up his main-sail, which filling immediately, bent his little bark on one side, almost level with the water, and made it fly across the lake in great style. When, however, it got under shade of the high mountains on the Borrowdale coast, the breeze slackened, and he determined to add his mizen and jib; but what was his surprise, when, on attempting to remove the old cloak which lay near them, he discovered within its folds the sleeping boy. Supposing him to be a spy placed there to watch his movements, and report his disobedience, he began to curse and swear, kicked at him under the bench, and ordered him to pack out of his boat instantly. The poor child, but half awake, gazed all round him, got up as well as his bruises would permit, and was about to obey in silence; but, when, he saw how far they were from land, he hesitated; upon which Henry took up a rope's end, and lashed at him in the manner that sailors call starting, repeating at each stroke, "Jump, spy! jump!"

Driven almost wild with the pain of the blows, the child at last did jump; but, at the same moment, caught instinctively at the side of the boat, to which he hung with both hands, and so kept his head above water. Henry set up a loud laugh, and rowed out, towing him after him. Then, willing to make sport for himself, by terrifying the beggar brat, he attempted to push his fingers off the edge of the boat, but they clung to it with all the tenacity of self preservation; when the one hand was forced for a moment from its hold, the grasp of the other became but the more convulsively strong; and when the second was assailed by the united efforts of both of Henry's, the first returned to its former position.

At length, tired of the jest himself, Master St. Aubin turned into shallow water, leaped ashore, and suffering the half-drowned child to land as he might, bade him scamper, ere he had well got footing. Then, intent on pursuing his sweet, because forbidden amusement, he stepped back into his boat, which with its white sails, contrasted with the dark woods of the coast it glided silently beneath, soon became as picturesque an object as though the urchin that guided it had been the most noble and adventurous of romantic heroes.

CHAPTER II.

—"And I tremble amid the night."

ABOUT the centre of the entrance of the vale of Borrowdale, conspicuously situated, stands that curious rock, called, by the native Cumbrians, Borrowdale-stane. In form and position it is much like a dismasted and stranded vessel, laying on its keel and leaning a little to one side. On the highest point of this rock, a station well known to the lovers of the sublime, stood a lady wrapped in a warm fur lined cloak. Her air, however, was much too fashionable and modern to harmonize in any degree with the wild desolation of the surrounding region, which, when viewed from the elevated position she thus occupied, as far as the eye could reach, resembled a stormy ocean: its gigantic billows formed by the congregated tops of mountains.

The evening was cold, approaching to frost; and the sun, though still much above the natural horizon, was just sinking from view behind the lofty chain of western hills: his last rays lingered a while on the most prominent parts of each stupendous height, then, gradually retiring, left point after point, which, like so many beacon lights extinguished by an invisible hand, successively disappeared, till all became shrouded alike in cheerless gloom and volumes of mist rolling down the sides of the mountains, a dense fog settled in the valley like a white and waveless lake.

The lady on the rock appeared to deem it time to return home, for, withdrawing her eyes from the distant view, she cast them downward in search of the path by which to descend; when, amid the rocks and huge rough stones which lay scattered beneath like the ruins of a former world, she thought she saw something move, though very slightly. She looked at it for a time; it quitted not the spot where she first descried it; yet, still it certainly did move! She descended, approached, and beheld a poor little boy, who seemed about five or six years old. He was sitting on the ground; the wretched rags, in which he was dressed, were dripping with wet; his poor limbs, which were all bent together, and drawn up close to his face, trembled extremely, while his little hands, with their long emaciated fingers, spread and hooked round his knees, seemed endeavouring to hold them, as though the violence of their motion was becoming too much for his frame to bear.

The lady stood looking down on him for a moment with mingled pity and surprise. He was slowly rocking himself from side to side: it was a movement quite expressive of despondency, his chin rested on the backs of the hands which held his knees, and his eyes wandered hopelessly among the bare stones that lay around him, while his head retained the same fixed position.

"Little boy, look up!" she said, taking one of his cold wet hands in hers. He raised his face; misery was depicted in every feature: his teeth chattered excessively, and his poor eyes, that swam in

tears, were now lifted to hers with an expression truly piteous.

"Poor child! come with me," she said. Something like hope began to dawn on his forlorn countenance; but she finished her sentence, in what she intended for the most comforting manner, by saying, "and I will take you home to your mother." [16]

He had not risen. He drew his hand from hers, turned on his face on the ground with the universal shudder of terror, and, clinging to the rocks, cried, "No! no! no!"

She endeavoured to soothe him, and to untwist his fingers from the fastenings, which, like so many fibres of roots, they had found for themselves among the crevices and broken fragments of his flinty bed; but he hid his face against the hard stone, and would not turn round. When she succeeded at length in detaching one of his hands, and was gently endeavouring to raise him, his inward shudderings increased so visibly that she became fearful of throwing him into convulsions: she desisted therefore, and, feigning to go away, removed a few paces; then stopped, and said, "Well! I am going; but won't you tell me your name?" [17]

"Edmund," he sobbed out; without, however, raising his head.

"Well, Edmund," said the lady, in a kind voice, "good night!" He turned, sat up, looked at her, and then all round, as though having had her near him, even for the last few seconds, the thought of being left alone for the night now struck upon his heart anew with fresh desolation; then, resuming the attitude she had first found him in, he began, as before, to rock himself from side to side and weep. "But where do you mean to sleep tonight, Edmund?" said the lady; "I am sure you must be cold sitting on those hard stones with your clothes so wet."

"Yes, I am," he said, looking up wistfully again, "very cold, and very hungry." Then, hesitating a little, he suddenly stretched out his hand, and said, "I'll go with you, if you will hide me from every one." [18]

"I will! I will, my poor child!" she exclaimed, flying back to him, kindly stooping over him, and, with some difficulty, assisting him to rise; for he was so stiffened it seemed scarcely possible to unbend his knees: nor did there appear to be one spark of vital heat remaining in the poor little creature! She drew a part of her warm fur mantle close over him, and endeavoured to soothe him and give him confidence in her protection.

"And will you stay here with me, then?" he whispered softly.

"I will take you to a much more comfortable place," she replied, "where there is a good fire, and a nice dinner for Edmund."

"And are you sure she won't find me there?" he said, still whispering.

"She shall never hurt you, while you are with me," the lady replied, "whoever she may be." [19]

"Then I will go!" said Edmund; and he lifted his head and tried to smile through his tears. The lady, still sharing with him her warm cloak, now led him by the hand, while he held hers fast in both of his, and walked, with short uneven steps, so close to her, that she was every moment in danger of treading on his little bare feet; and thus did they arrive at Lodore House, just as the first roll of the thunder resounded along the desolate valley they had so lately quitted.

CHAPTER III.

 [20]

"Vases filled with liquid beams, hang in chains
Of gold."

"A sumptuous banquet
Spread, invites the taste."

THE cheerful, well-aired, already lit up dwelling, now entered by our wanderers of the valley, formed a striking contrast to the dreary scene they had just left. An excellent fire blazed in the hall, bronzed figures held flaming lamps aloft, and powdered, well-dressed, well-fed servants, bustled to and fro, bearing, towards the dining-room, dishes, which though covered, tempted the palate by the various savoury odours they sent forth. In short, every comfort, every elegance, nay, every luxury, evidently abounded beneath the roof of Lodore House. [21]

It had indeed, some years since, been a mere shooting lodge, situated in the midst of an extensive property, on which, from its remoteness, no family mansion had ever been built. Mrs. Montgomery, however, its present possessor, had, since her early widowhood, made additions to the lodge in her own taste: and though on her daughter's account she regularly visited London during the fashionable season, at all other times she chose to reside in this romantic retirement. The lady, who had just entered, leading poor Edmund by the hand, was Frances Montgomery, the only child of Mrs. Montgomery. As Frances, with her charge, crossed the hall already described, they met Henry St. Aubin, a nephew of Mrs. Montgomery's, a boy of about twelve years old. Frances called immediately for the housekeeper, and desired her own maid to bring some warm soup. While her attention was thus engaged, master Henry contrived to come up close to the poor little stranger, and say to him in an under tone, "Take care, you sir, you don't dare to tell, or I'll —" Frances feeling an additional pressure of Edmund's hand, turned suddenly round, and saw the frown still on Henry's face, with which he had thought fit to strengthen his arguments. [22]

"How can you look so cross, Henry?" she exclaimed; "you actually frighten the poor child!"

"Pshaw!" said Henry, and went laughing into the drawing-room, where he attempted to entertain, by ludicrous descriptions of the pretty new pet Frances had found; while she proceeded to the housekeeper's room, and there, before a comfortable fire, herself assisted, in despite of the dinner-announcing voice of the gong, the operations of the two women she had summoned. They released the poor child from the wet rags which hung about him, sending a chill to his little heart; they put him up to the neck in warm water; and cautiously gave him, by a little at a time, some nourishing soup. Frances then called for meat, pudding, and every thing nice she could think of; and, lastly, for a supply of her own night things. By all these prompt exertions, the poor, naked, shivering, starving Edmund, was soon dressed in a long sleeved, high collared, full frilled sleeping chemise; his limbs warmly clothed in a pair of the housekeeper's worsted web stockings, which served him at once for drawers and hose; a large dressing-gown of Frances's folded about him, and a pair of her dressing slippers on his little feet; and, thus equipped, he was seated in front of the fire, with all the other good things which had been called for, placed on a table before him.

It was with the greatest pleasure that Frances, who stayed to help him herself, saw him venture, thus encouraged, to eat some dinner; and what with the refreshment, the cleanliness, the glow of all the surrounding warmth on his cheeks, and the comfortable white dress up about his neck, he certainly appeared almost a new creature; though, when he looked up, there was still a wildness, the unsteady glance of fear mingled with the appealing expression of his eyes; and when he looked down, their long black lashes, sweeping his hollow cheeks, might well inspire the beholder with even a painful degree of compassion; yet when, notwithstanding his timidity, he smiled with gratitude and a sense of present pleasure arising from bodily comfort, Frances, at least, could not help thinking him grown already quite a beauty; and she ran to the dining-room door, and entreated her mamma just to come out for a moment and see what a fine child the poor boy was, now that they had washed and dressed him.

Lord L., hearing her voice, begged permission to follow, but was refused.

Frances' absence had, in the meantime, banished the smiles of Edmund, so that Mrs. Montgomery, on entering the housekeeper's room, exclaimed, with a laugh, patting her daughter on the cheek, "I cannot say much for his beauty, my dear!—But that is no reason why you should not save the life of the poor child," she added; and, with the tenderness of one accustomed to a mother's feelings, she stroked his little head. He smiled again, and she continued, "but he may be pretty when he gets fat."

"And shall he stay here to get fat, mamma?" asked Frances eagerly.

"To be sure, my dear," replied Mrs. Montgomery, "we will never turn the poor little thing out of doors again, while it wants a shelter." Frances was delighted; caught up both her mother's hands and kissed them, and then the forehead of her protégé: nor did she leave him till he dropped asleep in a comfortable bed, with her hand in his to give him confidence.

Frances at length entered the dining-room, just as the domestic party engaged round the table were dispatching a third or fourth summons for her; the second course having by this time made its appearance. Lord L., who occupied his usual seat beside her chair, began to question her about the adventure of the evening. Compassion made her eloquent on the misery, the cold, the hunger, the wretchedness of poor Edmund; but when she came to his beauty, she faltered and looked at her mother with a beseeching expression.

Mrs. Montgomery laughed, and replied to the look, "Oh, yes! there was a sweetness when he smiled, that made me begin to think he would be pretty if he were fat; but now, the poor child is all eyes and eyelashes."

"Oh, mamma!" said Frances, "he has the most beautiful mouth I ever saw in my life, and such nice teeth!"

"Has he, my dear?" said Mrs. Montgomery, with provoking indifference: for she happened to be deep in a discussion on the nature of the poor laws, with Mr. Jackson, the clergyman.

Master Henry, meanwhile, was greedily devouring tart and cream, with his face close to his plate, and his eyes levelled at the dish, in great anxiety to be in time to claim the last portion which now remained on it; but, in his attempt to swallow what was before him, he missed his aim, and was a moment too late, though he thrust out his plate with both hands just as he saw a servant coming round; but the tart was dispatched to Lord L., to whom it had been offered, and who, being too much occupied to refuse it, had bowed. It lay before him a few moments, and went away untouched. Henry, vexed extremely, and desirous of revenge on Frances for the disappointment occasioned him by her lover, said, "If you are talking of the beggar brat, he is the image of a monkey! I was quite afraid he would bite me as I passed him in the hall."

"I am sure, Henry," retorted Frances, "he seemed more afraid of you, than you could be of him: and, by the bye, you need not, I think, have looked so cross at the poor child."

"Cross!" repeated Henry, "I did not look cross. What reason do you suppose I had to look cross? I never saw the brat before in my life."

Henry's speech was accompanied by that hateful expression, which the eyes of an ill-disposed child assume, when it knows it is uttering falsehood!

"Henry!" said Mrs. Montgomery, with some surprise; "you need not look angry, much less guilty. No one can suppose that you know any thing of the poor boy. But leave the room, sir: and

remember you don't sit at table again, till you know better how to conduct yourself."

Henry obeyed, but slowly and sulkily; trailing one foot after the other, and determining to have revenge on the cause of his disgrace. He offered no apology, and therefore was not taken into favour again for the evening, though poor Mrs. Montgomery, as she passed to her own apartment, looked into that where he lay, and said, with a sigh, "Good night, and God bless you, child!"

To account, in some degree, for the unprepossessing manners of Master Henry, we shall introduce a few words respecting the young gentleman's birth, and hitherto unfortunately directed education.

CHAPTER IV.

"Lifting at
The thought my timid eyes, I pass them o'er
His brow; and, if I would, I dare not love him:
Yet, dare I never disobey that eye,
Flashing outward fires, while, within its depths,
Where love should dwell, 'tis ever still, and cold,
To look upon."

ST. AUBIN, Henry's father, was a Frenchman, and totally without religion. A flourish of worldly honour, as long as no temptation had arisen, had sustained for him even a showy character. By this, a showy appearance, and showy manners, he had, what is called, gained the affections, that is, he had dazzled the fancy, of Maria, the younger sister of Mrs. Montgomery. Maria was a beautiful girl, and but seventeen. Her sister, who was also her guardian, for she was some years her senior, and their parents were dead, disapproved of the match, but in vain: Maria married St. Aubin, and was miserable! The marriage being a runaway affair, no settlements were entered into, which circumstance St. Aubin imagined would be in his favour; but, when he discovered that the consent of the guardians not having been obtained, gave them the power of withholding Maria's fortune till she should be of age, and of then settling it on herself and her children, without suffering him to touch one shilling, his brutality was such, that Mrs. St. Aubin, before the birth of her child, for she had but one, was broken-hearted.

She denied herself the consolation she might have found in the sympathy of her sister, for she wished to conceal from her the wretchedness she had brought upon herself, by acting contrary to her advice. She was, however, shortly removed out of the reach of that sister's penetration.

St. Aubin was deeply in debt when he married, and things had been ever since becoming worse and worse. He had always flattered himself that the guardians would not use the full power of which they spoke, and that by making fair promises he should be able, when once Maria was of age, to get the money, or the greater part of it, into his own hands; he had therefore laboured incessantly to put off the payment of every demand to the day of his wife's coming of age, and made all his arrangements with reference to that period. At length it arrived. He made application for his wife's fortune; but Mrs. Montgomery, in reply, reminded him, that her sister having married without her consent, had given her, as sole remaining guardian, a power, which she now saw it was her duty to exert; namely, that of refusing to pay down any part of the money. She should, therefore, she said, secure the whole of it in the hands of trustees, as a future provision for Maria and her child.

With this letter open in his hand, St. Aubin, foaming with rage, entered the room where his wife sat with Henry, then between two and three years old, playing on the ground at her feet, while she was absorbed in melancholy anticipations of the probable result of her husband's application. St. Aubin flung the letter in her face, swearing, with horrid imprecations, that he would be the death both of her and her brat, and then blow out his own brains. Mrs. St. Aubin remained silent; but the shrieks of the child brought servants. By the time they arrived, however, St. Aubin was striding up and down the room, venting his rage on the open letter, which he kicked before him at each step.

Shortly after this final disappointment respecting Maria's fortune, St. Aubin found it necessary to take refuge from his creditors in the Isle of Man; whither he went accordingly, carrying with him his wife and child, and settling there with a very reduced establishment.

Not choosing, it would seem, to be hung for declared murder, he appeared determined, by every species of ingenious barbarity, to torture the wretched Maria out of her remaining shred of existence; and, among other devices, he daily and hourly made her shudder, by his vows of deep and black revenge on her sister.

One day, after sitting some time leaning his head on his hand, with a countenance resembling the thunder-cloud, lightning suddenly flashed from his eyes, imprecations exploded from his lips, he started to his feet, stood before his wife, and clenching his hand, uttered these words: "I tell you, Mrs. St. Aubin, that child, that I hate, because it is yours! that child, to whose future provision she has sacrificed me! that child I will rear, I will preserve, for the sole purpose of being the instrument of my revenge!—by his means, were it twenty years hence, were it thirty years hence, I will break her heart! Yes," he added, as if in reply to a look from Maria of astonishment, almost

amounting to incredulity, "and I have determined how I shall do it." He then resumed his sitting attitude, and again leaning his head on his hand, a long hour of utter silence followed, during which his unhappy wife sat at the other side of the table, not daring to arouse him by rising to leave the room. [37]

Henry, at this time, promised to have in him a strange mixture of the dispositions both of his father and mother; or, in other words, of evil and good. The evil certainly did predominate; yet, had a careful hand early separated the seeds, cultivated the good, and cast out the bad, this ill-fated child might have been saved from perdition; or had he, with all his faults, been supplied with that only unerring standard of right, the practical application of sacred truths to moral obligations, even in after-life there might have been hope; but his father, as we have said, had no religion: he daily scoffed at whatever was most sacred, purposely to insult the feelings of his wife, and this before his child. One morning, he found Maria with the Bible before her, and Henry on her knee. He looked at them for a moment; then taking the child by the shoulder, he raised one foot level with the hand in which he held him, and kicked him, in a contemptuous manner, as he swung him to the middle of the floor, saying, that such a mammy's brat ought to have been a girl. Mrs. St. Aubin ran to raise the child from the ground. St. Aubin snatched up the sacred volume, open as it lay, and flung it after her, telling her, in a voice of thunder, that she was a psalm-singing fool, and ordering her not to cram the boy's head with any of her cursed nonsense. Indeed, in his calmest and best disposed moods, "You are a fool, Mrs. St. Aubin!" was his usual remark on any thing his wife ventured to say or do. [38]

Mrs. St. Aubin having ascertained that the child was not hurt, took up the book, arranged its ruffled leaves in silence, and laid it with reverence on the table. Her husband viewed her with a malicious grin till her task was completed; then, walking up to the table, he opened the treasury of sacred knowledge, and deliberately tore out every leaf, flinging them, now on one side, now on the other, to each far corner of the apartment; then striding towards the fire-place, he planted himself on the hearth, with his back to the chimney, his legs spread in the attitude of a colossal statue, the tails of his coat turned apart under his arms, and his hands in his side-pockets. [39]

"Now," he said, looking at his wife, "pick them up!—pick them up! pick them up!" he continued, till all were collected.

Mrs. St. Aubin was about to place the sheets within their vacant cover on the table; but, with a stamp of his foot, which made every article of furniture in the room shake, and brought a picture that hung against the wall, on its face to the floor, he commanded her to put them in the fire. She hesitated; when seizing her arm, he shook it over the flames, till the paper taking fire, she was compelled to loose her hold. [40]

"I ought to have reserved a sheet to have made a fool's cap for you, I think," he said, perceiving that silent tears were following each other down the cheeks of his wife. "Why, what an idiot you are! the child has more sense than you have," he added, seeing that Henry, occupied by surprise and curiosity, was not crying. "Come, Henry," he continued, in a voice for him most condescending, "you shall carry my fishing basket to-day."

Henry had been just going to pity his poor mamma when he saw her crying; but hearing his father say that he had more sense than his mother, he could not help feeling raised in his own estimation, and anxious to show his sense by flying with peculiar alacrity for the basket. [41]

He had viewed the whole of the preceding scene with but little comprehension, as may be supposed, of its meaning, and with very confused ideas of right and wrong, being, at the time, not above six years old; but the practical lesson—and there are no lessons like practical lessons—made an indelible impression: all future efforts, whether of mother or aunt, usher or schoolmaster, layman or divine, to infuse into Henry precepts derived from a source he had seen so contemned by his father, were for ever vain. His father, he was old enough to perceive, was feared and obeyed by every one within the small sphere of his observation: for him, therefore, he felt a sort of spurious deference, though he could not love him. For his mother, who had always indulged him with the too great tenderness of a gentle spirit utterly broken, and who had wept over him many a silent hour, till his little heart was saddened without his knowing why, he naturally felt some affection; but then he daily saw her treated with indignity, and therefore did not respect either her or her lessons: for he was just at the age when a quick child judges wrong, a dull one not at all. [42]

Henry had much of the violence of his father's temper, with some of the fearfulness of his mother's. In judicious hands, the latter, though no virtue, might have been made to assist in correcting the former; the whole current of his fears might have been turned into a useful channel: in short, he might have been taught to fear only doing wrong, and, by a strict administration of justice, proving to him his perfect security from blame while he did right, he might have been given all that honest-hearted boldness in a good cause, which, throughout after-life, is so necessary to ensure dignity to the character of man, and the early promises of which, it is so delightful to see in the happy open countenance, in the very step and air of a fine frank boy, who has never had his spirit broken by undeserved harshness, or been rendered hopeless of pleasing by inconsistency. [43]

Henry, on the contrary, when he had done no real wrong, was frequently treated with the most violent cruelty; while his very worst faults passed unreprieved, if they did not happen to cross the whims of his father: and this cruelty, thus inflicted on a helpless, powerless child, which could not resist, for ever raised in the breast of Henry, who was, as we have said, naturally violent, an ever unsatisfied thirst of vengeance; a sense too of the injustice of the punishments inflicted, a thing early understood by children, embittered his feelings, and the transient impressions thus [44]

rendered permanent, corroded inwardly, till they settled into a malice of nature, totally subversive of all that was or might have been good or amiable.

Alas! why will not parents reflect, how much the characters and happiness of their children, in after life, depend on the species of minor experience collected in infancy, and the few years immediately succeeding that period. When intellect is matured, we may call upon it to judge of great events, to guide us in great undertakings, or lead us to signal self-conquests; but by this time, the feelings, the strong holds, whether of vice or virtue, are pre-occupied, and the passions, already in arms and in the field, too probably on the side of error, certainly so, if hitherto undirected. And hence it is, that in so many minds the kingdom within is found in a perpetual state of rebellion against the sovereignty of reason: or, in other words, hence it is, that so many people daily act by impulse, contrary to what they call their better judgment. Here, then, is the true task of the parent; to use, for the benefit of his child, that deliberate sense of right, which, in his own case, comes frequently too late for action. And how shall that parent depart in peace, who has not thus endeavoured, at least, to smooth the path of truth before the footsteps of his child? [45]

When Henry was old enough for public education, Mrs. Montgomery wrote to her sister, to offer an allowance for the expenses of placing him at school. St. Aubin ordered his wife to accept the offer, and selected S— B— school, with the meanest description of lodging in the neighbouring village, as the cheapest he could hear of, that a part of the allowance, which was liberal, might remain in his own hands. [46]

The school-house, at the period of which we speak, could accommodate but a very few of the boys, while the rest were generally lodged in the houses of the poor villagers; where, it is to be feared, they lorded it, and did just as they pleased.

Rather more than a year before the opening of this history, St. Aubin was assailed by a temptation, against which, the fear of detection, in the desperate state of his affairs, was an insufficient defence. He yielded, and became engaged in a swindling transaction to an immense amount. The business was discovered, and St. Aubin apprehended under circumstances which left no doubt of his being hung, unless steps were taken to prevent the prosecution. In this extremity the wretched Maria entreated her sister, if the sacrifice of the fortune so long preserved would suffice, to rescue with it herself and child from the disgrace of having a husband and father die an ignominious death. A compromise was accordingly offered, and accepted. It was not, however, in the power of the persons principally interested, to do more than connive at the escape of St. Aubin, who therefore fled the kingdom, taking with him his miserable wife, and his black factotum, the only slaves utter beggary had left him; and abandoning the child, still at S — B— school, to the compassion of Mrs. Montgomery. Nor did he remit any part of his hatred to that lady, notwithstanding her late concession; on the contrary, he called down fresh imprecations on her head, as being the sole cause, he said, of all his misfortunes, by having withheld the money at the time it would have been really of use, and enabled him to have arranged his affairs before they became quite desperate. [47]

The next accounts Mrs. Montgomery had of her sister and St. Aubin were, that the ship in which they had sailed, with all the crew, and passengers, had perished off the coast of France. The affair was of too public a nature to afford, from the first, the slightest hope of mis-statement; for the vessel, though a merchantman, was of importance, from the value of her cargo, as she had much specie on board. The circumstances too under which she was lost were remarkable, and consequently made a great noise, for the weather was perfectly calm. She had been seen and passed in the evening by a frigate homeward bound, but after that was never seen or heard of more, and not even one individual, it was stated, had escaped, to relate the particulars of the accident: it was therefore concluded, that she must have foundered during the night. [48]

Thus was Henry cast entirely on Mrs. Montgomery; who, while she grieved to trace in him the evil nature of his father, could not help loving him, as the child of her poor lost sister. Having concluded this necessary retrospect, we shall, in our next chapter, return to our narrative. [49]

CHAPTER V. [50]

“He
To her face looked up, with innocent love,
And she looked fondly on him.”

WE left the family at Lodore House enjoying, we hope, the refreshment of a good night's rest. The next morning Frances, before she thought of breakfast, repaired to the bedside of Edmund. He had been for some time awake; but, unaccustomed, it would seem, to have any friend or confidant, he had not ventured to speak or stir. The tones of Frances' voice, naming him to the servants as she inquired for him, appeared to bring at once happiness and confidence to his heart. He opened his eyes as she bent over him: he started up, clung round her neck, and wept; though now it was evidently for joy. These first transports, over however, he cast, from time to time, doubting glances on the various sides of the apartment, and especially towards that in which the door was placed, and evinced a great anxiety to retain Frances' hand. She thought him feverish; and with great alarm perceived that his poor little frame was covered with fearful bruises. His neck and hands first drew her attention; and Mrs. Smyth, the housekeeper, soon [51]

ascertained that the limbs, concealed by the night-dress, had suffered full as much. Frances sent to Keswick for medical aid, and left her charge with Mrs. Smyth. Mrs. Smyth was a good-natured woman, added to which, the patience and gentleness of the little sufferer had begun to win upon her heart, from the very moment her assistance was first ordered to him. She found it necessary to sit by and encourage him while he breakfasted, for, like a wild animal, driven by hunger nearer to the haunts of man than usual, he started, and desisted from eating, at every sound.

[52]

"And what might you have for breakfast yesterday's morn, my dear?" said Mrs. Smyth.

"Nothing," he answered.

"And what had you for dinner, then?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing, my dear!" repeated the good woman; "and ye could na ha' less! Ney fault tell the cooking o' sic dinners, to be sure! And wha was it then, that beat and bruised the life and saul out on ye in this shamefoo manner, my dear?" she continued.

Edmund trembled, sighed heavily, and was silent.

"And win't ye tall me wha it was 'at beat ye?"

[53]

Tears stood in his eyes, but still he was silent.

"So you win't speak till me! And after the nice breakfast I geed ye, too!"

The tears now flowed, but still he was silent.

"And wha was it then, that drooneded ye in the water?"

He looked all round, but did not speak; and Mrs. Smyth soon saw it was vain to persist in questioning him.

Mr. Dixon, the Keswick surgeon, arrived. He inquired of Mrs. Smyth what the child had eaten, and how his food had seemed to agree with him. Having received due replies, he turned to Frances, who by this time was just entering, and addressed her thus:—

"I should not have anticipated, madam—I should not have anticipated, that so great a variety of aliment would have assimilated well in the child's stomach; but, such being the case, I never set my face against facts, madam!—never set my face against facts! I should, therefore, continue the course which has been hitherto pursued, with respect to nutriment."

[54]

"Yes, sir; but have you seen his bruises?" asked Frances.

"My practice is very simple, madam," resumed the doctor, without answering her question; "I love to go hand-in-hand with our great instructress, Nature."

"But—these terrible bruises, sir! What is your——"

"It is too much the custom with men of our profession, to oppose the efforts of nature; but I love to assist them, madam—I love to assist them."

"You are quite right, sir. But, do you think those bruises will be of any consequence?"

[55]

"Depend upon it, madam, depend upon it, there is always a revulsion, as it were, towards right; a rebounding, a returning, in nature to her usual functions, as first ordained by her all, wise Creator; and our part, is carefully to watch those movements. And when the elasticity of any power is impaired by the forcible, or long continued pressure of adventitious circumstances; first, to remove the weight of such, and then, by gentle stimulants, to restore buoyancy to the injured spring; thus, madam—thus, I ever doff my cap to Nature!"

The doctor having arrived at what seemed a pause, at least, if not a conclusion, Frances had some hopes of being heard; and, by way of exordium, said,

"Your system, sir, is as judicious as it is pious."

"I am not presumptuous, madam!" again interrupted the doctor; "I am not presumptuous—"

[56]

"And I should like," persisted Frances, "to have the opinion of one so skilful, respecting the bruises of this poor child."

The doctor's ear at length caught the word. "The bruises, madam! the bruises! They have been inflicted by a cruel and most unsparing hand! No doubt of it, madam—no doubt of it! Who was it that beat you in this shocking manner, my little dear?" he continued, stroking the child's head good-naturedly.

Edmund looked alarmed, but made no attempt at reply.

"There are, I hope, no inward bruises," resumed the doctor: "some of these outward ones are attended with a degree of inflammation, doubtless; but it is very slight and quite local, and may, I hope, be even beneficial: inasmuch as it may divert the attention of the system, and prevent any more vital part becoming the seat of disease; but it is not such as to require any general reduction of a patient already so low."

[57]

"I am delighted to hear you say so, sir!" exclaimed Frances; "for I wish so much to give him every thing good, when I think, poor fellow, that perhaps he never had a comfortable meal in his life, before last night! And I long so, too," she added, looking at Edmund, "to see the little creature quite fat and rosy."

"No roses here, madam! doubtless none, nor rotundity of limb, that is most certain. I do not know

that I have ever met with a more decided case of emaciation in the whole course of my practice! Look at his fingers, madam! do look at his fingers! Nor do I think that his pulse would warrant me in bleeding him at present, as I should, doubtless, any other patient, labouring under contusions of this nature. I will, therefore, send an emolient and cooling mixture, with which, Mrs. Smyth, you will bathe the parts frequently. Nutriment and quiet will do the rest," he added, turning again to Frances, "for his fever proceeds entirely from irritation of the nervous system, not from general fulness; therefore, as I said before, cannot require general reduction. General opposed to general, you see, madam, in the healing, as well as in the wounding profession! Heigh! heigh! You don't admire puns, I know; but come, that's rather a good one, is it not? Good morning to you." And so saying, though on the wrong side of sixty, the doctor performed an active pirouette at the door, as was his custom; and, with the lightness of a lad of sixteen, made good his retreat, being in great haste to leave the impression of the last good thing he had said fresh on the minds of his hearers. Notwithstanding these little innocent peculiarities, Mr. Dixon was a truly worthy, a kind-hearted, and a skilful man, charitable to the poor, and solicitously attentive to his patients; and, with all, he had not a mercenary thought! Mrs. Montgomery had employed him for many years; and such was her confidence in his abilities, that she would have judged those she regarded, less safe in any other hands.

[58]

[59]

Frances flew after Mr. Dixon, to entreat his aid for Fairy, her beautiful Italian greyhound, that she had left very ill in the arms of Lord L—. But, alas! the poor little dog was no more: it had expired in convulsions; and the group which presented itself, on entering the breakfast-room, appeared holding a sort of coroner's inquest over the body. Lord L., still faithful to his charge, held the motionless favourite on his knee; Mrs. Montgomery sat near, with a countenance which seemed to say, "all is over!" Frances' maid and the butler stood, one with a saucer of milk, the other with a plate of water, both now become useless; while Henry pinched, first a foot, then the tail, then an ear, to ascertain, as he said, whether the thing were quite dead. Frances gently put his hand aside, and looked in the doctor's face. The doctor shook his head. He was asked if he could say, from the symptoms, what had caused the creature's death?

[60]

"Poison, madam! poison!" he replied, without hesitation.

Henry reddened. "It does not admit of a doubt, madam!" continued the doctor, "the animal has died by poison." The servants had their own opinion, as to who had given the poison, but were silent.—Such are the beginnings of crime.

[61]

Poor Edmund had now been some days an inmate of Lodore House, but, as yet, no one had been able to discover who or what he was: while from himself no replies could be obtained, but sobs and terrified looks.

One morning Frances sent for him to the breakfast-room, and, after giving him many good things, began a kind of questioning, which she hoped might draw some information from the child, without alarming him: such as, Where was his home? Where was the place where he used always to be? He replied, "No where." Was there any one that used to love him? "Yes," he said. She now thought she had found a clue to some useful discovery, and asked him, who it was that loved him? "You do," he replied. Frances took him on her knee, and put her questions in low whispers; upon which, when she asked him particularly about the large bruise on the side of his leg, he stole his little arms round her neck, and breathed softly in her ear, "She wanted to break it off." "Who, my dear, wanted to break it off?" "My mother." Then, alarmed at the great effort he had made, he became more silent than ever, and looked so much distressed, that at last, for his own relief, he was dismissed in charge of good Mrs. Smyth. While Frances, inspired by the same sentiment which had guided the righteous judgment of Solomon, felt convinced that the woman, whoever she might be, who could treat a child so barbarously, was not its real mother. Mrs. Montgomery was herself disposed to entertain the same opinion; she, however, laughed at the romantic deduction attempted to be made by Frances, that Edmund therefore must be the child of parents in an exalted rank in life.

[62]

[63]

While the ladies were discussing this point, Mr. Lauson, an attorney resident at Keswick, came in to pay his respects: for he was agent to the Cumberland and Westmoreland estates, as well as general man of business to the family. Lauson had passed Mrs. Smyth and Edmund in the hall, and had looked rather hard at the child. As soon as the morning salutations were ended, and he had taken his seat, he pointed with his thumb over his shoulder towards the door, which was behind him, saying, "What child's that?" And, without waiting for a reply, he added, "I'd be sworn but it's the boy that was begging about at the regatta with one leg."

"With one leg!" interrupted Frances.

[64]

"Ay, ay," said Lauson; "but I saw him myself find the other, so there is nothing so surprising in his having the two now."

The ladies requested an explanation, and Mr. Lauson gave the best he could, by recounting as much as he had witnessed of the scene which opens our history.

CHAPTER VI.

[65]

"Of snowy white the dress, the buskin white,
And purest white, the graceful waving plume."

IN about six weeks the marriage of Frances and Lord L— took place, and the happy couple set off for Beech Park, his lordship's seat, near London. Within the following ten days Mrs. Montgomery made all her home arrangements, paid her pensioners, gave orders for the Christmas dinner of the neighbouring poor, placed Edmund in the peculiar care of Mrs. Smyth; and, finally, the day before she set out to join her daughter and son-in-law, dispatched Henry, under escort of the butler, back to S— B— school. The school, as we have before observed, was an excellent, though a cheap one; but the lodging was such as Mrs. Montgomery certainly would not have selected for her nephew, nor indeed suffered him to occupy, could she have known the scenes and society into which it threw him. [66]

Henry arrived at the village of S— B—, and jumped out of the carriage at the door of a butcher's house. While the servant was taking out the luggage, Henry addressed, very familiarly, a woman who stood with her back to him; and accommodating his language, as was his custom, to his company, said, "Weel, Katty, and whoo is't wee aw wee you?" "No mickle the better for yeer axin!" she replied, continuing her washing. The next moment Henry was engaged in a game of romps with a fine girl of fourteen, who just then came in from the garden: all the flowers which had lately bloomed there collected in her apron, to be tied up in penny bunches for the ensuing day's market. On receiving, though not, it must be confessed, without richly deserving it, a smart slap on the ear from his fair antagonist, the young gentleman closed with her, and commenced an absolute boxing-match. At this juncture the butcher himself entered. [67]

"What's aw this? what's aw this?" he exclaimed. The angry voice of David Park (such was the butcher's name) ended the scuffle.

"Mr. Henry and me was no' but larking, fether," replied his daughter, adjusting her disordered hair and drapery, and gathering up her scattered flowers.

"Mr. Henry! Mr. Deevil!" said the man, recognising Henry with a scowl. "Bonny larking truly!" he continued; "bonny larking truly! And what business had you, wife, to aloo of ony sic work?" And he sat down sullenly, deterred from taking signal vengeance on the laughing young gentleman, by the dread of losing his lodger. "Bonny larking truly!" he resumed, as, without looking round, he poked the fire before which he had seated himself, and began to light his pipe. "Ye'll soon be oure aul', te lark after that gate wi' the scholar lads, I can tell yee!" Here he glanced at his daughter, and added, "Git awaw wi' ye, and don yeer sel', lass! yeer na fit till stand afoor a man body noo, tho' he be thee fether! Yeer aw ribbands!" [68]

We shall here leave Henry to keep such society, and to follow such pursuits unmolested, and give our attention again to other and more amiable personages of our history.

CHAPTER VII. [69]

"Yes, sweet boy, Clara will be thy mother.
Thou hast thus her first of mother's feelings;
Even should there rise, to claim her fondness,
Other beings like to thee: innocents,
Helpless innocents."

MONTHS had rolled away. It was a beautiful evening in the middle of July; and Lodore House, which had been deserted by most of its inhabitants about the latter end of last October, when the trees were almost leafless, and the voice of the fall loud with the swell of wintry torrents, now looked with a cheerful aspect from amid embowering verdure. The lofty head of Skiddaw arose with great majesty above the woods immediately behind the house, and the calm lake spread abroad in front, and bounded by the wide amphitheatre of the Keswick mountains, filled the mind with pleasing ideas of peace and retirement. The building, in its own outline, was picturesque; running along in light corridors, connecting its principal parts. Numerous glass doors, or French windows, leading out on the lawn, were all standing open. A table, covered with fruit and other refreshments, might be just peeped at through one of these; musical instruments, freed from their cases, appeared through others, and through more might be discerned, sofas, book-stands, work-tables, Turkey carpets, reposed chairs, Italian vases, bronze lamps, cut-glass lustres, hothouse plants, French beds, swing mirrors, &c.: while the intervention of silk and muslin draperies, permitting each object to be but imperfectly seen, left imagination free to deck the whole with the charms of fairy-land. Indeed, from what did appear, it was evident that the sitting-rooms were numerous, and richly furnished; that one corridor was a green house, another a conservatory; and that the wings contained library, music-room, billiard-room, and several sleeping and dressing-rooms, all on the ground floor, all opening on the smooth turf, and displaying, or rather betraying, enough of their arrangements to show that, not only convenience, but luxury had been studied in their fitting up. [70]

On the outside, ever-blowing roses, with jessamine, honeysuckle and clematis, bloomed in abundance, climbing around the casements, and creeping along the palings: while a gay assemblage of the choicest and sweetest flowers occupied plots, scattered irregularly on the velvet green. [71]

The evening song of myriads of birds was pouring from the deep woods with every wild variety of note, rendered the more remarkable by the monotonous sound of the now subdued murmur of [72]

the fall, which still went on, on, like the studied sameness of a judicious accompaniment, selected to give effect to the varied excursions of the singer's voice.

Though the sun was still above the horizon, many bonfires were already lit at various distances along the road. The immediate approach was crowded with people, looking full of expectation. Detached groups were advancing in different directions; and, here and there, individuals had climbed trees, or elevated portions of rock, and seemed looking out for something. Every now and then, Mrs. Smyth, dressed in a holiday suit, came forth from some one or other of the many open doors, held up her hand to shade the glare of light from her eyes, looked towards the lake for a few moments, and returned in again. Then, would some beautiful exotic be seen to change its position on some flower-stand; next a drapery would be let down from the golden pin which had held it, and hung again, we suppose, with more grace, at least in the opinion of good Mrs. Smyth, whose form glided on through long corridors, from time to time appearing, disappearing, and re-appearing; and generally followed by that of a child that seemed, at every step, to leap and gambol for very glee.

[73]

At length, a carriage was seen driving, at a rapid pace, along the borders of Derwent-water. Every thing bright about it sparkled in the rays of the setting sun. A universal shout arose, and all became hurry and motion. The carriage approached: it was a barouche thrown open, and, seated in it, were Mrs. Montgomery and Lord and Lady L. They bowed, smiled, and waved their hands on every side. But soon the attention of the latter lady was entirely engrossed by the appearance of a lovely little boy, whom Mrs. Smyth, as she descended the lawn, led by the hand; and in whom, but for one touching expression, imperceptible perhaps to any other eye than Frances', no one could have recognized poor Edmund. The rich dark locks, the profusion of which had formerly added the look of wild neglect to that of misery, now flew back as he ran against the wind, displaying and giving contrast to a forehead white and open. The late hollow cheeks were now rounded, dimpled, and glowing, at once with exercise and delight. His mouth, always beautiful in its form, and so very sweet in its movements, had now all the advantages of rosy lips and happy smiles. While his eyes, which from their being large, and adorned by peculiarly long lashes, had once seemed to occupy the chief part of his face, now but served to give soul to the more earthly beauties, which the good cheer of Mrs. Smyth had supplied.

[74]

[75]

Edmund had got a few paces before his conductress. He stretched forward both hands, and leaped up with a bound towards the door, as he reached the side of the carriage. Lady L. pulled the check-string. The carriage stopped, and Edmund, whom by its rapid motion it had already passed some yards, was brought back by a servant, and lifted in. Such was his joy, that the poor little creature could not speak! He trembled excessively, and, for a moment or two, his features were almost convulsed by his struggles not to cry: he thought it would seem as if he were not glad, and he knew he was very glad. A few tears, however, forced their way; but they only hung in the long lashes, shining like early dew-drops, while happiness sparkled through them: for now, encouraged and caressed, he sat on Lady L.'s knee, and hugged one of her hands. Yet, when he looked up in her face and tried to speak, his little lip trembled again, and his little countenance assumed an expression of feeling beyond his years, which early sorrow had taught the infant features. Lady L. kissed his forehead and passed her hand over it, to wipe away, as it were, the trace of care; while an ardent desire swelled in her heart to screen this object of her tender compassion from every painful vicissitude of life, accompanied, however, by a sigh to think how vain the wish! This sigh was followed by yet another, as, from association, the very natural idea presented itself, that it must be also impossible for her effectually to shelter from the changes and chances of mortal existence, even the babe, that destined to be born under auspices so different, would, in a few months, make her really a mother.

[76]

[77]

Mrs. Montgomery rallied, and Lord L. complimented her on her discernment; declaring that they never had seen any thing half so beautiful as her unpromising favourite had turned out.

"Do not think me illiberal," said Lady L.; "but I cannot imagine this the child of coarse, vulgar parents—a creature that seems all soul! See, with what an intelligent countenance he listens to every thing that is said!"

Mrs. Montgomery smiled; and Lord L., anxious to please a wife with whom he was still in love, was about to express himself quite of her opinion.

[78]

The discussion was, however, for the present broken off by the stopping of the carriage amid shouts of joyous welcome. While the merry groups around the bonfires drank the healths of our family party, its members seated themselves at a most inviting looking table, which we have long half seen from behind a muslin curtain.

The agreeable summer supper they here found prepared for their entertainment, consisted chiefly of fruit, of which little Edmund, placed between Lady L. and Mrs. Montgomery, was permitted to partake.

"You see," remarked her partial ladyship, after observing the child for a time, "with all the gentleness of his nature, there is no slavish awe of superiors about him. Do you know, I almost fancy I can discern an innate consciousness of being in his right place when he is with us: it would seem as though, however long he had been in the hands of those wretches, the impressions of absolute infancy, and of the caresses and tender treatment experienced, (if my conjecture is correct,) during that period, were never entirely effaced; for, that though they were not within the reach of memory to recall with any thing like distinctness, association possessed a mysterious power of bringing every thing similar to them home to the feelings. Can you imagine so nice a distinction? I can," she added, turning to Lord L.

[79]

"There are few," replied his lordship, "who have not, I should think, experienced the feeling of which you speak. Of this class are all the sensations of pleasure or of pain, occasioned by sounds or sights possessing in their own natures no corresponding qualities. How often, for instance, do we hear people say of an air, by no means solemn. 'That tune always makes me melancholy: it reminds me of something, though I cannot remember what.'" [80]

This sort of conversation naturally led to the subject of Edmund's future prospects. It seemed tacitly yielded to the evident wishes of Lady L., that his profession should be that of a gentleman.

"I think," said Lord L., "it will be the best way to give the boy a liberal education: and when he is of an age to judge for himself, let him choose for himself."

Mrs. Montgomery expressed the same opinion.

"Nothing can be kinder, I am sure!" said Lady L., giving a hand to each, and seeming to take the obligation entirely to herself: then looking at Edmund, she added, after a moment's pause, "I dare say, he will choose to be a clergyman, the benevolent duties of that sacred office will suit so well with his gentle temper. Should you not like to be a clergyman, my dear—like the gentleman who reads in the church every Sunday." [81]

"I'd like to be a sailor boy," said Edmund.

"A sailor boy!" repeated Lady L. "Poor child!"

"That's right, my brave fellow!" exclaimed Lord L. "You see, Frances, he will not be so very gentle after all! Less than a year of good feeding and kind treatment have already brought out his English spirit. If he continue of this opinion, I can obtain his admittance into the naval college at Portsmouth; after which, I shall put him forward in his profession with all the interest I can command." [82]

Things being thus arranged, so much to Lady L.'s satisfaction, the family retired for the night.

CHAPTER VIII. [83]

"Thou wilt see him."

MRS. MONTGOMERY received an account, in the morning, from Mrs. Smyth, of how good Edmund had been, and of his having become so great a favourite, not only with the good doctor, but also with the clergyman, that both had had him to dine and play with their children more than once. She also reported, with great self gratulation, the very uncommon progress he had made in learning, under her tuition; and then proceeded to relate an adventure she had met with one evening, when walking with Edmund. [84]

"We were just returning," said Mrs. Smyth, "from Keswick, where I had been taking a cup of tea wee a vara discreet neighbour. I carried the boy wee me, for I niver like to let a child that is in my care oot o' my sight; it's a thing I nivir did, and Edmund is ne trouble; tack him whar ye will, he awways behaves himsel so prettily. So just as we were walking quietly up the hill, before ye git under the shade o' the trees, hearing voices, I happened to look ehint me, when I saw following us a dacent, vara gentleman looking man, in earnest conversation with a woman, wha from her rags, and the whiff o' spirituuous liquor I found as she passed, seemed a beggar o' the maist disreputable kind. They keep't looking, looking, still at little Edmund, as they spoke; and though, when I think upon it, it seems as though ony body might look at his bonny face, heaven love him! yet at the time I felt within myself parfact sure 'at they were no looking at him for the sake o' looking at him. As they cam' past I heard the man say, 'Well, I suppose she'll be satisfied, now that I have seen him myself.' I am quite sure o' these words, but they went on, and I could hear no more. It seemed so strange like, I thought, to follow and speak wee them, when I felt the bairn pull me by the hand; I looked round, and he was trembling aw over, and as pale as death. By the time I had speered at him what ailed him, and spoken him a word o' comfort, the man and the woman were bathe gane, and the peur thing talt me, that yon graceless wretch was his mother." [85]

Much commenting followed, on the part of Mrs. Smyth, which it is unnecessary to repeat; while Mrs. Montgomery could not refrain from expressing great regret, that so favourable an opportunity had been lost for compelling the vagrant to give some account of herself, and of the child. The subject was, of course, discussed in the breakfast-room, but nothing could be made of it, except that it would seem there did exist some one who took an interest in Edmund, and who might yet claim him, when their reasons for mystery were at an end. But then, their choice of such an agent as the drunken beggar, was quite unaccountable; for, had she stolen the child, why should she be in the confidence of the decent man, who, it seems, was to satisfy the child's friends, by being able to say that he had seen him himself. The most diligent search was made in the neighbourhood, but neither man nor woman could be heard of. [86]

Mrs. Montgomery and Lady L. now undertook the instruction of Edmund themselves, till proper arrangements should be made respecting that point, lest he should acquire too much of good Mrs. Smyth's accent; yet that discreet lady was far from thinking any such precaution necessary, as she prided herself on reading English with great precision, and indulging in her native idiom only in familiar conversation, for the sake, as she averred, of "Auld lang syne." [87]

This plan of the lessons brought Edmund much into the sitting-rooms, till, by degrees, it passed into a custom for him to remain all the morning with the ladies. Then, when particularly good, he was indulged with a sort of second dinner at the table: and he was always good, so that there was no opportunity to withdraw an indulgence once granted, and, very shortly, a chair and plate were set for him at every meal, as a matter of course; while every one grew so fond of him, that it seemed forgotten he was not a child of the family, and even the servants, of their own accord, all began to call him Master Edmund.

[88]

CHAPTER IX.

[89]

"This is thy
Birth-day, and thou must be the little idol
Of the festival."

IN the mean time preparations of every kind were making for Lady L.'s expected confinement. The doctor had an apartment assigned him, and now lived at Lodore House, lest his attendance should be a moment too late. A respectable woman, of approved abilities, arrived all the way from Edinburgh. She was provided with an assistant under-nurse from Keswick, and both established at Lodore. Offerings too, at the shrine of the expected stranger, made their appearance every day. A splendid set of caudle-cups, of very curious china, was sent from London by Lady Theodosia R., a sister of Lord L. A set of baby-linen, of needle-work the most exquisite, arrived from Scotland, sent by Major Morven, a rather elderly bachelor-brother of Mrs. Montgomery's. The major mentioned in his letter, that, as he did not understand those things himself, he had had them chosen by a committee of ladies, the best judges in Edinburgh.

[90]

Many, indeed, were the little, very little things, which came from various quarters, more than we entirely understand ourselves; but every band-box that was opened produced something little, so that it seemed a sort of importation from the Lilliputian world. Little hats of white beaver, like snow-balls, in which, however, little plumes were not forgotten. Little caps, little bonnets, and even little shoes, wrapped in silver paper. In short, there was nothing big, but the good woman from Edinburgh, and Major Morven. The major came to be in time for the christening, as he was to be one of the sponsors.

[91]

At length another little arrival took place, and a beautiful little girl commenced her earthly pilgrimage. Quickly was the young stranger dressed in the raiment of needle-work, and carried by its grandmamma, and followed by its nurse, to the drawing-room, there to receive the caresses, and claim the admiration of its happy papa. There also was Edmund, wondering much at the bustle, and at his lessons having been entirely omitted. His ecstasies of delight and astonishment on seeing the baby were so great, and his entreaties so eager, first to be allowed to look at, then to touch this quite new object of wonder, all the time trying each expedient to add to his height, now leaping straight up, now climbing the chair nearest to Lord L., then the arm of the sofa, and, finally, the sofa-table itself, to the imminent danger of his neck, that Mrs. Montgomery was at length induced, after making him sit down on the said table, to hold the infant, for a second or two, across his knees.

[92]

During those seconds it was, we have good reason to believe, that the first idea of self-importance ever entertained by our hero, entered his mind: it accompanied the proud consciousness of fancying that he afforded support to a creature more helpless than himself. He touched its soft cheek, then its miniature hand, which soon began to close itself round his finger, in the manner that infants do. It seemed to Edmund, as though his caresses were kindly returned. His little heart overflowed with fondness. He looked up, his face beaming with delight, and asked if he might kiss the darling little baby.

[93]

"A pretty bold request indeed!" said Lord L., laughing, "kiss my eldest daughter, you urchin."

Mrs. Montgomery, laughing also, told him he might, and Edmund accordingly approached his rosy lips to those of his precious charge, with, however, the greatest gentleness, lest, as he said, he should hurt it.

Mrs. Montgomery, on her return back from the drawing-room, was much surprised to hear the cry of an infant inside her daughter's apartment, while she herself, if she were not dreaming, held the baby in her own arms, outside the door. The fact was, an occurrence had taken place, which, with all their preparation, they were not at all prepared for. A second little girl had made her appearance. Two dress caps, certainly, had been provided, one with a cockade for a boy, the other with a suitable rosette for a girl, in case of such a contingency (and bad enough in all conscience) as that of the child being a girl, after doctor, nurse, servants, tenants, and indeed every one knowing perfectly well that it would be a boy, but two girls never had been so much as thought of. The elder young lady, therefore, by three-quarters of an hour, being already in possession of the girl's rosette, the younger was obliged to make her first public appearance in this world of vanities, figuring in a boy's cockade.

[94]

To prevent, however, a serious disappointment on the part of Lord L., an explanatory message was sent to him before she was permitted to enter the drawing-room. There was but one child's nurse, too; but what with grandmamma's help, and good Mrs. Smyth's assistance, and Edmund's, which he judiciously afforded, by running under every body's feet who carried a baby, they

[95]

contrived to manage till a second nurse could be procured.

We speak of nurses under certain limitations; for Lady L. had been too well instructed by her mother, in every right sentiment, to meditate for a moment depriving her infants of the nutriment nature had ordained for them.

The doctor, as soon as he thought he could venture to assert that there would be no more, either boys or girls, frisked into the drawing-room, rubbing his hands, and smiling with perfect satisfaction.

"I give your lordship," he said, "joy, twice told! twice told! I believe I am justified in so doing on the present twofold occasion. Twofold, heigh? twofold it certainly is, literally so, and twofold should be our rejoicing; else are we ungrateful for the bounty of Providence, and the liberality of nature! Liberality of nature, heigh?" [96]

"But—," said his lordship, with a countenance of some anxiety.

"We did not anticipate this, sir," continued the doctor, "this is a contingency that we did not anticipate."

"Pray—," recommenced Lord L., making a fresh effort to be heard; but the doctor proceeded.

"Two beautiful girls, upon my life—beautiful! I already see future conquests sparkling in their eyes!"

"Are you sure, doctor," asked the major, "there won't be any more? A boy now, eh? Girls first: all right that—*Place aux dames*." [97]

"The next," proceeded the doctor, still addressing Lord L., "shall be a boy. At present two *belles* have been sent us, and we should make them joy *belles*! eh? Come, that's rather good, a'n't it?" And with his usual pirouette, he flung himself on the sofa beside the major, threw one leg across the other, and with his head a little back, and on one side, looked up and smiled with entire self-complacency.

Mrs. Montgomery now appeared at the door, to give Lord L. the long-wished-for summons; which he obeyed on tip-toe.

"From Scotland, I presume, sir?" said the doctor to his neighbour on the sofa.

"Ee noo, sir," replied the major; "bit hoo did ye ken I cam frae Scotland? No by my speech, I reckon." [98]

"Oh, sir, the name—the name," returned the doctor, a little disconcerted.

"Morven is a weel kent name, dootless," rejoined the man of war; "and for my speech, I should tack ney sham that it savoured o' the land o' my nativity, provided sic was the case; bit it fell oot, that being much wee my regiment, on the sarvice o' his Majesty, I ha' been full sixteen year o' my life oot o' Scotland; se that noo, when I gang to Lunnon, ne body kens me till be a Scotchman: that is, by my speech. Bit ne' doot—"

Here the doctor, who had kept silence unusually long (perhaps from admiration of the major's pure English), interrupted his companion, to descant on use or custom being second nature, &c. [99] And the major being one of the many who never listen to anybody's speeches but their own, leaned back on the sofa, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER X.

 [100]

"But not less pious was the ardent pray'r
That rose spontaneously."

"Look at him! Is he not a beauteous boy?"

THE christening was quite a splendid festival. A number of friends and relations, among whom was Lady Theodosia R., became inmates of Lodore House for the occasion. All the neighbourhood was invited to join their party for the day; and the tenantry and poor people entertained on the lawn and borders of the lake; while the inhabitants of the town of Keswick illuminated their houses to show their respect and affection for the family.

The names of Julia and Frances were given to the little girls. The ceremony was over, and Edmund, who had been dressed very sprucely for the great occasion, was standing near one of the nurses, endeavouring to pacify his baby, as he invariably called the eldest of the twins. The young lady was evincing her displeasure at the drops of cold water which had visited, so suddenly, the nice warm glow produced on her cheek by the full lace border of her cap, and the sheltering shawl of her nurse. [101]

Mrs. Montgomery, who was looking on much amused at the little manœuvres of Edmund, naturally recollected (the whole business being about names) that he, poor fellow, had but one appellation, and though that did very well now, the case would be altered when he began to go among strangers, when some sort of surname would become quite indispensable. She chanced to express her thoughts on the subject (in an under tone of course) to Lady L. and Mr. Jackson, who were standing near her, adding, that as there was no name over which she had so good a right as [102]

her own, she thought he had better in future be called Montgomery.

"Are you quite determined, madam?" asked Mr. Jackson.

"Yes, quite," she replied.

"Come here, then, my dear little fellow!" proceeded the worthy clergyman, addressing Edmund in an elevated tone.

Edmund obeyed timidly, but immediately.

Mr. Jackson still stood opposite to the font, though, his sacred duties being ended, he had descended the steps previous to the foregoing conversation, which took place while the congregation were moving out of church.

The figure and countenance of Mr. Jackson were fine and impressive, and his air and carriage lent to them all the dignity which the Ruler of nature intended man to derive from his upright form, when the mind is upright too. The infantine figure at his knee seemed, by contrast, to add nobleness to his stature. His eyes were raised to heaven, those of the child to his face, as laying one hand on Edmund's head, and extending the other, he pronounced with solemnity the following words: [103]

"May the Almighty Father of the fatherless, and Defender of the orphan's cause, bless, guide, and protect you, under the name of Edmund Montgomery, till your claim (if you have such) to any other shall be known and acknowledged."

The tones of his voice were fine; and, on this occasion, a tenderness was blended with their depth, supplied by the growing partiality he had for some time felt for poor Edmund; while his naturally grave and almost severe deportment, borrowed, when, as now, he had been recently engaged in divine service, a grace from his piety, a humility which yet elevated: it was a consciousness, visible, of standing in the presence of his Maker. [104]

When our party had come out of church, and were waiting under some trees in the little green that surrounded the building, for the carriages to come up in convenient order, Mr. Jackson, who still held Edmund by the hand, turned to Mrs. Montgomery, and, with an enthusiasm peculiar to himself, and the very glow of which prevented his perceiving that he not unfrequently produced a smile on the lips of those who were not capable of entering into his feelings, said, "This child, madam, is a more perfect personification of my ideas of what the angels must be, than any thing I have ever before met with, or even read of." [105]

"You except the ladies, I hope," said Lady Theodosia, "or, at least, those of the present company."

"I make no exceptions, madam," replied Mr. Jackson, with but little gallantry of voice or manner. Then turning again to Mrs. Montgomery, he was about to proceed; but Lady Theodosia ran on thus:—

"It is certainly customary to say of any fine fat child, that it is quite a cherub; but I cannot see why a perfection so earthly, should lay exclusive claim to the attribute of angels! The Edinburgh sick nurse, in that case, would be the most angelic creature among us, for she must measure, as Sir John Falstaff says of himself, at least three yards round the waist."

Lady Theodosia was very thin.

"My premises, madam, led to no such monstrous conclusion!" replied Mr. Jackson, with much more severity of tone than the occasion called for. [106]

"Monstrous conclusion!" echoed the doctor. "Come, that's very good! The person your ladyship has just mentioned, is somewhat monstrous, it cannot be denied."

Mr. Jackson, meanwhile, with a gravity not to be shaken, proceeded addressing Mrs. Montgomery as follows:—"In my mental visions, I have often indulged in speculations on the possible appearance of angels. I have, 'tis true, always pictured them to myself decked in that freshness of beauty peculiar to extreme youth; yet, on the brow, I have imagined an expression resembling what may be traced here!" and he passed his hand over the forehead of Edmund. Then taking off the little plumed Scotch bonnet, and viewing him as he spoke, he continued: [107]

"That look, I had almost said of thought, that touch of sentiment, scarcely corresponding with the dimpled and infantine loveliness of the cheek: that smile too, of perfect happiness, emanating from the blissful consciousness of never even wishing wrong! No seeds of jarring passions there, madam! no contentions of spirit: but that absolute harmony of soul, so rarely to be met with on earth, when every impulse of the native will is in unison with the sense of right implanted in all, by the great Author and Source of good!"

Lady Theodosia was dying to laugh, but dare not, Mr. Jackson's face was so perfectly serious. Edmund looked up at the moment, conscious that he was spoken of, though, of course, not comprehending what was said.

"The eye," continued Mr. Jackson, "when it meets yours, certainly conveys a tender appeal, a silent claim on protection, that we scarcely expect in that of a superior intelligence." [108]

Lady Theodosia philosophically observed, that the child's hair was black, and that angels were always depicted with golden locks. (Her ladyship's were auburn, bordering on red.) "And as to supposing," continued the lady, "that angels must invariably be children," (Lady Theodosia was no child,) "it is quite an erroneous idea. Milton's angels were of all ages."

"But there were no ladies among them, Theodosia!" said Lord L., just coming up. "Lovers call you angels, but brothers and married men may speak the truth; and, it must be confessed, that all the

angels upon record are either children or young men."

"Oh fie! my lord," ventured the doctor; "is it not recorded every day before our eyes, in the fairest characters," bowing and smiling to Lady Theodosia, "that the ladies are angels! Fair characters! fair characters! Come, that's fair, very fair, a'n't?" [109]

CHAPTER XI.

 [110]

"There is nothing great,
Which religion does not teach; nothing good,
Of which she is not the eternal source;
At once the motive and the recompense."

FROM the evening of the birth of Lady L.'s babies, it was evident that our hero, though not yet seven years old, no longer thought himself little. He assumed a manly air and carriage, and could not bear the idea of being suspected of wanting assistance or protection. He, indeed, was always ready to give his assistance, if one of the babies stretched a little hand for any thing, or his protection, if the bark of a dog, the sight of a stranger, or any such awful occurrence, alarmed either of them; or his soothings, if they cried. [111]

He would no longer hold by any one's hand in walking, but would step out in front of the nursery party, with quite a proud air, looking over his shoulder, from time to time, and telling the nurses that he was going first, to see that there was nothing there to hurt the babies. He often asked if they would ever be as big as he was; and always kept alive, by perpetual inquiries, and additional caresses, a perfect recollection of the identity of the eldest baby—the one that had been held across his arms, the evening it was born; and which, at the moment it seemed to clasp his finger, had awakened in his little breast the first emotion of tenderness, that was not accompanied by that almost awe-inspiring feeling—a grateful looking up, as from an immeasurable distance, to beings, in whose love and protection he himself sought shelter. [112]

The partiality evinced by Mr. Jackson for our hero, on the day of the christening, encouraged Mrs. Montgomery to put in immediate execution a plan which Lady L. and herself had been for some time meditating; namely, to request that gentleman to undertake the education of Edmund, till he was of an age to be sent to the Naval College.

Mr. Jackson was eminently fitted for the task of instructing youth. He had been a fellow of one of the universities, and distinguished both for his learning and his talents.

Since his retirement from college on his present living, he had enjoyed much leisure, and had devoted it to elegant studies: modern classics, modern languages, the fine arts, late discoveries in science, &c. &c. In short, to use his own words, he had, since that period, wandered daily through the pleasure-grounds of literature; not suffering his mind to sink into utter indolence, yet giving it no more than the healthful stimulus of gentle exercise. He was born a poet, but had, through life, indulged more in poetical feelings than in poetical effusions; unless, indeed, we admit as such, the energetic overflowing of his spontaneous eloquence in conversation; for his sermons, he took care, should be plain and practical. He was not a shepherd, who, at the instigation of vanity, would turn the green pasture-lands of his flock into beds of tulips. Yet did not the pure and perspicuous style, which good taste, as well as good feeling, taught him to adopt on sacred subjects, want for that true sublime which is derived from simplicity, when the grandeur of the thought itself leaves laboured language far behind. [113]

The topic on which he was unwearied was, the inseparable connexion between right faith and right practice, and between both and happiness. He proved, by the most beautiful and feeling arguments and illustrations, that, like the root, the blossom, and the fruit, they grew out of, necessarily produced, and, as necessarily, could not exist without each other. He then proceeded to show, that the whole chain of natural causes and effects formed one unbroken, practical revelation of the Almighty will, ordaining virtue and forbidding vice; inasmuch as not only is virtue necessary to make us capable of happiness even here, but out of vice invariably grows suffering, not only moral, but generally physical also, lest the lowest capacity should be slow to comprehend this manifestation of the sovereign purpose of him who called us into being, but bestows upon us that felicity, towards which, his all-wise government is constituted to lead us; of him who, had it been possible even to infinite power, to bestow a consciousness of individuality of spiritual being, without an equal consciousness of freedom of will, would have rendered it impossible for his creatures to err; or, in other words, to forfeit that bliss which "eye hath not seen, ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." [114]

"For," our Christian philosopher would add, as he drew his arguments to their close, "had that emanation of the divinity which is the soul of man, been without choice between good and evil; or, in other words, necessitated to act by no other impulse than that of its great source, the Almighty had created but a material world, all spiritual intelligence, the whole soul of the universe, had still been God himself!" [115]

Mr. Jackson's imaginings, especially when he walked alone amid the majestic scenery that surrounded his dwelling, certainly were poetry; but he seldom interrupted his pleasing reveries, or checked his nights of fancy, to place them on paper, or even to arrange them in any precise order of words. Indeed, it was one of his favourite positions, (and he was famous for theories of [116]

his own,) that a man might be a poet, without possessing one word of any language whatsoever, in which to express his poetic ideas.

In judging a new work, too, he seldom descended to verbal criticism; but, taking an enlarged view of the spirit in which the thing was written, pronounced it, at once, to want, or to possess, that poetical spark, that vivifying principle, which must, he maintained, breathe a soul into every composition, whether prose or verse, worth the trouble of reading. [117]

To complete Mr. Jackson's qualifications for a preceptor, he himself found a sensible pleasure in imparting knowledge. Let others prove the wonders, the properties, the virtues of all that the material world affords; and, admired be their curious, and respected their useful labours; but the natural philosophy in which he delighted, was the development of the young mind. In his mode, too, of communicating instruction, there was a peculiar felicity. He never required of a pupil an arbitrary act of mere memory: "indeed," he would say, "there is no such a power as mere memory." What is commonly called having a good memory, he considered as nothing more than the natural result of fixing the attention, awaking the feelings, and forming the associations. [118] These last, he termed the roots, by which remembrances entwine themselves with our whole constitution, till the very heart vibrates to a sound, a colour, or but the scent of a flower, plucked in the day of joy, or of sorrow. He, therefore, always endeavoured to lead the understanding to facts, through their causes; and, again, to interest the feelings in the consequences of those facts: thus were the lessons he taught never to be effaced. Above all things, he hastened to supply the infant mind with salutary associations, on every subject tending to implant principles and form character; considering every avenue of the soul, not thus timely fortified, as laid open to the incursions of wrong, perhaps, fatal opinions. For instance, whilst others railed, with common-place argument, against bribing children, as they termed it, into goodness; he maintained that the lowest animal gratification of the infant, (that is, before it can understand any other,) may be so judiciously bestowed, as to become the first seed of that grand principle, a thorough conviction that the virtuous only can enjoy happiness. If the child's daily and hourly experience prove to it, that when it is good it has all from which it knows how to derive pleasure; and that when it is not good, the reverse is the case; must it not soon learn to connect, so thoroughly, goodness with happiness, that, through after-life, the ideas can never present themselves apart. "As mind is developed," he would say, "let the sources of the child's happiness be ennobled: teach it to prize, as its best reward, the love and approval of its parent; to dread, as its greatest punishment, the withholding such. And, to acquire this power, let your tenderest indulgence, the perpetual sunshine of your countenance, be the very atmosphere in which your child is reared; and soon, the sight of features on which no smile appears, will be chastisement sufficient, and you be spared the brutalizing and alienating your offspring, by beating it into forced obedience, and spontaneous hatred." [119]

That such a man as we have described, was ever found, in the fulfilment of his active duties as a pastor, the conscientious and benevolent Christian, we need scarcely add. [120]

The income arising from Mr. Jackson's living was considerable; and, as he had also private property, he was quite independent; it was, therefore, entirely as a favour; that Mrs. Montgomery meditated requesting him to take charge of Edmund's education. He, on his part, came into all her plans and wishes, with as much readiness and warmth, as his enthusiastic praises of our hero had led her to hope. [121]

The parsonage, to which Mr. Jackson had built very elegant additions, stands within a short walk of Lodore House. Its own situation is beautiful. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to choose a spot in this immediate neighbourhood which is not so. Every distance is terminated by magnificent mountains. More or less ample views of the lake, are almost everywhere to be descried through trees that grow with luxuriance to the water's-edge; the long vista of each opening, carpeted with a velvet sod of the tenderest green; while, where the wooding climbs the feet of the hills, bare rocks, like the sides and turrets of ruined castles, protrude in many parts, giving much beauty and variety to the scenery. One of the highest of these lifts itself conspicuously above the grove which embowers Mr. Jackson's dwelling, and stands just in view of his study-windows. It is crowned by a rent and blasted oak, the outer branches of which still bud forth every spring, displaying a partial verdure, while the naked roots are bound around the rock's hard brow, with a grasp which has maintained its hold from age to age, against the winds and rains of countless winters. Beyond the woods, stupendous Skiddaw rears its lofty head, enveloped in perpetual clouds, in much the same manner, that it backs the view of Lodore House; for in this wild region, that mountain holds so conspicuous a place in every scene, that it may almost be said to be omnipresent. [122]

A window to the south presents some slight traces of human existence, not discernible from any of the others: a curious bridge, roughly constructed, its date unknown, and crossing a spot where there is now no water; and a single chimney, with its blue smoke, peeping from the cleft of a rock, within which is concealed the little habitation to which it belongs. The study itself, from which these prospects are enjoyed, contains an excellent library: it opens with French windows on the lawn, and communicates with the drawing-room by means of a green-house in the corridor form, in imitation of that at Lodore, from which it had been stored with choice plants. Beyond the drawing-room, in the old part of the building, is situated a comfortable dining-room. To this literary Eden, our hero each day repaired, reaping from his visits all the advantages which might be expected. Thus did matters proceed for about four years, except that we omitted to mention that he spent all periods of Mrs. Montgomery's absence from Lodore House entirely at Mr. Jackson's dwelling, by that gentleman's particular request. Edmund had become the consolation of his worthy preceptor's lonely hours, the centre of his affections. Those had, indeed, no other [123] [124]

object. Within the first three years of Mr. Jackson's marriage, he had lost a wife to whom he had been attached from early youth; and, more recently, the measles had robbed him of both the boys she had left him.

CHAPTER XII.

[125]

"Did jealous hate inspire thee?"

MEANWHILE the unamiable Henry, every time he returned from his school for the vacations, was filled with fresh envy and hatred on beholding Edmund more and more established in the rank of a child of the family, and more and more beloved by every one; while he, Henry, felt as if at enmity with the whole world, merely because his own unworthy nature could not divest itself of an instinctive consciousness, that he did not deserve to be loved. He, however, explained the business very differently: he persuaded himself that the beggar-brat (as he called Edmund in his own thoughts, for Mrs. Montgomery would not suffer him to do so to be heard) had got into his place, and deprived him of every body's regard.

[126]

As soon as Mrs. Montgomery had been aware of her nephew's lodging, she had had him removed to one more eligible; but his low habits were too strongly confirmed to be much amended by this salutary change. He still spent his leisure hours at the butcher's house, and carried thither the fruits of all his depredations, namely, the spoils of robbed orchards, and scaled poultry-yards. There the wife and daughter would first cook for him, and then, joining in the carousal, help to demolish. His rompings too, with Miss Betsy Park, for so was the butcher's daughter named, grew daily more frequent.

[127]

The sagacious mother did not choose to interfere, observing, that though Betsy had become very saucy to Mr. Henry, and sometimes even gave him a smart slap in the face, he, instead of threatening to beat, and not unfrequently to kick her, as he used to do, was now often heard to menace her with a good kissing if she did not behave herself. The damsel, however, by no means alarmed, would most generally repeat her offence, and, snapping her fingers, tell him she defied him; upon which he would pursue her round the house, back yard, or garden, to put his threat into execution. On such occasions, however, he could not so entirely get rid of his old habits, as to let Miss Betsy off, without following up his new species of vengeance, by some of those cruel pinches which, in childhood, had so often diversified the snowy surface of the young lady's skin, with the various tints of black, blue, and green.

[128]

Yet Miss Betsy was, by this time, become a very fine girl: she was fair, had a glowing colour, a quantity of light auburn hair, laughing blue eyes, a saucy nose, full pouting lips, good white teeth, and was tall and well made, though, if any thing, a little too fat; but, in consequence of her youth, this, at present, rather gave luxuriance to her beauty, than coarseness to her appearance.

It may be asked, why any thing in the shape of a mother sanctioned such scenes as we have alluded to. But too many S— B— mothers, in Mrs. Park's way, speculated on marrying their daughters to scholar lads, as the boys and young men are indiscriminately termed; and the questionable means employed by Mrs. Park were not only, in her opinion, the best to obtain her end, but those sanctioned by the customs of the village, time immemorial.

[129]

By such mothers, while their daughters were permitted—we had almost said counselled—to cast off all delicacy, a sort of worldly prudence was taught, by which the necessity of not forfeiting their chance of marrying a gentleman was duly impressed on young creatures, whose habitual manners, from childhood, had early deprived them of the natural guard of modesty. Thus, a girl who was forsaken (before marriage we mean) by a scholar-lad, incurred direful suspicions in the village; while one who had so successfully balanced her blandishments, as to decoy one into marriage, was ever after held up as a pattern of virtue! This was the more easily managed, when we consider the respective ages of the parties.

[130]

When once these lads left the school, their brides saw no more of them. The ladies, however, as soon as the schoolmaster's authority was at an end, proclaimed their marriage in the village, called themselves by the gentleman's name, had some allowance, particularly if there was a child in the case, and considered themselves a step higher in the ranks of society.

Henry was not yet seventeen, but he would be older before he finally quitted the school; and most of the S— B— weddings took place between mere boys and girls a few years their seniors.

A custom too prevailed in this village, and its vicinity, very favourable to suitors—we mean among the elevated rank of which we are now speaking. All received sweethearts, as they are called, were permitted to sit the whole of the night by the embers of the kitchen fire, without witness or candle, beside the damsel to whom they wished to plead their cause. This indulgence was granted, whether scholar lad or labourer, on the plea of the swain, in either case, having no leisure for love-making by day. It was a custom, however, which David Park never permitted in his house, though he had himself been so favoured when courting Betsy's mother.

[131]

It is reported in the village, that great confusion exists in the parish register, respecting the christenings and weddings of many families, including the butchers. We think, however, that it must be by a mistake of the old clerk, when a christening appears actually upon record before the wedding, the circumstance being quite out of the course of nature.

Betsy's father, to do him justice, though he joined in wishing to see his daughter married to a gentleman, and though he was sturdily determined, if such a thing should ever happen, to have her publicly acknowledged; yet would he have disapproved of all the methods pursued by his wife for forwarding such views, had he been aware of them; nor did he permit the slightest familiarity in his presence, from the time that Betsy began to assume at all the appearance of a woman. Indeed he often took her seriously to task; and one memorable day, in particular, as he sat before his house fire, he drew his pipe, which he had been smoking for some time in moody silence, from his mouth, and addressed his daughter thus:— [132]

"If thoo has a mind tle be a gintleman's woife, or an honest man's outher, kep thee sell' to thee sell', and behave theesell' decently." Turning half round, with both hands resting on his knees, he seemed to measure her height and form with his eyes, and then said, "Thoo's gitting up, Bess! dinna let the lads ovr nigh thee!" She blushed and smiled. "Coomme," he continued, "thoo may kiss thee fayther tho'!" [133]

After a rough caress, he recommenced, still looking at her, "Thoo's a fine lass thoo! It wad be a pity ti—a, that thoo shouldst coome tle ney bitter end, than tle mac devartion for scholar lads!— And sham to thee fayther!" he subjoined, after a pause, and in an altered tone.

After another pause he proceeded thus:—"Bonny devartion trully! bonny devartion! Nay, nay, Betsy, thoo's worthy to be sum'ot bether nor that, my barne! If thoo sould niver be a gintleman's woife, thoo may be a farmer's woife, and ha' plenty and decency round thee aw thee days, and bonny bairns, like what thoo was thee sell, about thee. And when I's tired wee killing swine," he added, pleased with the picture he had drawn, "I can coome to thee chimney corner, and tack the wee things on my knee, and gee thee good-man sum'ot be the week for my leeving. I think I sould like that bether, after aw Betsy, nor yon gentleman hunting!" [134]

"A weel, fayther," said Betsy, affected, "and I'll dee whatever thoo wilt. Bit Mr. Henry's a nice enough lad, tee—a! and civiler grown nor he used to be."

"Weel, weel, lass! Bit tack care o' thee sell: the civiler the war, may be."

That evening Henry brought one of his suppers to be cooked; and, among other good things, a jar of smuggled spirits, a delicacy which he had latterly contrived, by some secret means, to add to his feasts. On this occasion he seemed already to have taken himself a foretaste of the potent beverage. He found Betsy unusually distant. He kept following her about and deranging all her culinary proceedings, in the hope of provoking a game of romps. At last he got her up into a corner and kept teasing her, and coming up so close that it was impossible to get by without a struggle, which was just what he wanted. At this moment her father came in. [135]

"Kep off the lass!" he cried; "kep off the lass!" And, pushing Henry roughly aside, he stood between him and his daughter. "I tell you what, Mr. Henry St. Aubin," he said, "I been't a gintleman, to be sure; bit she is my flesh and blood for au' that, and the best gintleman in the land shan't coome nigh hand her, without he gangs to church wee her first! She's a fine lass, and a bonny lass, and a good lass; and worthy till be an honest man's wife, and the mother o' bonny bairns; and she sha'n't be sport for scholar lads, as long as her fayther has twa hands tle knock him doon that mislests her!" [136]

Henry laughed coarsely, and muttered some reply which did not seem to coincide exactly with David's notions of delicacy; for he continued thus:

"Hoo durst yee tle spack in that undecent fashion afoor the lass? And what for do you look at her e that gate?"

Henry, whose usually slender stock of good manners had not received much addition from his late intercourse with the spirit jar, was getting provoked. He could think, at the moment, of no readier mode of venting his anger than that which the immediate power of insulting offered. He seized Betsy, therefore, in pretended jest, and began to pull her about rudely, in open defiance of David and decency. The father's ire, at this, so got the better of him, that he forgot all his speculations. [137]

"Git oot o' my hoose!" he cried; and seizing Henry by the shoulders, he thrust him into the street, flinging the preparations for the supper at his heels, and exclaiming, "I'll gar ye! ye greet gapping fiery-faced deevil! I'll gar ye!"

Henry's countenance, at the time, flushed with intoxication, rage, and insolence, at once suggested and justified the epithet of 'fiery-faced deevil,' bestowed by honest David.

The next time Henry found Betsy alone (though, fortunately for her, her father came in almost immediately) there was so much of ferocity in his manner; and the determined advances of the urchin, in despite of grave looks, partook so much more of revenge than of love, that Betsy was instinctively disgusted, and determined, though with tears, to think no more of him, and please fayther by marrying John Dixon. [138]

Dixon was a young farmer in the neighbourhood, who could not help showing a partiality for Betsy, though he did not much like her intimacy with the scholar lads, nor the thoughts of her having romped so often with Mr. Henry. He got over all this, however, being a gentle-tempered, kind-hearted, rather simple young man; and, since he first fancied Betsy, disposed to melancholy.

The day was accordingly fixed for their wedding, when Henry, who had been forbid the house, contrived, by the mother's means, to get an interview with the bride elect. He affected repentance for his late rudeness, pleaded excessive love by way of an excuse, and, rather than be ousted by the farmer, proposed marriage. Betsy shed tears of reconciliation, and poor John Dixon [139]

CHAPTER XIII.

[140]

“No green star trembles
On its top, no moonbeam on its side.”

“The blast of the desert comes,
It howls in thy empty courts.”

THERE happened to be a young man at this time expected in the village, who had received his early education at S— B— school, and who had been, for many years, the mate in mischief of Henry St. Aubin.

The young man, of whom we are speaking, was the only child of a lone woman who kept the bakehouse of the village. His father, whom he had never seen, had been, in the youthful days of his mother, a scholar lad. The mother was determined that her son should be, as his father had been, a gentleman! She devoted, therefore, the fruits of a life’s industry to educate him for the church. After such an exertion, however, she had no pocket-money left to give her darling, who, consequently, often wanted cash. He was selfish, and had no principles. His habits were low, yet, in their own petty way, expensive. His present return to the village was after a considerable absence. Henry hastened to the bakehouse at the moment of his arrival, and, taking him aside, asked him if he was yet ordained, “because,” continued Henry, without waiting for a reply, “if you are not, tell David you are, and pretend to marry me to Betsy. We’ll have rare fun and carousing at the wedding: and the next time my aunt fills my purse, I’ll go halves with you.”

[141]

Now, the young man was in orders already; but so good an offer as a carouse and even half a purse, was not to be cast away without consideration. Besides which, it might be ‘very convenient’ to have St. Aubin in his power; for though it was perfectly well known that Henry did not inherit any thing from his father, his future prospects from his aunt were equally well known not to be despicable; and, at any rate, she behaved so handsomely to him at present, that as a scholar-lad his purse was always tolerably well lined; it was not likely, therefore, that she would ever let him be without money, when he went into the world as a man. The conscientious young divine, accordingly, without more time for his calculations than whilst Henry spoke, told his friend that he was not yet ordained, and, at the same time, undertook that his mother should tell David (as well she might) that her son was in orders. “Indeed, for that matter,” he added, “it will be the safest way to make her think so herself.”

[142]

[143]

After this, it was easily arranged, with all parties, that Greyson (such was our hopeful churchman’s name) should perform the ceremony. It was to take place among the roofless ruins of S— B— Abbey, poor David having a prejudice in favour of his child being married in church, and the repaired part of the building, which is the present church, being of course locked. The little party, in contempt of canonical hours, left David’s house after midnight. They passed down the street, and all was silent. As they approached the little bridge, situated half-way between the village and the abbey, Betsy saw a man leaning over the battlements, seemingly looking on the water as it glided from beneath the one low arch. She was sure, doubtful as was the light, for the moon was much obscured, that the figure was that of the young farmer. When they came to the gate which divides the road and school-house from the wide-spread ruins, they found it fastened, and were obliged to get over the stile. When elevated on the upper step of this, Betsy gave one look towards the bridge. The figure had left its position there. She passed her eye along the road, and could still discern it following at some distance.

[144]

“Make haste!” whispered Henry, hurrying her down the steps rather roughly. “You’re not going to change your mind again, are you?” he added, sneeringly.

Betsy’s heart misgave her, and she answered, with a heavy sigh, “If I have changed it ance, Henry, it’s no you ’at sould reproach me!”

“Hoot! if it is such a sighing matter,” he replied, “don’t break your heart to oblige me.”

[145]

“Tack care yee dinna brack it, Henry, nor my honest fayther’s nowther,” was Betsy’s answer. Then, mentally she added, “There’s ane ’at must be bracken, and that’s enew.”

At this moment a shadow passed along a moonlit wall beside them, and sunk in a dark archway before them. They soon entered the same archway; proceeded along the flags in front of the great western entrance; mounted some steps; walked on the northern high gravelled terrace, some way; then, leaving it, climbed over graves, and stumbled over tombstones, till, descending a rugged path, among nettles and long grass, they entered a part of the ruin which was without any roof. The walls, however, still rose to their full original height, till the starry sky seemed a canopy that closed them in; while, through a row of long, narrow, well-preserved arches, the moonlight streamed with an adventitious brightness, borrowed from contrast with the dark shadows in every other part. The entrance of our party, however, seemed the signal for all that had been bright to disappear. The moon, which had struggled for some time with the vapours of a hazy night, almost at the instant dropped behind a range of thick clouds near the horizon. She set a few moments after, and the haze thickening to a mizzling rain, the very stars became extinguished. It was slowly, therefore, and with difficulty, that the feet of our wanderers now

[146]

advanced to the further or eastern end, where the altar is said to have once stood.

Our reverend divine here took a small dark lantern from his breast, unfastened its door, and opened before it a pocket prayer-book. By this time the darkness of all around was total, and added much to the strange effect of the partial gleam that lit up the book, the one hand that held it, and a part only of the one arm, the back of the lantern itself throwing a powerful shadow on the rest of the figure; so that the waving hand seemed a floating vision unconnected with any form, and the voice that arose out of the darkness behind it, almost supernatural! At the moment of its first sound, which, after the silence that had preceded it, seemed to startle every thing, an owl on the top of the ruins screamed. Betsy shuddered: the owl fluttered downwards, fell, as it happened, actually on the lantern, and, striking it out of the hand that held it, extinguished its light; then, having panted a moment at the feet of the astounded group, rose, and screaming again, brushed by their faces. A minute after, its cry was heard repeated, but fainter from the distance, for it now came from the highest point of the steeple. [147]

"It's no to be, fayther!" said Betsy, in a low voice, "it's no to be!"

"Hoot!" said Henry, gruffly.

Betsy felt her hand, on the other side, taken in one that seemed to tremble. She thought, at first, it was her father's; but just then she heard his voice on the far side of Henry, saying to the clergyman, "What's to be done noo?"

"He kens it off book," said Henry.

Greyson, who had engaged to swear whatever Henry said, alleged that, while he held the book in his hand, and repeated the words, it was the same thing as if he read them. Accordingly, with particular solemnity of tone, as if to compensate for the want of other requisites, he recommenced the ceremony.

Betsy felt the hand suddenly dropped, which had been all this time held against the throbbing heart of some one, whose laboured breathing she had distinguished close to her; not by sounds, those were apparently suppressed, but she had felt each warm sigh steal over that side of her neck and cheek. A moment after her hand had been dropped, she heard a slight movement among some loose stones at a little distance. The darkness was such, that she could not see any of the figures present. [148]

David gave away his daughter: the ceremony was concluded, and they all began to make the best of their rugged way homeward. With much ado they got from among tombstones, and fragments of ruins. They passed the stile at the gate, even the bridge, and Betsy could see no traces of any one; but it was still very dark. At length they arrived at David Park's door; it was opened, and a strong stream of light, pouring from it, crossed the street. David, the clergyman, and a friend of David's, who had been taken as a witness, went in. [149]

The bride and bridegroom, happening to be a little behind the rest, were following, when, just as Betsy put her foot on the threshold, she heard in the direction of the bridge a plunge, which, though distant, was distinct, from the perfect stillness of the night. She staggered back a few paces, drawing Henry with her.

"Oh, run! run!" she cried, pointing to the bridge, which was in a straight line from where they stood, so that any one who had been upon it might have seen the light of David's open door, and the figures entering. [150]

"Run where?" asked Henry.

"Yonder! yonder! Didna ye hear yon? I's amaist sure its John, gane o'ur the brig for love o' me!" [151]

"And if it be," replied Henry, "he may go. He shall have no help of mine!"

At this tender and considerate speech from the bridegroom, his young bride fainted away. She was carried into the house, without any one but Henry knowing the cause of her illness.

"My peur bairn's doon-hearted wid yon darkling wedding, and that ne'er do weel o'a Jenny Owlet," said David.

When Betsy recovered, which was not for a considerable time, she told her father her fears, and entreated him to go to the bridge.

"It was aw nonsense," he said, "and no but fancy! The lad had na mickle to say for his sel, to be sure, bit he was no sic a feul as aw that; and if there had been ony body faud i' the water, of a mischance, it wad be owr late tle help them noo." [152]

However, to satisfy his daughter, he walked down the road; but returned, saying, he could see nout. "It was no but yon Jenny Owlet again, or may be a wild duck; there plenty o' them i' the Senbee vale. And, what's mare," he added, "I wadend care an' we had twa on them noo, twirling afoor this rouser."

So saying, he placed himself in his own large chair before the said rouser, which he roused still more, with a gigantic poker, as was his invariable custom; while his wife laid on the board smoking dishes, one of which was graced, if not by two wild ducks, by two good tame geese. Henry, mean time, was preparing, scientifically, a large bowl of punch; to which was added, on the present occasion, several bottles of choice wine, purloined from the cellars of Lodore House. [153]

In the morning, the miller who lives near to where the river —, after wandering through the vale of S— B—, and passing under the bridge of which we have spoken, empties itself into the sea, found, stopped in its course, as it floated towards the ocean, by his mill-dam, the body of

poor John Dixon. And Betsy was long before she could get it out of her mind, how his heart had beat against her hand so short a time before it lay still, and cold, in the mill-stream.

CHAPTER XIV.

[154]

“My soul is tormented
With fear! Ah, they are dead!”

LADY L. had not increased her family since the birth of the twins, and they were, by this time, between four and five years old. Her ladyship now, however, expected to do so, and the event was to take place at Lodore.

Dr. Dixon, too, such was the almost superstitious confidence placed in him by Mrs. Montgomery, was to be again employed, which was matter of no small pride, as well as delight of heart, to the good old man.

He did not fail, as may be believed, to mention in every house in Keswick, and that before he felt a pulse, or even contemplated the hue of a tongue, that an humble individual like himself, had been selected to usher into this eventful life the future Earl of L. “For it would be a boy, no doubt,” ran on the Doctor, “as there are already two girls; lovely little creatures!—the Ladies Julia and Frances L. Both the future brides of noble earls, doubtless. But, respecting the seniority of the Lady Julia L.,” continued the Doctor, proud of having it in his power to give little people so much information about great people, “the circumstances are very remarkable—very remarkable, indeed! And if her little ladyship makes as good use of her time through life, as she did for the first three quarters of an hour, she will be fortunate—very fortunate—no doubt of it! Three quarters of an hour only, the elder of her fair sister; yet, by that short space, is her ladyship entitled to the sum of three thousand pounds per annum; to which fine property, situated in the shire of —, her ladyship is, by the will of the late Major Morven, of age on the day that she completes her eighteenth year. The property has on it, the Earl tells me, a fine old family-seat, called the Craigs, with wood, they say, worth forty thousand pounds! The mansion, too, I understand, contains a gallery of invaluable pictures, a fine library, with service of plate, &c.”

[155]

[156]

The old gentleman made a very curious will, leaving the young lady entirely her own mistress, independent of father, mother, or guardian. “For,” said the good major, “I had not been an old bachelor, had they let me follow my own way in my youth.” “I was one of the witnesses myself,” continued the doctor, “and heard him say these words. The major was gallant, you see, as all soldiers should be, and was determined that his will, should not thwart the will of a lady! The will! the will! Well, come, that’s very fair, a’n’t it?”

[157]

About this time, Mrs. Montgomery received a letter from the master of the S— B— school, stating, that he had been obliged, however reluctantly, to expel Mr. St. Aubin from his establishment, for the following offences, namely,—many scandalous irregularities, respecting the young women of the village; holding intercourse with the crew of a smuggling vessel, laying off S— B— head; absenting himself for days and nights, it is supposed on board the said vessel; and re-appearing in a shameful state of intoxication.

Soon after this epistle had been read, and before its contents had been half talked over, Henry himself arrived. Some charges he denied, others scoffed at; but did not succeed in satisfying Mrs. Montgomery.

[158]

He was sitting with her and Lady L. in the breakfast-room, which opens on the lawn. Speaking in answer to the account of his being supposed to have formed an unjustifiable intimacy, at least, if not a marriage, with Betsy Park, he said: “You must know, ma’am, the people of that village are always getting some one to swear that their daughters are married to every gentleman’s son in the school, just to extort money. They consider it quite a trade, I assure you,” he added; seeing that what he had said had made some impression. At this moment, a tradesman-like looking man appeared on the lawn.

On perceiving Henry, instead of directing his steps to the regular entrance, he came up to the French window, or glass-door, which was standing open. Stopping a moment, he said, respectfully, to Mrs. Montgomery: “May I comeb ene, madam?” His dress and manner were so decent, and he seemed so much heated and fatigued, that, without hesitation, she said: “Certainly, sir.” He put the lifted foot, which had waited in that position for her reply, over the threshold, and, turning to Henry, said, in a determined manner: “Where is my Bess, sir? Where is my bairn?”

[159]

“You needn’t ask me,” replied Henry, turning pale, and speaking as though a lock-jaw were coming on; “the last I saw of her was in your own house.”

“Oh, doon’t say so, Mr. Henry!” exclaimed the poor man, clasping his hands entreatingly.

“It’s very true though,” said Henry, gaining courage.

“It’s not true!” returned David, with sudden fierceness, “or, if it is,” he added, changing again to accents of despair; “there’s nay body in this world that kens whare she is!” He paused; then, with forced composure subjoined, “She gade oot o’ the hoose, the morn after yee gade away, and she’s niver cam back syne.”

[160]

"She is gone off with some sweetheart, I suppose," replied Henry, affecting carelessness.

"For sham o' yeersel!" cried David, "for sham o' yeersel; and she at the doon-lying wid yeer bairn! Wha was she gang wid bit wid you? Ye ken weel enew, she was nane o' that sort, or ye wad niver have been forced til mack her yeer wife."

"She's no wife of mine, man," interrupted Henry, "and don't dare to say so!"

"I will dare," returned David, "til spack the truth." Henry switched his boots with his whip, and whistled a tune. David continued—"She is your wife, Mr. St. Aubin; and your lawfu' wife, afoor heaven, and lawfu' witnesses beside." [161]

"Neither you, nor your false witnesses, can say that you saw us married," said Henry, with a sort of laugh.

"If we didna, we heard yee," replied poor David.

"Then it would seem, by your own confession, that you have nothing but hear-say to found your story upon," wittily retorted master Henry. "You had better send the fellow away, ma'am," he added; turning, as he hurried out of the room, to Mrs. Montgomery; who, together with Lady L., had hitherto listened in mute astonishment.

"Look yee there!" cried David: "oh, madam, if my heart was na breaking within my body, I wad knock that young man doon at my feet." [162]

Mrs. Montgomery was about to speak, probably to reprove such violence.

"Hear me, madam!" he continued with solemn earnestness; "Yee're a Christian woman, and a mother, I dar say. She was doon-lying, (as yon lady may be,) the neighbours aw kent she was wid bairn, and kent she was wedded and need na' sham; then, whare wad she gang from her fayther, and her fayther's hoose, in sic a straight, if she didna gang we him, whose wedded wife she was? Sweetheart, indeed! An the lass had been without sham hersel, whare's the sweetheart at wad tack her awa, an she gone wid another man's bairn?—Not his wife!—not his wife! An' he thinks then, does he, to tack a vantage of yon darkling wedding? But I'll tell you aw aboot it, madam," he continued, gasping for breath. Then, with the utmost simplicity, he recounted every minute particular of Betsy's wedding; the roofless ruin, the midnight hour, the fall of the owl, the consequent darkness, &c. &c.; and finding that his relation was listened to with interest, and evident compassion, he advanced a step nearer, grasped Mrs. Montgomery's arm, with a hand that almost scorched her skin, and, lowering his voice, continued: "Oh, madam! bit what's to come, is war than all; I went to Whiten like one distract, when Bess was missing; and there, the ostler folk at ane o' the Inn-yards, talt me sic a tale about a lady and a gentleman, at had been seen late at evening, walking ootby o' the sands, a lang way aff. And hoo the gentleman, at darkling, cam back by his sel'; and cam 'intle the inn-yard, looking affeared like, and caw'd for a carriage; and hoo he walked up and doon, up and doon, on a bit o' flag, nay longer nor yon table, aw the time the cattle war putting too; (the folk showed me the bit o' flag;) and hoo, when ane on them asked him to remember t'ostler, hoo he looked at him, and never spack; and when he asked him again to remember t'ostler, hoo he started like a body at was wakened, and talt him te gang te hell; and gave him nout, and bad the driver drive on. I trembled fray head to foot," continued David, "and I asked them—but, oh, I feard te hear what they should say in reply—I asked them, if the lass was na wid bairn; and—and—they answered—" Here the poor man became dreadfully agitated; threw up his arms and eyes a moment, then flung himself forward with violence on a table that stood before him, laid his face down on it, and sobbed audibly, uttering, in broken accents, the concluding words:—"They answered, she was wid bairn—it was why they notished her." [163] [164] [165]

"But what would you infer?" asked Mrs. Montgomery.

"Wha wad it be but Bess!" he replied, still sobbing. "And she did-na cam back," he recommenced, raising his streaming eyes and clasped hands to heaven, as he joined complaint to complaint thus:—"And she'll niver cam back! and she was aw I had! and I'll niver see her bonny face more! nor her bairn, that I could ha' loved for being Betsy's bairn, if the deevil had been the fayther on't! He has murdered her i' the sands!" he added, sternly and suddenly, and he faced round as he spoke, "to be clean rid bathe o' her and the bairn!"

"Silence! silence, man!" exclaimed Mrs. Montgomery, in a voice of authority. Then, too much shocked and affected to experience, in full, the indignation she must otherwise have felt on hearing Henry thus accused, she added, "For heaven's sake compose yourself! The horrible suspicion which agitates you in this dreadful manner, it is quite impossible should have any foundation! My nephew, however imprudent he may have been, is much too young a creature to have even thought of an enormity such as this!" [166]

"Then where is Betsy?" said the poor man, looking up in her face.

"I shall insist on Henry's declaring all he knows about her," replied Mrs. Montgomery. "Depend upon it, she is perfectly safe in some lodging in Whitehaven, or some cottage in this neighbourhood, perhaps."

The poor father smiled. It was a ghastly and a momentary smile. "Heaven grant it!" he ejaculated.

"Henry has behaved most imprudently," continued Mrs. Montgomery, "in marrying, as you assure me he has done: and very wickedly, in endeavouring to deny it, when done; and I shall see that he does your daughter, if she be a modest girl, every justice, however ruinous to his prospects, ill-fated being! But you ought, indeed, my good man, you ought to take care, how you [167]

accuse any one, lightly, of such a crime as you have ventured to name! Were it not that I see your own internal sufferings are so dreadful, that you scarcely know what you say, and that it all proceeds from parental affection, in which I can sympathise, I should, indeed, be very much, and very justly offended!"

But there was no severity in Mrs. Montgomery's tone: she looked, while she spoke, at her own daughter, and her mind glanced at what was, and what was not, parallel in situation, and she could have pardoned almost any extravagance in poor David. [168]

"Weel, weel," he replied, and forgetting ceremony, he sat down on a chair, and leaned back quite exhausted.

Lady L., who had felt for his extreme agitation, and had ordered wine to be brought in, now charitably offered him some, helping him herself. At this mark of condescension he attempted to stand up; but she saw he was unable, and would not let him. He took the glass from her; in doing so, a finger came in contact with the hand of Lady L.; its touch was like that of an icicle! He brought the wine near his lips; then, pausing, laid it on the table untasted, and said, "Bit wha could yon ha' been, 'at went oot wid a young gintleman, and niver cam' back, and was big wid bairn!"

"Possibly," replied Mrs. Montgomery, "some lady, whose friends live in that direction, and who had no intention of returning." [169]

David took up the glass again; but it dropped from his hand, and he fell to the floor with a fatally heavy sound.

Mrs. Montgomery rang, called, begged Lady L. to sit down quietly in the next room, and not suffer herself to be agitated; then rang, and called again. Servants appeared, the doctor was sent for, bleeding, and every other method of restoring animation, resorted to, but in vain—poor David was no more! It was the doctor's opinion, that his long and hurried journeys on foot, the frightful agitation of his mind, and the heat of the weather, had all together occasioned apoplexy.

Henry, when, a few days after this melancholy catastrophe, the subject was renewed, persisted in his assertions, that he had never thought of marrying the girl; that she was a perfectly good-for-nothing creature, and, most probably, gone off with some fellow, whoever, perhaps, she had been most intimate with; though it was not a week since the father had had the insolence to threaten him, because he had spoken to the girl two or three times, with legal proceedings, forsooth. [170]

Mrs. Montgomery was staggered, and puzzled, and knew not what to think. She wrote, however, to the master of S— B— school, but received, in reply, no more satisfactory information than the certainty that Betsy Park was missing. As to her character, she had always been considered dressy, and fond of the company of scholar lads.

If there was any truth in David's having thought of taking legal proceedings, his sudden death seemed to have silenced his intended witnesses, for no person came forward. All, therefore, on which Mrs. Montgomery could decide was, that Henry's profession should not be the church, as had been intended; and that she would settle some little pension on David Park's widow. [171]

CHAPTER XV.

 [172]

"Fruits, abundant as the southern vintage,
O'erspread the board, and please the wand'ring eye,
As each, from its moist and globular side,
Reflects a ray, varied by its native hue;
And all, through shelt'ring foliage shine, so placed,
To give them tempting freshness: while Flora,
Dispensing fragrance in the gayest forms,
And brightest tints, that once fair Paradise
Adorned, flings all the loveliness of spring
O'er autumn's ripen'd richness."

A SOCIAL party of relatives, friends, and neighbours, were seated round the dinner-table at Lodore House. They have, it would seem, just dispatched the first two courses, and all important business thus concluded, they appear to be, at the present moment, trifling most agreeably with a summer dessert, consisting of clustering grapes, golden pines, velvet-cheeked peaches, &c. &c. These, crowning costly dishes, and decked with fresh leaves and gay flowers, resembled, as the shining surface of the board reflected each inverted heap, so many isles of plenty, scattered on a glassy sea. While, to keep up our simile, we may add, that cruising fleets of wine decanters sailed smoothly round and round, dispensing, wherever they passed, the sparkling juice of the foreign grape, with wit and gaiety as sparkling. The busy hum of voices still went on, some in the low murmur of flirtation, some in the loud debate of politics; while others, in medium tones, discussed the merits of the last new novel, opera, or play. [173]

Mr. Jackson, who sat next to Mrs. Montgomery, addressing Henry, said—"Pray, Mr. St. Aubin, if the question is not an impertinent one, who might the man be, whom I saw part from you last evening, at the end of the wood leading into the shrubbery walks between this and my little place? I was much struck with his figure, and the insolence, I had almost said, of his step and carriage." [174]

Henry, at first, affected not to hear; but, on the question being repeated, answered, with over-acted indifference—"The fellow has been, I believe, a sailor. Begging, I fancy, is his present calling."

"He doubted then," rejoined Mr. Jackson, "either my ability, or my will to be charitable; for he did not beg of me. Indeed, he seemed disposed to get out of my way as fast as he could."

"Possibly," said Henry, "he feared that, as a magistrate, you might put into force the laws against vagrants." [175]

"There was something very remarkable in the countenance of the man," persisted Mr. Jackson: "handsome, certainly; but the expression sinister in the extreme!"

"Expression," repeated Henry with a sneer, "the man is deranged! You must have heard of a mad beggar about Whitehaven, who calls himself Sir Sydney Smyth: this is the fellow. I have been foolish enough to give him money, more than once, I believe; and, consequently, he now does me the favour to consider me in the light of an old acquaintance."

"I thought," said Mr. Jackson, "the man spoke in a strangely loud and dictatorial tone.—And so, he is a mad beggar! Well, I have dignified him amazingly: for he presented to my fancy, why, I scarcely know, the poetical idea of Milton's devil, walking in paradise. The spot where I first observed him certainly is equal to any garden of Eden I have ever been able to imagine!" [176]

"The parson is always in the heroics!" whispered Lady Theodosia to her next neighbour, Colonel B—: "the last time I was down here, he could talk of nothing but angels, I remember."

At this moment, the beautiful little twins, now between four and five years old, were ushered in. After speaking to mamma, papa, grandmamma, &c. they took up their usual station, one at each side of Edmund, who helped them to fruit, ice, &c. Indeed he had so many requisitions of attention from both young ladies, and generally at one and the same moment, that he proved himself to have no mean talent for gallantry, in being able to turn with sufficient quickness from one to the other.

"Why, my little pupil will learn to be quite an accomplished ladies' man," observed Mr. Jackson, aside to Mrs. Montgomery. [177]

"Then will the list of his accomplishments be complete!" said our old friend the doctor, who happened to catch the words, though across the table; "for I understand you are teaching him everything—absolutely everything! In short, erecting, on the substratum of ancient literature, an elegant structure, adorned with all the modern additions lately made to science, and inhabited by the muses!"

"Why," said Mr. Jackson, who always answered seriously, however foolish the speech addressed to him; "I could not feel satisfied in communicating to a mind like Edmund's, mere dry learning: he already shows a sensibility to what I call the poetry of nature, and indeed of everything, which quite delights me."

A young lady, beside whom Henry sat speaking at the same time to her neighbour, observed, that the little beau had quite enough to do. "It is not every gentleman who can take as good care of even one lady," she added, with a laugh. [178]

Henry's attention thus aroused, (for something had thrown him into a reverie,) he perceived that the lady's plate was quite vacant. He started, apologized, and now heaped upon it every kind of fruit; making, at the same time, so many pretty speeches, that the young lady began to suspect that love, and that for herself, must have caused his absence of manner. Henry now appeared determined to be quite gay, and even full of frolic: and the young lady, restored to perfect good-humour, seemed highly amused by his efforts.

Edmund, and his two little ladies, were on the other side of Henry; Julia the nearest to him: whenever she looked away, he stole the fruit off her plate; and laughed much, in unison with his young lady, at her look of innocent astonishment, when she turned about; and at her instant application to Edmund, to get her more fruit; which, at the next opportunity, Henry would again steal. At length he was discovered; and Julia, without condescending to remonstrate, turned her shoulder as much as possible to him, and took better care of her plate; which she pushed with both hands quite close to Edmund's. [179]

Henry's young lady, now seized with a strong veneration for justice, insisted on her swain's making restitution of the heap of fruit, by this time collected before her. He, accordingly, slipped his hand over Julia's head, and emptied the young lady's plate on hers. Julia turned round; hustled back from off her own chair, and on to Edmund's knee, supporting herself with one arm over his shoulder; and now, facing the enemy, she took up her plate in her other hand, slid off its whole contents on the table near Henry, still without speaking to him, and asked Edmund to give her more fruit; which he did. [180]

"That is not polite, my dear," observed Lady L.; "why should you throw Henry's fruit away, and take the same kind from Edmund?"

"Because," answered Julia, speaking distinctly, and with an air of importance and decision which amused every one, "I don't love Henry, and I do love Edmund!"

"Explicit, upon my word!" said a gentleman at the other side of the table, who had been all day receiving alternate smiles and frowns from an heiress, to whom he was paying his devotions.

"You love poor Henry, then, I suppose," said that gentleman's fair neighbour to Frances. [181]

"No, indeed!" said Frances; "I hate Henry!"

"And so do I!" said Julia.

The twins always made it a point to be exactly of the same opinion.

"You must not hate any one, my dears," said Lady L., looking grave.

Frances was busily engaged arranging the grey hair of the doctor; and the better to effect her purpose, she was standing on tip-toe on the seat of her chair, with her little arms stretched eagerly across the wrinkled, smiling countenance of the good old man. While Julia, having kept the strong position she had at first taken up on Edmund's knee, was sitting perfectly still.

"How marked at this moment," observed Mr. Jackson, aside to Mrs. Montgomery, "are the distinguishing characteristics of the two little girls! Quiescent," he proceeded, "I should hardly know one from the other: the size, the fairness of the skin, the brilliancy of the red in the cheek, but especially the remarkable quantity of curling, floating, flaxen hair, is so exactly the same in both." [182]

"The eyes," interrupted Mrs. Montgomery, "are a different colour."

"Oh, yes; and in my opinion," said Mr. Jackson, "the dark hazel is the most beautiful eye in the world! Yet, Frances', it must be owned, have many of the poets on their side. Do look," he added, "at the elastic spring of all her movements, and the picturesque air of her every attitude; while Julia's grace is always that of repose, except at the moment of some immediate excitement—I mean, of the feelings, when the colour mounts, the eyes sparkle, and all becomes energetic expression. That little creature will require the greatest nicety of management: her very warmth of heart may lead to a too great vehemence of character." [183]

"She has certainly a most affectionate disposition," said Mrs. Montgomery.

"And her gratitude," pursued Mr. Jackson, "is quite a passion!"

"Well, gratitude can never degenerate into a fault!" resumed Mrs. Montgomery, "and the child is not in the least selfish; indeed, it is always in the cause of something oppressed or injured, that her little spirit rises: a bird, a fly, or I have seen her, after trying to beat Henry, sit down and cry over a crushed worm, that he had refused to step aside to spare."

"She may require the stricter guard," rejoined Mr. Jackson; "for, under the guise, and in the cause of generous feelings, we sometimes permit a warmth of temper to grow upon us, which we should have early subdued, had it appeared with a bare-faced front, and offered to fight our own battles." [184]

The rising of the ladies to retire, here put an end to the conversation.

In a day or two, Lady L.'s expected confinement took place. What were the rejoicings, bonfires, and illuminations, may be imagined, when we say, that the child was, as the doctor had prophesied, a son.

CHAPTER XVI.

 [185]

"Thinkest thou, that he but sleeps?
Long shalt thou wait his awaking."

THE sick nurse ought not to have been asleep. Yet it appears that she certainly must have slept; for when the sound of something like a door shutting made her start forward from the deep, high back, of her easy-chair, she found, not only that her eyes had been shut, but that she had dreamed, what she considered a most remarkable dream. She was our old acquaintance from Edinburgh, and was very superstitious. The dream, and the particulars attending it, were as follows. We shall give them in her own words, as she ventured, nearly thirteen years after, to relate them, under a promise of secrecy, to her countrywoman, Mrs. Smyth, while they sat together at their tea in the housekeeper's room. [186]

"The peur lady," said the nurse, "had fall'n intle a sweet sleep, wi' the baby at her breast. The chamber was dark, exceptin' a dull bit lamp, that was blinking doon on the hearth-stane; for being summer time, there was nae fire. I mysell' was sitting quietly e the great chair; every thing e the hoose was se still, that I amaste thought 'at I could hear the far-aff voices o' the folk, 'at was making rejoicing around the bonfires. My ane mind, you see, being quite easy like; for, nor mother, nor child, could be doing better nor they were doing; I must just ha' dozed a bit; for I begun a-dreaming, tho' I canna' say precisely the purport of my dreams, until I thought I saw Mr. Henry, as plain as I see you, slip on tip-toe, and stop half-way e the middle e the floor. And then, I was se perfect certain, that I heard him ask, in a whisper, hoo Lady L. was; that I meant to reply, 'As weel as can be expected, Sir;' bit tho' I begun working my jaw frae side to side, to strive to get the words oot, it was se stiff it wad na move. I can remember naething maer, till I thought I heard a soond like a watchman's rattle; and then, I thought it was naething bit the crumpling o' a piece o' paper, 'at I dreamed the doctor was taking aff o' a bottle o' medicine. I was sure 'at I saw him quite plain, standing wi' the bottle in his hand, near the table. Nor was I that far gane, but that I kent weel enough, through aw my sleep, 'at I ought tle rise and reach him a glass; bit I had na poor tle stir a limb. I could nae ha' been weell mysell', for it was mere like tle a trance, [187] [188]

woman, nor the common sleep. And then, I thought, 'at to my great surprise, the doctor had the vara face o' Mr. Henry, bit oulder like; and while I was wondering at this, and looking at the doctor, and the doctor, I thought, looking hard at me, the doctor, and the bottle, and the table, and the foot o' the bed-curtain, aw disappeared; and I can remember naething mere, bit a deal o' confusion about being hame again in Edinburgh; until I was wakened ootright, by what I thought at the time, was the shutting o' the door frae the dressing-room intle the gareden. Bit it must ha' been the doctor's rap, for he cam' in amaste immediately. What was vara remarkable was, that after I should ha' dreamed o' seeing yon bottle in the doctor's hand, that there should hae been se mickle said and done about yon vara bottle; and that it should ha' been yon bottle, that I mysell' blamed for every thing! Weel! the doctor he could na get the bit tie undoone; and he sais to me, 'Mrs. Mowbray, will you favour me weth a pin?' I remember it as weel as it was but yesterday. And he said, at the same time, that he never had afore, in aw the hale course o' his practice, used a double knot wi' tying down a bottle, but a'y a single ane, wi' the ends twisted. And then he said, in his curious way, ye ken, as he shook the bottle afoor he poured the medicine intle the glass, that the good lady need na to be afeared to tack it, for that he aye mixed his medicines afoor dinner. And then, he pleased his sell', honest man, wi' laughing a bit at his ane joke. And then he geed the lady the glass; bit yeer mistress, wha had come in soon after the doctor did, and wha was standing at the bedside, just eased the lily-white hand o' the weight, for a moment or twa, while she observed, that as her daughter had had some refreshing sleep, it might no be necessary to gie her a composing draught. Weel, the doctor, he alood his sell', that there was naething like natural rest; bit tho' he was amang the best o' them, he was like them aw, in that particular, he wad hae his ane ill-savoured trash swallowed, right or wrong—and wrong enough it proved. However, the doctor said, that they might depend upon it, it was a maste benign and salubrious mixture; and that having slept se much a'ready, the lady might the mere likely be wakefu' in the night-time, if she did na tack her sleeping-draught. And se, her peur mither, she was over-ruled, and geed her back the glass. And she swallowed the draught sure enough, and slept sure enough, and lang enough, for she never waked more!"

Mrs. Smyth made no reply, for she was rocking herself from side to side, with the tears rolling down her face.

"The doctor, peur old man, he is dead and gane," resumed the nurse, "or I wad na say what I am going to say, even to yoursell', Mrs. Smyth; but I have often thought syne," and here she lowered her voice, "that yon sleeping-draught was stronger nor the hold o' life in her that drank it." Mrs. Smyth only shook her head. "My dream," added the old nurse, after a short silence, "certainly cam' oot, about the bottle; and that's what I blame mysell' for: I should ha' spoken up, and talt the vision; for never did I, nor ony belanging to me, dream o' seeing ony thing, so distinct as I saw yon bottle, that some harm did na come o' 't. And the doctor, too, he was na long for this world, after I dreamed o' seeing his face changed. It's never good to dream o' seeing ony body wi' another body's face."

"Bonfires, indeed!" murmured Mrs. Smyth to herself, as if thinking aloud. "Aye," she added, in a spiritless tone, when aroused to attention by the ceasing of nurse's voice, "it was a particular dream, to be sure. And some of the folk was saying, too, that there was ane seen oot by that night, that keeped be his sell', like the angel o' death. He went near nowther bonfires nor drink, and was seen ne more, when aw was over wi' them within."

CHAPTER XVII.

"He lies beside the dead; at frantic starts,
Kisses the cold lips of Julius."

"At such a moment, piety becomes
The only passion of the soul!"

ALTHOUGH the conversation related in our last chapter, was not, as we have already hinted, held between the parties till thirteen years after the present era, owing to the nurse's unwillingness to confess that she had slept when she should have watched; yet, as the subjects of which it treats, belong strictly to this epoch of our history, we do not consider that we anticipate unjustifiably, in giving the conversation itself the place it now fills.

The melancholy events to which it alludes, divested only of the additions made by superstition, did indeed but too truly, too surely, take place at this period. Lady L.'s infant died at her breast, soon after the closing in of evening had rendered the illuminations for its birth conspicuous; and in less than half an hour she herself expired.

When once the termination of the miserable scene had separated the remaining members of the family, Lord L. could not be prevailed on to see again, even for a moment, Mrs. Montgomery or the children. He lay, day and night, without retiring, on the sofa in his dressing-room, till the funeral was over, and then fled to the continent in a state of mind the most alarming.

Henry, now destined to a naval life, went with him as far as the port where both embarked, though on board different vessels.

Henry, usually so unamiable, had, on the present occasion, greatly endeared himself both to Mrs.

Montgomery and Lord L. by the excessive grief he had evinced. Indeed, his countenance appeared haggard, and expressive not only of sorrow, but almost of despair.

Mr. Jackson was the only person who had conducted any thing like business; not only the family, but the very servants, were in consternation; and even the doctor had been quite unable to give the slightest assistance. He, indeed, from the time that Lady L.'s unfavourable symptoms had appeared, had behaved as if seized with sudden insanity; while life remained, he had continued in the sick room, in a state of uncontrollable perturbation; he had drained or tasted every bottle from which the patient had taken medicine; his hand had trembled to that degree, that he had broken almost every thing he had attempted to take up; he had repeated incessantly the word "No, no, no," beginning with low murmurs, and increasing gradually in quickness and loudness, and again declining into whispers; till, finally, the moment Lady L. had expired, he rushed from the house without hat or cane, and ran till he reached home, while his horse stood in the stables at Lodore.

[196]

It was Mr. Jackson too, who had put all the household in mourning, and who had made the arrangements for the funeral: at which, what was remarkable, was the concourse of the poor, and, perhaps, the unpremeditated part taken by our hero in the solemn pageant; for, when the hearse arrived at its destination, and the body was about to be lifted out, poor Edmund, to the astonishment of every one, was discovered lying across the coffin. He had not fainted; for, when brought into the light, he looked all round him vacantly, and, with a sudden movement, hid his face again.

[197]

Mrs. Smyth had, it seems, some days before shown him the chamber of death, with all its awful circumstances; and on this morning, when dressing him, she had, inconsiderately, given vent to the petulance which often accompanies sorrow, in the following words:—"And its her ain sel 'at brought ye in aff the cald stanes, boy, and tak the wet rags aff ye, and put the warm clothing on ye, and geed ye bread when ye were hungry, boy; its hersel' they're goin' to carry oot the day, and leave her by hersel', in the cald church-yard!"

Edmund made no reply; but soon after this he stole from the nursery, and lingered about the halls. Presently the bearers brought out the coffin; he followed at their feet, and when they lifted it into the hearse, he too clambered up unheeded. But here, no sooner was the hearse closed, and the consequent darkness complete, than the situation into which an impulse of grateful affection had led the poor child, proved too much for his strength. A strange sensation of awe, and worse than loneliness, at once silenced the sobs which had hitherto shaken his frame; the tears, which had been streaming over his cheeks, ceased to flow; his forehead became covered with the cold dew of superstitious terror; he was motionless; his very breathing was suspended; while still the wretched consciousness remained, that his little heart was breaking. And had the funeral not arrived at the church door at the moment it did, most probably either life or reason must have yielded to a combination of feelings so overwhelming.

[198]

[199]

Mr. Jackson also preached the funeral sermon. All he was able to deliver were a few broken sentences of passionate admiration and pathetic regret, mingled with the tender hopes of piety, for the triumphant ones he could not reach.

And now it was painful to witness, even on the outside, the appearance of the late gay Lodore House. All was silent; the very bells were taken off the necks of the sheep that fed on the lawn; no sound was heard, but the uninterrupted murmur of the fall; every window was closed by a blind or shutter; and when any symptom of remaining life was seen, it was, at times, the figure of Mr. Jackson, in deep mourning, both of habit and attitude, leaning against the paling, and looking fixedly at the two little girls, in their little black frocks, walking, one on each side of Edmund, also dressed in black, up and down the gravel before the door, without speaking a word, or deviating from the direct path. If a meal of the children happened to be ready, Mrs. Smyth would come to the door, and preserving silence, beckon them in; then letting them pass her, and following them, look at them, and shake her head mournfully.

[200]

CHAPTER XVIII

[201]

"Am I indeed the cause of this?"

IN one of the streets of Keswick stood an old, gloomy, but respectable house. In this house was a small back parlour, receiving light from a back lane, and surrounded with shelves, covered with bottles and jars; while ranged beneath the shelves were small drawers, on the outsides of which appeared, labelled, the names of every medicine in use. In the midst of this parlour stood a table; on the table stood a number of bottles, with the apparatus for various chemical experiments; and before the table, wrapped in a loose dressing-gown, slippers on his feet, his grey hair uncombed, stood Doctor Dixon. On his face a haggard expression of fear, inverted the lines of harmless mirth which had so often mingled, gleefully, with those of age, on the poor man's features. His step was uncertain, and his hand trembled, as he selected another and another bottle from a shelf, or another paper from a drawer. His whole frame seemed to have undergone a species of dissolution; and all the infirmities of old age, which he had hitherto, with so much gaiety, warded off, seemed to have been suddenly let in upon him. In short, his heart was broken!

[202]

A terrible suspicion had for some days pressed upon his mind; his experiments, his researches,

had failed to throw any light upon the subject; he had not dared to communicate his thoughts to any one. He sat down. At length he exclaimed, "I—I, who should have healed, have I destroyed?" Tears came to his relief. "I am an old man," he said, in a faltering tone, "I cannot live long: would I had died before this had happened!" After a long silence, during which he moved his lips often, and seemed to undergo a powerful inward struggle, he pronounced, with the air of one refusing an importunate request, "Never! never! never!"

[203]

The cruel thoughts which so agonized the poor man's mind were these. From Lady L.'s symptoms, he suspected that her death had been occasioned by poison; every medicine she had taken had been mixed by himself, and here was the distracting thought! Some ingredients in his dispensary must then, he feared, have come to him wrong labelled; and, in mixing these, he must have formed some combination, hitherto unknown in chemistry, which had produced a deadly poison. To decide this point, he made numerous experiments. When every mixture proved wholesome, or at least innocent, and every label seemed rightly placed, he would say to himself. "But, they are dead!" Then, after pausing, and wearying his mind with vain conjectures, he would break forth again: "And the symptoms of both were those of poison, which the babe, doubtless, imbibed with its mother's milk. And I mixed every medicine myself; my own servant took them over; they lay on the table in Lady L.'s own bedroom, till I, with my own hands, administered them, taking care to see that my own labels were upon them! Yet," he added, shuddering, "the dregs in one of the bottles had neither exactly the colour, nor exactly the taste, that I should have anticipated." And whenever this conviction forced itself upon him, he turned cold, and the pulsations of his heart ceased for some seconds.

[204]

[205]

We have seen the doctor completing the last of his experiments. He had reflected for a short time, in dreadful agitation, whether he were not in duty bound to declare his belief respecting the cause of Lady L.'s death to the family. He had decided that the information could only add to their affliction; while the confession, to himself, would be worse than ten thousand deaths! It was at this conclusion he had arrived, when we heard him exclaim, "Never! never! never!"

He destroyed the whole contents of his dispensary, never more prescribed for any one, or mixed another medicine. All observed a general decay, a total failure both of strength and faculties, in their friend, the good doctor. He never smiled again, nor made another pun; and in a few weeks he died, carrying with him to the grave, the dreadful secret, or rather surmise, which was the occasion of his death.

[206]

CHAPTER XIX.

[207]

"He spoke of thee, but not by name."

ABOUT six months after the death of Lady L., Mrs. Montgomery, in looking over papers of all descriptions, which had accumulated on her dressing-table, while she had been unable to attend to any thing, found one, folded and wafered, which had the appearance of a petition. On being opened, however, it proved to be a sort of letter, but vulgarly written, badly spelt, and without signature. It was also without date of time or place. It bore, notwithstanding, in its simplicity, strong marks of truth.

[208]

It professed to be from a person, calling herself Edmund's nurse. Yet it gave him no name but that of the "young mather; or, be rights, the young lord, sure; only he was too young, the crathur, to be calling him any thing, barring the mistress's child." In like manner, it called Edmund's father "the lord," and his mother "the lady," but did not mention the title of the family. The writer asserted, that having laid the child down for a moment, on the grass of the lawn, at a time when the family were from home, it was stolen by a strolling beggar, for the sake of the fine clothes it had on; for, that the "lord and the lady" were, that very day, expected at the castle. That afraid of blame, she had substituted her own infant. That it had been received without suspicion by the parents, who, having been "mostly in London town and other foreign parts," had seen but little of their boy. It then went on as follows:—"A little while after, sure, I seen the poor child, with hardly a tack on him, of a winter's day, in the arms of the divil's own wife, at laste, if it was'nt the divil himself, the strolling woman, I mane, in the big town, hard by. I went up to her, and abused her all to nothing, and offered to take the child from her. And glad enough he was, the crathur, to see me, and stretched out his poor arms to come to me. But the woman, she hits him a thump, and houlds down both his little hands with one of her great big fists, and turns to me, and says, smelling strong wid spirits all the while, (but for a drunkard as she was, she had cunning enough left,) and she says, spakin' low, and winking her eye, like, 'And whose young master is that, dressed up at the castle, yonder?' says she. 'And it's my boy, to be sure,' says I, 'and small blame to me, when you didn't lave me the right one.' 'And are you going to send the right one there now, if you get him?' says she. 'And what's that to you?' says I. And with that, she gives a whistle like, and snaps her fingers afore my face, and thrusts her tongue in her cheek, and begins jogging off. 'And' says I, following of her, 'and what do you want o' the child?' says I; 'and haven't you got the clothes? and can't yee be satisfied? I'm not going, sure, to ax them of yee, and can't yee give me the child! when it's I that 'ill kape him warm, any how, and fade him well too; I that gave him the strame o' life from my own breast,' says I; 'and what 'ud I be grudging of him afther that?' says I. 'Then nothing at all sure, but jist what belongs to him!' says she, 'But the divil a bit of him you'll get, any how; for there's not a day since I've carried him,

[209]

[210]

[211]

that I haven't got the price of a dram, at last, by the pitiful face of him!' says she. 'And for that mather,' says she, 'if any one takes him to the castle,' says she, 'it'll be myself that'll do it,' says she, 'and git the reward too.' 'You the reward!' says I; 'is it for stailing him? It's the gaol's the reward you'll get, my madam!' says I. 'It's the resaver's as bad as the thafe,' says she. 'And it's you, and yours, that'll git more by the job than iver I will. But it's I that'll make my young gintleman up at the castle yonder, pay for his sate in the coach, and his sate in the parler, too, one o' these days,' says she, wagging her head, and looking cunning like. And so it was, to make a long story short, the divil tempted me; and I couldn't think to take my own boy out o' the snug birth he had got safe into; and the divil a bit o' her 'at was worse nor the divil, that 'ud give up the mistress's boy quietly, at all, at all; and so, I was forced, without I'd a mind to tell the whole truth, to say no more why about it, and let her take the poor child away wid her, tho' my heart bled for him. Well, sure, twis every year, she came to the big town, begging, and brought him with her, sure enough; but looking miserable like, and starved like; for it was less of him there was every time, instead o' more. And be the time he was near hand five years ould, she brought him, at last, sure, lainin' up on crutches, and only one leg on him! I flewd upon her like a tiger, to be sure, and just fastening every nail o' me in the face of her, I axed her where the rest o' the boy was. And she tould me, but not till she was tired bateing me for what my nails had done, that the leg o' him was safe enough in the bag. And a dirty rag of a bag there was, sure enough, hanging where the tother leg should be. And jist then, cums by the coach and six from the castle! And up she makes to the side of it, with the brazen face of her, driving the poor cripple before her. And, sure, I see my mistress throw money out to him, little thinking it was her own child, with the one bare foot of him over the instip in mud, and them crutches, pushing his little shoulders a'most as high as his head, and his poor teeth chattering with the could, and the tears streaming from his eyes, (for she'd given him a divil of a pinch, to make him look pitiful.) And there was my boy sitting laughing on the mistress's knee. But he looked quite sorry like, when the little cripple said he was hungry, and he throw'd him out a cake he was ateing. 'Well!' says I, (quite low to myself,) 'that you should be throwing a mouthful of bread to the mistress's child!' And it was for dropping on my knees I was, and telling all, to the mistress herself; but just then, they brought her out a sight o' toys she was waiting for, and she drawd up the winder, and the coach druv off. And the next time the woman cum, she cum'd without him, at all, at all! 'And,' says I, 'the last time you cum'd, you brought but a piece of him, and now you've brought none at all of him!' But she tould me, sure, his fortune was made, and that he was with grand people that 'ud do for him. But I wouldn't believe her, you see, and gave her no pace, any way, but threat'nin' te hav' her hanged at the 'sizes, if I was hanged myself along with her, till she took'd my husband with her over seas, and let him see the boy. And he seen him, sure enough, walking with a nice ould lady, that's been your ladyship, I suppose. And he had his two legs, my husband said, which I was particular glad to hear. And he was getting fat, too, and rosy-like, and was dressed, as the mistress's child (heaven love the boy) should be. And this made my mind a dale asier, for now there was little wrong dun him. [212]

"But, by and bye, troubles came upon me, and my husband died; but, before he died, he thought, and I thought about our sin in regard to the child, and so I made him write down the way to get a letter to your ladyship's hands; and it was a thing that my husband, as he was a dying, seemed to hear to. Well, when I buried my husband, sure, I fell sick myself, and then I begun to think the hand of Heaven was upon me, and I sat up in my bed, and wrote this long letter to your ladyship; which, becouse of what my husband set down for me before he died, I give to one that's going over seas to the harvest, to give to your ladyship's own hand. He'll tell your ladyship all my husband thought it best not to put down in the letter. But just ax him that takes it what is nurse's name, and he'll tell you fast enough, and all about the great folk at the castle. And it's he that can tell that too, for its he that ought to know it, for his father, and grandfather before him, got bread under them, and he might have got bread under them himself, only for his tricks. But no matter for that. He knows no more o' what's inside the letter, than one that never seen the outside of it; and he's sworn too, before the praist, at the bedside of the sick, and may be of the dying, to deliver it safe, for the ase of the conscience of the living, and the rest of the soul of him that's dead. [213]

"And now I have no more to add, but that the young mather (that's him that's with your ladyship this present time,) when he has all, should take it to heart to do for his foster-brother, that's innocent of all harm, and that has larned to lie on a soft bed, without fault o' his, and that throwd him the cake he was aiting in the coach, poor boy, when he thought it was his own, and that may be too.—But no matter for that now: the penance has been done for that, and the absolution has been given for that, and the priest has had his dues. And it's not like the sin that satisfaction can be done for, and that it must be done for too, before the absolution can serve the soul: sich as giving back to the owner his own, or the likes of that; or the setting up of the misthress's child again in his own place, and the pulling down of him that a mother's heart blades for, but that has no business where he is; though it would be hard, for all that, if his father's child should want. But don't be frightening yourself with the thoughts of that, Molly. The young mather, after all that cum and gone, will surely do for him that's his foster-brother, any way; and may be do something for his foster-sister too. [214]

"Why I trouble your ladyship I forgot to mintion, but thim that it concarns most are not to the fore, and, besides, you have the boy.—Your sarvent till death: and that, I think, won't be long now. [215]

"I'm jist thinking, that may be your ladyship would'nt be happy without you'd a boy to be doing for: and there's him, sure, that's up at the castle now, my poor boy, and there isn't a finer boy in the wide world; and if I thought that your ladyship would jist take him in place of the misthress's [216]

child, and do for him, I would die quite aisy."

Thus ended the nurse's epistle.

"I should certainly," observed Mrs. Montgomery to Mr. Jackson, "believe this strange letter to be genuine, from the perfect simplicity of the style, but that the writer appears to be too illiterate to have been any thing so decent as a nurse in such a family as is here described."

"That," replied Mr. Jackson, "does not at all invalidate the evidence of this extraordinary document; for, nurses intended merely to supply the nutriment denied by unnatural mothers to their offspring, must be chosen with reference chiefly to their youth, health, and wholesomeness of constitution; and, in great country families, they are naturally selected from among the simplest of the surrounding peasantry."

[220]

The letter, bearing, as we have said, no date of time or place, the first and most obvious step seemed to be, to inquire very particularly where, and by whom, it had been brought to the house. The outside of the mysterious dispatch was shown to, and examined, by most of the servants, without other effect than a disclaiming shake of the head, although each turned it upside down, and downside up, and viewed it, not only before the light, but through the light, as with the light through, is generally expressed.

Mrs. Smyth, indeed, allowed that, as the bit of a scrawl was vara like a petition, it was no impossible that she hersel' meud ha' just laid it o' the mistress's table; for the mistress, to be sure, never refused tle read ony peur body's bit o' paper, however unlearned or dirty it meud be.

[221]

At length John, the under-footman, made his appearance, and after examining the shape, hue, and dimensions of the folded paper, said, that it was not unlike one which he had taken about six months since from a strange looking man, who had come to the door, requesting to see his mistress, on the very day that —, and he hesitated—that every body was in so much trouble, he added.

Mr. Jackson, seeing Mrs. Montgomery turn pale, took up the questioning of John. And here, lest the said John's powers of description should not do justice to his subject, we shall give the scene between him and the nurse's messenger, exactly as it occurred.

The stranger was tall and well made, with a countenance, the leading characteristic of which was, now drollery, and now defiance; whilst its secondary, and more stationary expression, was equally contradictory, being made up of shrewdness and simplicity, most oddly blended. He carried a reaping-hook in one hand, and, with the other, held over his shoulder a large knotted stick, with a bundle slung on the end of it.

[222]

This personage, on the melancholy day alluded to, arrived at the closed and silent entrance of Lodore House. Disdaining to use the still muffled, and therefore, in his opinion, noneffective knocker, he substituted the thick end of his own stick. This strange summons was answered by John.

"And is it affeard of a bit of a noise you are?" was the first question asked by the stranger. Without, however, waiting for reply, he was about to pass in, saying, "Just show us which is the mistress, will yee?"

The powdered lackey, astonished at such want of etiquette, placed an opposing hand against the breast of the intruder; upon which the stranger, after a momentary look of unfeigned surprise, very quietly laid down his reaping-hook, bundle, and stick, behind him, (for the latter he would not deign to use against an unarmed foe,) then planting his heels as firmly together as though he had grown out of the spot whereon he stood, he cocked his hat (none of the newest) on three hairs, put his arms a-kimbo, and his head on one side; and, his preparations thus completed, with a knowing wink, said, "Now I'll tell you what, my friend, I'd as soon crack the scull of yee, as look at yee!"

[223]

John, even by his own account, stepped back a little, while saying, "You had better not raise a hand to me: for if you do, there are half a dozen more of us within, to carry you to Carlisle gaol."

"Half a dozen!" cried our unknown hero, in a voice of contempt, and snapping his fingers as he spoke, "the divil a much I'd mind half a dozen of you, Englishers, with your gingerbread coats, and your floured pates, for all the world as if you had been out in the snow of a Christmas day, with never a hat on; that is, if I had you onest in my own dacent country, where one can knock a man down in pace and quietness if he desarve it, without bothering wid yeer law for every bit of a hand's turn."

[224]

During the latter part of this speech he turned to his bundle, and kneeling on one knee, untied it, took a small parcel out of it, unrolled a long bandage of unbleached linen cloth from about the parcel, next a covering of old leather, that seemed to have once formed a part of a shamoy for cleaning plate, then several pieces of torn and worn paper, and at length, from out the inmost fold, he produced a letter, which, as he concluded, he held up between his thumb and finger, saying, "There it is now! I mane no harm at all at all, to the misthress; nothing but to give her this small bit of paper, that the dying woman put into my hands, in presence of the priest, and that hasn't seen the light o' day since till now."

[225]

John told him, that if that was all, he might be quite easy, as his delivering the letter at the house was the same thing as if he handed it to his lady herself; for that all his lady's letters were carried in by the servants.

"And is she so great a lady as all that," said the stranger, "that a poor man can't have spache of her? But I've had spache, before now, of the great lady up at the castle, sure, and its twist, aye,

three times as big as that house.”

After some more parleying, in the course of which John disclosed the peculiar circumstances in which his mistress then was, our faithful messenger, after ejaculating, with a countenance of true commiseration, “And has she, the crathur?” at length seemed to feel the necessity of consenting to what he considered a very irregular proceeding, namely, the sending in of the letter; not, however, till he had first compelled John to kiss the back of it, and, in despite of the evidence of his own senses, to call it a blessed book, and holding one end, while our pertinacious friend held the other, to repeat after him the words of a long oath, to deliver it in safety. This, John proceeded to say, he did immediately, by giving the letter to one of the women to carry into his mistress’s room. [226]

“I suppose,” said Mrs. Montgomery, with a sigh, “I must have laid it down without opening, and forgotten it.”

Mr. Jackson observed, that from the expression, “over seas to the harvest,” and also the man’s appearance, it was very evident he must be one of those poor creatures who come over in shiploads from the north of Ireland to Whitehaven, during the reaping season; and that this fact, once admitted, seemed to render it more than probable, that the noble family spoken of were Irish. As to the important particulars of names and titles, there seemed but one chance of obtaining them; which was, to institute an immediate search after the young man who had brought the letter. Every inquiry was accordingly made, but in vain. [227]

After some months, Mr. Jackson himself, in the warmth of his zeal, undertook a journey to Ireland; but returned, without having been able to discover any clue to the business. Advertisements were next resorted to, but no one claimed Edmund. The letter had said, that “those it concerned most were,” in the nurse’s phraseology, “not to the fore.” Whether death, or absence from the kingdom was meant, it was impossible to say. [228]

The harvest season of the next year came and went, but the wandering knight of the reaping-hook was heard of no more; and Mrs. Montgomery, while her better judgment condemned the feeling, could not conceal from herself, that she experienced a sensation of reprieve, on finding that she was not immediately to be called upon to resign her little charge. Poor Edmund had now become to her a kind of sacred pledge; every thought and feeling that regarded him, was associated with the memory of her dear departed child, who had taken so benevolent a delight in protecting and cherishing the helpless being she had rescued from misery, and almost certain death. Could the mourning mother then leave undone any thing that that dear child, had she lived, would have done? The absolute seclusion too, in which grief for the loss of her daughter, induced Mrs. Montgomery to live, gave all that concerned this object, of an interest thus connected with the feelings of the time, an importance in her eyes, which, under any other circumstances, would scarcely, perhaps, have been natural. [229]

Gradually, however, the prospect of discovering who Edmund’s parents were, faded almost entirely away; but the conviction that they must be noble was, from the period of the receipt of the nurse’s packet, firmly fixed on the mind, both of his benefactress and of Mr. Jackson. The style, indeed, of the letter itself, left no doubt of the veracity of the writer; while the manners of him who had been the bearer of the strange epistle, the conversation of the man and woman on the Keswick road, nay, the very state in which the poor child was first found—were all corroborating evidences. [230]

CHAPTER XX.

 [231]

“Thy fame, like the growing tree of the vale,
Shall arise in its season, and thy deeds
Shine like those of thy fathers. But go not
Yet to the bloody strife; for thy young arm
scarce can draw the heavy sword of Artho,
Or lift Temora’s spear.”

“The blue arms of the lovely boy
Invest him, as grey clouds the rising sun.”

LORD L. remembered, and even experienced, something of a consolatory feeling, in faithfully performing the promise which, within the first happy year of his marriage, he had made to his beloved wife, and which had seemed to give her so much pleasure: we mean that which respected placing and advancing Edmund in the navy. His lordship accordingly wrote from abroad to his friend, Lord Fitz Ullin, and Edmund, at the age of twelve, was received into the naval college at Portsmouth. [232]

This was, no doubt, a very wise and proper arrangement; yet there were those to whom it caused infinite grief: we speak of the twins, who, though they had never been expressly told that Edmund was their brother, had learned to love him as such; and whether they really thought he was so, or never thought about the matter, were in the habit, in all their little plays and pastimes, of calling him brother Edmund, and fancying that nothing could be done without him.

His vacations, however, were all spent at Lodore House, and were joyful in proportion to the [233]

sorrows of parting. On the first of those memorable occasions, Mrs. Montgomery absolutely wept over him; Frances frolicked round him, as if obliged to exhaust herself by fatigue, to moderate her transports; while little Julia stood silently, and with a pensive expression, quite close to him; and when, after performing any extraordinary new feat for the amusement of Frances, he would stoop, and ask of his little favourite what he should do for her, she would answer, with a glow of enthusiasm, "Stay always with me!"

He generally brought some tasks home, which were to be learned before his return to college. When he sat at these, Frances would fidget round the table, in visible discontent—stop straight opposite to him, put her head on one side, watch to meet his eye, and make him laugh; failing in this, try to play alone; and finding this also dreadfully stupid, return to the charge; while Julia would get on a part of his chair, hold his hand and remain perfectly still, till the hand was borrowed to turn over a leaf, when she would follow it with an appealing look, which look, being repaid by a fond caress, she would retake the hand, and sit again as motionless as before. At length, poor Lady Frances, infected by the dullness of her companions, would sometimes bring a chair on the other side, and insist on having the other hand, which would reduce Edmund to the necessity of fastening his book open on the table with another book; after which arrangement, we must confess, that, however unjust the proceeding, and notwithstanding the remonstrances of the injured party, it was always the hand which Frances held, which was borrowed to turn over leaves, &c. &c.

But there was something in little Julia's enthusiastic manner of showing attachment, which won upon the affections in an extraordinary degree, and made her almost unjustly the favourite; poor Frances, considering her lively temper, loved brother Edmund full as well, in her own way.

Thus passed two years; and at fourteen, Edmund was appointed to the same ship on board which Henry then happened to be. The vessel was ready for sea, and going on a foreign station, on which it was to remain for three years. Our hero, after joining, obtained a few days' leave, that he might pay a farewell visit to Lodore. Arrived at the last stage of his journey, he stopped at the little inn, and put on his midshipman's dress, which he had brought with him, from a boyish wish to surprise his two little sisters, as he called the twins, now about seven years old. Accordingly, he entered the domestic circle fully equipped, and produced, at least, as great a sensation as his beating heart, while jumping out of the carriage, and hastening across the lawn, had anticipated.

As soon as the first clamorous joy of meeting, as well as the first public examination of every part of his dress was over, Frances possessed herself of his cocked-hat, dirk, and belt, and began arraying herself in the spoils. While Mrs. Montgomery, drawing him near her chair, began to question him as to how long he could now remain with them, and when he thought he should be able to return. Little Julia stood close at the other side of her grandmother, her eyes raised, and passing from one countenance to the other, watching every word. When Edmund answering, that he must leave them early in the morning, and that it would be, at least, three years before he could hope to see them again.

"Three years!" exclaimed Julia, turning as red as crimson for one moment, and the next as pale as death! Edmund took her on his knee, kissed her little forehead, and remonstrated fondly. At length, showers of tears came to her relief; and amid reiterated sobs, she articulated, in broken accents, "No! I cannot bear the thoughts of summer coming three times without Edmund! Oh! I'll hate summer, that I used to love so much!"

"But, Julia! my darling Julia!" said Edmund, "why should you hate summer? You know, I must be far away in the winter also."

"Then I must only hate winter too!" said Julia, as well as her continued sobs would permit; "but you used to come back in the summer."

Meanwhile, the little Lady Frances, quite unconscious of the tragic scene, was standing before a large mirror, at the far end of the room, contemplating her tiny form, surmounted by the cocked-hat, tried on in all the varieties of fore and aft, athwart ships, &c. &c. Now, perfectly satisfied with her own appearance, she advanced on tip-toe, that her height, as well as her dress, might, as much as possible, resemble Edmund's. But perceiving Julia's tears, and being informed of their cause, she flung away hat and dirk, and threw herself into her sister's arms, and joined in her sobs—with a violence proportioned to the sudden transition of her feelings. Nothing could console the little girls, and it being late in the evening, they were obliged to be sent to bed; to which measure, after some demurring, and many last words, they consented, for the purpose of being up very early, as they could not think of an over-night farewell. Locked in each other's arms, and planning to stay awake all night, lest they should not be called in time, they cried themselves to sleep; and, alas! ere their eyes started open in the morning, early as that was, the unconscious cheek of each had received Edmund's parting kiss, and he was already some way on his journey.

CHAPTER XXI.

"The billows lift their white heads above me!"

A FEW days more, and our hero's ship, the *Glorious*, was on the high seas. It was night. Edmund had had the early watch—had been relieved—had retired to his hammock—had fallen into a

sound sleep, and was dreaming of Lodore. Suddenly, his pleasing vision became troubled. A thunder-storm arose; the loud peal rolled, and resounded from mountain to mountain: the little girls shrieked. He started awake! and found the scene indeed different; but the noises which had occasioned his dream, real. The drum was beating to quarters; signal-guns were firing; and all hands hastening on deck. He jumped out of his hammock. The officers were all getting up; the men were casting the great guns loose, knocking away the bulk-heads, and tumbling them, as well as all the furniture of the cabins—trunks, tables, chairs, &c. &c.—pell-mell together, down into the hold, with a tremendous clatter. In short, the ship was clearing for action. She was also tacking to close with the enemy, and her deck, in consequence, was greatly crowded: blue lights burning, rockets going off, sails flapping, yards swinging, ropes rattling, and the tramping of feet excessive; while the voice of the officer giving orders was heard, from time to time, resounding through all. The vessel they were approaching, carried two stern-lights, indicating that a vice-admiral was on board. While all eyes were fixed upon her, she drew near slowly, and on coming up, opened at once all the ports of her three decks, displaying a blaze of lights which, amid the surrounding darkness, had much grandeur of effect, not only dazzling by its sudden brightness, but exhibiting, as it were, in proud defiance, the strength of the broadside, which was thus ready to salute a foe. The vessels now hailed each other, and lo! proved to be both English! The supposed enemy was the *Erina*, Admiral Lord Fitz Ullin, returning from Gibraltar. All hopes of fighting thus at an end, both men and officers were, to use their own expression, “confoundedly disappointed.” [241]

They soon, however, had fighting enough; so much, that to give any account of the various actions they were in, would, we fear, be tedious; and, to those unacquainted with naval affairs, uninteresting; we shall not, therefore, attempt it, but passing over about four years of our hero’s life, proceed at once to his return to Old England, a fine, promising lad, of nineteen—a great favourite with all the officers, and in high estimation with the captain, having already given many proofs of spirit, and being always remarkable for regularity and good conduct. [242]

CHAPTER XXII. [244]

“From ocean’s mist, the white-sailed fleet arose!
First, a ridge of clouds it seemed; but brighter
Shone the sun—and the distant ships stood forth,
Their wet sides glittering in all his beams!”

“Heavens!
Must I renounce honour, reputation?”

As the *Glorious* anchored in Cawsand Bay, in company with a numerous fleet, the animated prospect which presented itself, especially in its combined effect with the state of the atmosphere, uniting a bright sunny glow with a fog, consequently, of a peculiar whiteness, possessed a degree and style of beauty not easily imagined by any one unaccustomed to harbour scenery.

It was the noon of a frosty day: the sun which, as we have observed, shone brightly, gave to the face of the waters the appearance of a sheet of light. The heights around, and all other distant objects, were covered with the smoky veil of white fog, already noticed, which reduced them to shades of the neutral tint; while, on the side of the nearest hill, the clumps of wood and undulations of ground were plainly visible, and along its topmost line some scattered trees stood curiously and beautifully traced against the pale, even mistiness of all behind. In the bay, too, the nearest range of ships, with all the varied and still varying forms of their floating canvass, (for almost all the fleet at this time were employed in furling their sails,) every mast, every cord, each figure standing beneath the picturesque canopy of a sail-boat, or stretching to the oars of a row-boat, were all strongly defined, and appeared, from contrast with the snowy whiteness of the fog behind them, black as ebony; while the more distant vessels, being deeper and deeper sunk in the shrouding atmosphere, were more and more faintly shown, till the farthest seemed but one degree more palpable than the mist itself. The wind, soon after the fleet anchored, died away entirely, and all that had been activity and bustle, changed to the most peculiar repose; as though the beautiful picture, once completed, was left to delight posterity; for nothing now moved as far as the eye could reach, except that, from time to time, a gleam reflected from the flat, wet oar of some row-boat, plying between ship and ship, shot, like a flash of summer lightning, across the still and shadowy scene. [245]

During the anchoring of the fleet, one of the ships, by some mischance, got aground, and all the others were ordered to send boats immediately to her assistance. The task was laborious, and much disorder occurred in the tiers of the stranded vessel, where the sailors, taking advantage of the confusion which prevailed, had broken into the spirit-room, and were regaling themselves with rum. Towards evening, however, with the help of the tide, she was got off the rocks, and the signal being given for the boats which had been sent to her assistance to return alongside their respective ships, Edmund and Henry, with their boats and crews, did not obey the signal with their usual promptitude. Edmund, meanwhile, after going through great exertion the whole day, was still on board the vessel so lately got off, commanding his men in the most peremptory manner into his boat, when Henry observing that he appeared heated and fatigued, and thinking [246]

[247]

[248]

that, at such a time, a very little would overcome one not accustomed to excess, drew towards him a second glass, (for he had been drinking freely,) and filling both that and his own, said, "How heated you are, Montgomery! you will kill yourself, if you don't take something!" at the same time offering him one of the glasses. Edmund answered instantly, and with indignation, that were it but water, and were he expiring with fatigue, it should not, in such a place, and at such a time, approach his lips! Henry stared at him, lifted the glass to his head, and, with a laugh, swallowed its contents. Edmund again remonstrated, and taking Henry, who was by this time very much intoxicated, by the arm, endeavoured to draw him away. Henry staggered, fell, dragged Edmund with him, and at the same time, seizing the handle of a can of spirits, which stood on the cask, trailed it after him, emptying its odoriferous contents on our hero's breast and face, as he rolled with him on the floor. [249]

At this unfortunate moment, a lieutenant, sent in search of the boats and midshipmen, which were missing, entered, and seeing both officers on the deck drenched in rum, two glasses on the barrel-head beside them, the spirit-can in their arms, and, apparently, the object of contention, as they struggled together on the floor while their men stood round them drinking, laughing, and swearing, he very naturally drew most unfavourable conclusions. Edmund, as soon as he could release himself from Henry's grasp, arose; but so much heated, and so thoroughly ashamed of the situation in which he had been found, that he looked quite confused. He attempted to speak, but was silenced, and very harshly repulsed by the lieutenant to whom he addressed himself, who told him, with an air of the utmost contempt, at the same time holding a handkerchief to his nose, that while he smelt of spirits in so disgusting a manner, it was impossible to listen to him. [250]

Our hero reddened with indignation, and repaired to his boat without further attempt at explanation, not doubting, however, that he should be able to justify himself ultimately. Henry was obliged to be carried to his boat, and thus did all return to the ship. The necessary report being made to Captain B., he was so much incensed, that he sent an order for both young men to quit the ship in half an hour, directing that, with their sea-chests beside them, they should be left on the nearest beach, to find their way home as they might.

Edmund begged to be heard. The captain refused, sending him word that it was impossible for him to permit gentlemen to remain in his ship, who had disgraced themselves by carousing among the common sailors. There was then no longer a hope! He must get into the boat. He did so; and, as they pushed off, another boat, in which sat a midshipman, (a stranger to Edmund,) passed them, and then ran alongside the ship, taking up the position they had just quitted. [251]

The sun, a moment before, had dropped below the horizon. Edmund folded his arms, sighed, and resigned himself to his fate; then rested his eyes almost unconsciously on the scene before him. The water in the bay was still as a frozen lake, its face one sheet of cold transparent light, marking, by contrast, the pitchy darkness which twilight had already imparted to the hills that rose around it, and to every opaque object laying or moving on its peaceful surface. Perpetual, though imperceptibly wrought changes were each moment taking place in every thing around. The clouds near the horizon breaking, the still illumined western sky shed awhile a brilliant ray: the clouds closed again, and left all darker than before. The trees on the western hill stood for a few seconds strongly defined by the parting beam; then faded with the fading light. Some of the larger vessels, more lately arrived than the rest of the fleet, with majestic progress passed slowly to their places of anchorage. Single-masted boats, (warned by the approach of evening,) one by one drew smoothly towards the shore, changing, as they did so, at each moment, the disposition of their sails; and, finally, taking all down as they came to for the night under shelter of a projecting point. Alongside the same point, numerous row-boats, having shipped their oars as they drew near, fell silently; while the single figure that had guided each, might shortly after be traced wandering homeward along the extended beach. [252]

When the boat in which our hero sat had gone about twenty yards, they were hailed from their own ship, and desired by the officer of the watch to lay on their oars till further orders. Some time of anxious suspense followed, during which the approaches of night were as rapid as they were silent, and all objects were visibly shrouding themselves in that mysterious gloom which imagination loves to people with shadowy forms, when the flash of the evening gun was seen from the admiral's ship, followed by a report which, with startling effect, broke upon the universal stillness, then rolled along like distant thunder up the harbour. As the last sound died away, they were hailed again, ordered to come alongside, and Mr. Montgomery to come on board. Our hero obeyed the order, and was not a little surprised, on reaching the deck, to find all the ship's company assembled there. In a few minutes, the captain and officers, preceded by lights, and accompanied by the strange midshipman who had passed the boat on its first quitting the ship, ascended the hatchway, and arranged themselves on the quarter-deck. Edmund was ordered to draw near. He did so; when the captain, addressing the stranger, in a tone which showed he wished to be heard by all present, said, "Lord Ormond, will you have the goodness to repeat, in the hearing of my officers and the whole ship's company, the deposition you have made to me respecting Mr. Montgomery." [253]

The stranger, a mild-looking lad, about Edmund's own age, came forward and said, that he had been in the tiers of the stranded vessel, calling off his own men, when Mr. Montgomery came in to collect his; that his attention had been fixed by that gentleman's very proper conduct, which he here explained minutely, dwelling on our hero's effort to rescue Henry; and his declaration, that were the beverage but water, he would not, for example sake, suffer a glass to be seen approach his lips, &c., till he came to where Edmund was pulled to the ground by the fall of Henry. He then proceeded to say, that he himself was about to go to his assistance, when, seeing the officer who came in search of both young men enter, he had hurried to his own boat, it being [254]

late.

Here the captain again spoke, saying, that as all had had reason to believe Mr. Montgomery's conduct disgraceful, he had deemed it necessary that all should be thus publicly informed of his innocence, as well as made sensible of his, the captain's, sufficient reasons for so sudden a change of measures towards him. He then turned to our hero, and expressed himself as highly gratified, to find the favourable opinion he had formed of his character thus justified. Captain B. here renewed the order to have Mr. St. Aubin immediately sent a-shore. [256]

The stranger, Lord Ormond, who was the son of Admiral Lord Fitz-Ullin, got himself presented to Mr. Montgomery; and Edmund, anxious to express his gratitude, requested his new acquaintance to tell him by what fortunate circumstance he had become his deliverer.

"If any one deserves that title," answered Ormond, "it is my father. I fear I was rather negligent in not remaining to assist you; but I had been already detained much too late. In my own justification, I described the scene I had just witnessed, and the consequent interest I could not avoid taking in what was passing; when, happening to say that the other gentleman called you Montgomery, my father repeated the name, and, after considering for a moment, exclaimed, 'Why, that is the name of Lord L.'s young friend! If it be the same, he must be in the Glorious, Captain B., which came in this morning with the Cadiz fleet.' I mentioned about what age you appeared to be; upon which my father started up, saying, 'I could almost venture to affirm, that that young man has got into a serious scrape! You had better, Ormond,' he continued, 'go instantly on board the Glorious, present my compliments to Captain B., and recount all you witnessed of the business.'" [257]

Before the young men parted, Ormond gave a message, of which he was the bearer, inviting Mr. Montgomery to dine with Lord Fitz-Ullin on the following day. [258]

CHAPTER XXIII.

 [259]

"A vision came in on the moon-beam."

HENRY, left on the beach, with his chest beside him, slept heavily for some hours. When he awoke it was night. He lay on the shingles. He felt the fresh breath of the breeze, as, from time to time, it lifted the hair on his fevered temples. He heard the dash of each billow as it struck the shore, and the rattle of the loose stones, as each wave retired again, down the extended sloping bank of smooth pebbles, on which his head was pillowed. Thinking it all a dream, he remained for some moments motionless; when, becoming more clearly awake, he sat up, and passed his hand across his eyes, as it were to rectify their vision. [260]

The moon had risen over the expanse of waters before him. He gazed on the sparkling of her myriad beams, mingling in fairy dance o'er all the solitary waste, for not a sail or mast appeared. He looked on his right hand, and on his left; here too all was loneliness!

His ideas still bewildered, he rested his eyes on the pillar of light, which the bright orb exactly opposite to him, and still near the horizon, had flung across the whole ocean, planting its base at his very feet. On a sudden this dazzling object became obscured, and he beheld, standing over him, and intercepting its refulgence, the same remarkable figure which, it may be remembered, Mr. Jackson had seen walking with him, about eight years since, in the shrubbery at Lodore House. [261]

CHAPTER XXIV.

 [262]

"The darts of death,
Are but hail to me, so oft they've bounded
From my shield!"

"No boy's staff his spear!"
"No harmless beam
Of light, his sword."

THE next day, according to appointment, Edmund went to dine on board the Erina. Arriving rather early, he found Lord Fitz-Ullin alone in his cabin, reading a newspaper.

His lordship received our hero with the greatest cordiality, saying, he was happy to have it in his power to show any mark of attention, however trifling, to the young friend of Lord L.; "particularly," he added, smiling, "as my office of patron is, I understand, to be quite a sinecure, I am the more called upon to discover minor modes of proving my friendship. You have already, I am informed, Mr. Montgomery," he continued, "by your gallant conduct, so far cut your own way, that you are to receive your commission immediately, without any interference on my part. But, remember, my interest is only laid up for the first occasion on which it may be required, when you shall command it in a double proportion." [263]

Edmund was commencing a speech of thanks, but was prevented by Lord Fitz-Ullin, who said, "By the bye, Ormond is going up to the next examination, which will take place in a day or two. Had you not better go with him? You can then pass, and be made, without any unnecessary delays; and, if you have no objection to sail with me, we can have you appointed to the Erina on your promotion." [264]

Edmund was delighted with this arrangement; and, as he smiled, and made his grateful acknowledgments, and even when he had concluded, he observed Lord Fitz-Ullin's eyes resting on his features with a lingering expression of interest which surprised him, and therefore made him look grave. For a moment or two Lord Fitz-Ullin continued to gaze at him, as if waiting for something; and then, with an air of disappointment, sat down, and resumed his newspaper.

Ormond entering, and joining Edmund, the young people conversed with animation, but apart, that they might not interrupt the admiral's reading. Edmund, however, saw that the newspaper was little regarded, and that Lord Fitz-Ullin's eyes were generally turned on his countenance. He felt rather embarrassed by so strict a scrutiny, but contrived to maintain the appearance of not noticing it, except that he coloured a little. [265]

Lord Fitz-Ullin rose, came forward, and joining them, asked Edmund if he thought Ormond like him.

"I have scarcely ever seen a likeness so strong as that of Lord Ormond to your lordship," answered Edmund.

"Such is the general opinion," said Lord Fitz-Ullin; "but it is a stationary likeness, consisting in feature. What a fascination there is about that gleam of resemblance, found only in expression, which comes and goes with a smile, particularly when the likeness is to one who has been dear to us, and who no longer exists! We wait for it, we watch for it! and, when it comes, it brings momentary sunshine to the heart, and is gone again, with all the freshness of its charm entire, the eye not having had time to satisfy itself with a full examination into its nature or degree." [266]

Letters were at this moment brought in, and the admiral opened one, which he excused himself for reading, saying, it was from Lady Fitz-Ullin. The entrance of the rest of the company now diversified the scene, and dinner soon followed.

During the remainder of the day and evening, the intimacy between our hero and his young friend, Oscar Ormond, such was Lord Ormond's name, made rapid progress; and both the lads looked forward, with equal pleasure, to the prospect of Edmund's being appointed to the Erina.

There was an innocent openness about the manners of Oscar Ormond, proceeding from perfectly harmless intentions, which, to one so young as Edmund, and, himself of a disposition peculiarly frank, was very attractive. In Oscar, however, this winning quality, never having been cultivated into a virtue, had remained a mere instinct, and was even in danger of degenerating into a weakness—we mean that of idle egotism. While Edmund's native candour, equally, in the first instance, springing from an honest consciousness of having no motive to conceal a thought, had, during that earliest period of education, so vitally important, been trained and sustained by the skilful hand of Mr. Jackson; and, therefore, already was accompanied by undeviating veracity on principle, and a consequent firmness of mind, worthy of riper years. This gave our hero an ascendancy over his young friend, which might be said to have commenced at their very first interview; and which, in their after lives, frequently influenced the conduct of both, though neither, perhaps, was conscious of its existence. [267]

CHAPTER XXV. [269]

"Pleasant to the ear is the praise of kings;
But, Carril, forget not the lowly."

At this time there was no passing in any sea-port, but before three captains. Oscar and Edmund, therefore, proceeded to town. The anxious hour, big with the fate of many a middy, arrived. The friends, accordingly, having already got through their first examination with success, now wended their way to the great centre of naval hopes and fears, to answer such final queries as it might be judged necessary to put to them. Entering an ante-room, they approached a standing group of youngsters, who, probably, had not much interest to smooth their path, for their conversation chiefly turned on subjects of discontent. One, whose name was Bullen, and who had once been a messmate of Ormond's, seemed to be chief spokesman. He was growling at the additional difficulty which, he asserted, there was now every day in passing. "A young man might know it all well enough aboard," he said, "but to have a parcel of old-wigs staring a fellow in the face, and asking him puzzlers, why, it was enough to scatter the brains of any one of common modesty!" [270]

"If that is all," said one of his companions, for middies are not ceremonious, "there is no fear of you, Bullen: your modesty will never stand in your way!"

"I hope not," answered Bullen, "nor any thing else, if I can help it. At any rate, I should be sorry to be quite so soft a one as Armstrong! Only think," he continued, turning to Ormond, "only think of that foolish fellow Armstrong! One of the old-wigs asked him (saw he was soft, I suppose) the simplest question in the world, just to try him. Well, old-wig stares him in the face, and looking [271]

devilish knowing, says, 'Suppose yourself, Sir, in a gale of wind on a lee shore, the ship in great danger of going on the rocks, when, the wind suddenly shifting, you are taken all aback, what, Sir, would you do in this critical juncture?' Instead of answering, 'Clap on sail, and put out to sea,' poor Armstrong took it for granted he should not have been asked the question if it were not a puzzler, and was so confounded, that he looked like a fool, and had not a word to say, till the old-wigs themselves were all obliged to laugh out."

At this moment Bullen was sent for to attend the said old-wigs, as he called them; and though he still tried to bluster, he coloured to the very roots of his hair at the awful summons. On his return, however, he came laughing and swaggering, and bolting into the midst of the still standing group, he seized a button of Ormond's coat with one hand, and of Edmund's with the other, and began to tell his story. [272]

"Have you passed? have you passed?" cried many voices.

"Have I passed!" repeated Bullen. "There is no difficulty in passing."

"I thought it was very difficult, a short time since," observed Ormond.

"Well, well—so it may be to some: I found no difficulty, however. But listen till I tell you the fun. They thought they had got another Armstrong to deal with, I suppose; for one of the old fellows, looking as wise as Solomon, and as pompous as the grand Mogul, turned his eyes full on me, and began. I felt mine inclined to take a peep at my shoe-buckles; but, mustering all my courage, I raised them, stared straight in his face, clenched my teeth, drew my heels together, thus, and stood firm. [273]

"'Well, Sir!' said old-wig, 'hitherto you have answered well.'—This was encouraging. 'Now,' he continued, 'suppose yourself on a lee shore, under a heavy press of sail, the wind blowing such a gale that, in short, it is impossible to save the ship, what, Sir, would you do?'

"'Why, let her go ashore and be d——d!' I replied. Then, thinking I had been too rough, I added, with a bow, that I should never take the liberty of saving a ship which his lordship judged it impossible to save. He smiled, and said I had a fine bold spirit, just fit for a brave British tar! So I sailed out of port with flying colours, but no pennant, faith: I heard nothing of my commission. [274]

"After all," he continued, "what is the use of passing, when, if a man has not the devil and all of Scotch interest, and all that stuff, he don't know when he'll get made; but may, in all probability, be a *youngster* at *forty*! a middy in the cockpit, when he is as grey as a badger! There's a fellow aboard of us now, who jumped over three times,—no less,—to save boys who fell over the ship's side, and couldn't swim; (he swims like a fish himself;) but he's not Scotch! Well, the captain wrote word to the Admiralty; and what reward do you think they gave him? Why, employed one of their sneaking under *scratchatories* to write an official line and a half, importing, that 'their lordships were pleased to approve of his conduct.'" [275]

"You may depend upon it," replied Ormond, to whom Bullen chiefly addressed himself, "that his name is marked for promotion, as soon as a convenient opportunity offers."

"Convenient!" interrupted Bullen: "it would be devilish convenient to me, I know, to be made just now."

"And in the meantime," continued Ormond, "what can be more gratifying than the approbation of the respectable heads of the department, under which he serves his country?"

"I think," said our hero, whose opinions, like himself, were young, and therefore unsophisticated, "the lords of the admiralty do but justice to the motives of British officers, when they deem approbation the first of rewards! I mean, of course, in a public sense; considering their lordships, in pronouncing that approbation, as the organs, not only of government, but also of the nation, on naval affairs; of which they are constituted the judges." [276]

"Besides," said Ormond, "you forget how many men, in the British navy, have risen to the highest rank, without any interest whatever, entirely in consequence of meritorious conduct."

"That was long ago," replied Bullen sulkily. "But it's very easy for you to talk! You, the son of Admiral Lord Fitz-Ullin; sure of whatever you want, and want nothing neither! Aye, aye, that's the way of the world! I wish you'd make your father get me my commission, I know!"

The other young men looked at each other, and smiled.

"Well," said Ormond, laughing; "do something very brilliant to deserve it; and if the Admiralty give you approbation only, I pledge myself you shall not want interest. Here is my friend, Montgomery," he added, turning to Edmund, "saying not a word; and yet, so just a sense have their lordships of his merits, that he has no use for interest, though he possesses it in the greatest profusion." [277]

"Does he faith?" exclaimed Bullen, "I wish he'd give it to me, then!"

Here all laughed out. And now Lord Ormond was summoned. He went; and, in due time, returned with rather a conscious smile on his countenance.

"Well!" cried Bullen. "Well!" echoed a dozen voices at once. "Well!" repeated Ormond; but proceeded no further.

Edmund began to question his amused-looking friend somewhat anxiously, as to how matters stood; and whether there was really any difficulty, to one who knew what he was about. [278]

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Ormond, laughing out at last, "the only question they asked me, was—But I'll not tell you—guess!—all guess!—I give you fifty guesses!"

Every puzzler which had been conned by any of the party, was now proposed and rejected, in turn; at first, with much of loud merriment; subsiding, finally, however, into grave wonder; for unguessed riddles are apt to grow dull.

"I am sure I can guess no more," said Edmund at last. "Tell!" cried one. "Tell!" cried another. "Can't you tell!" vociferated Bullen.

"Well," said Ormond, "do you all give it up?"

"Yes!" "Yes!" "We all give it up!" "We all give it up!" answered many voices eagerly. And the circle drew itself closer round him.

"Well, then," proceeded Ormond, "they asked me how"—and here he hesitated and laughed again. [279]

"How what?" cried Bullen. "How what?" "How what?" "How what?" cried all.

"How my father was!!!" concluded his lordship, trying to look grave.

"No!" exclaimed every voice at once.

"I told you how it would be with you," cried Bullen.

"But you are not serious?" demanded Edmund.

"But I am, faith!" answered his friend.

"And they asked you nothing else?" pursued Edmund.

"No," said Ormond—"but, yes, they did, by the bye; they asked me to take a glass of wine, and a bit of cake."

"And you passed?" demanded Bullen.

"I did," replied Ormond.

"And are to have your commission, I suppose?" [280]

His lordship answered in the affirmative.

Our hero was now summoned. He met with a very flattering reception; and, after a respectable examination, was informed, that his commission should be made out immediately. He had also the satisfaction of being expressly told, that he was thus early promoted, to mark their lordship's approbation of his gallant and meritorious conduct, as reported by Captain B. How different this from being turned out of the ship in disgrace! thought Edmund.

CHAPTER XXVI. [281]

"Behold! the red stars silently descend
High Cromla's head of clouds is grey."

"Towards Temora's groves rolls the lofty car
Of Cormac."

WE next find our hero, wrapped in a large boat cloak of blue camlet, lined with scarlet plush, and seated on the top of a mail coach; which, with more regard to expedition than to comfort, travels night and day towards the north. His anticipations were all of unmixed delight.

With what fixed attention would his darling Julia, and even the restless Frances, listen to all he had to recount!

How much gratified would both Mrs. Montgomery and Mr. Jackson be, to find, that by endeavouring to follow their wise counsels, he had obtained the approbation of those best entitled to judge of his conduct. And this, to Edmund, was no trifling source of happiness. [282]

Then, what an important personage must his promotion render him in the eyes of every one! What joy would Mrs. Smyth evince, on seeing him return safe, and grown to be a man too! for such, at little more than nineteen, he already thought himself. Even one glimpse of the gleeful countenance of the old bargeman, who had the care of the pleasure-boat on the lake, appeared in the far perspective of busy fancy. Or, perhaps, this was a sort of vision; for it was one of the last things he could remember to have seen pass in review before his mind's eye, when, over night, he had begun to nod on his perilous throne. The hour was early, the morning bright, when the mail set him down where the road turns off to Lodore House. [283]

He almost ran the rest of the way, and quite breathless entered the dear haven of all his wishes, not by the common approach, but, as had ever been the custom of his childhood, by one of the glass doors which open on the lawn.

Breakfast was laid; the urn and hot rolls, evidently but just brought in, were smoking on the table: yet, a general stillness prevailed, and the room seemed without inhabitant. Edmund's heart, which had been beating with violence, stopped suddenly: he drew a longer breath, and felt even a kind of relief; for the intensity of expectation had arisen to almost a painful height while he crossed the green and stepped over the threshold.

Advancing a few paces into the apartment he cast an eager look all round; and, in a far window, [284]

descried his darling little Julia sitting alone; her eyes fixed on a book—her lips moving, apparently learning a task. She looked up, and, not quite recognising the intruder, the first expression of her countenance was alarm. He spoke. Her colour mounted till a universal glow spread itself over neck, face, and arms; not from bashfulness, for she was not quite thirteen, therefore too young for such a feeling; but from that extreme emotion peculiar to the enthusiasm of her temper.

Edmund forgot to throw off his boat-cloak, and enveloped the elastic fairy form of his little favourite in its uncouth folds; while she clung round his neck and sobbed for a considerable time before she could speak to tell him how glad she was to see him, and how much she loved him still—though he had staid such a long, long time away!

Mrs. Montgomery, preceded by Frances performing pirouettes, now entered. They had heard nothing of Edmund's arrival: the old lady, therefore, was much overcome. She embraced him, and wept over him; for his idea was ever associated in her feelings with that of her lost child. Frances, after a momentary pause, sprung into his arms, exclaiming, [285]

"It's brother Edmund! it's brother Edmund!"

Our hero, meanwhile, swinging about in his boat-cloak, looked rather an unwieldy monster amongst them.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Montgomery, "why don't you take off that great frightful muffle? I want to see what you are like!"

Edmund looked down at himself, laughed, and flung off the cloak, declaring he had quite forgotten it. Mrs. Montgomery now contemplated, with visible pleasure, his figure, become, from its height and proportions, almost manly, without losing any of that air of elegance, which, from childhood, had been animate grace of Edmund's: then, pointing to an ottoman close beside her chair, she bade him sit down; and, putting on her spectacles, for the shedding of many tears had dimmed her sight, she kindly stroked back the hair from his forehead, and examined his features. Julia stood close at her other side, holding her other hand. Frances was off to publish the joyful tidings to good Mrs. Smyth and the rest of the household; by singing at every bound, "News! news! news!—Brother Edmund is come! brother Edmund is come!—News! news! news!" [286]

After dropping a few large tears in silence, Mrs. Montgomery said, mournfully,

"My poor child was quite right. She always prophesied how handsome you would be, when I used to say you were all eyes and eyelashes. Now, I am sure, they are just in good proportion. She used to admire the forehead, too; and the form of the mouth; and the sweetness of the expression. Yes, yes! she was certainly right." [287]

And she looked at him as though he had been a picture, without the slightest compassion for his blushes.

Edmund, willing to turn the conversation from himself, said,

"Pray, ma'am, is it not generally thought that Julia will be very beautiful? Did you ever see any thing like the brilliancy of her colour?"

"Yes, it is very bright," said the old lady, "a sign of health, I hope."

"And as to her smile," proceeded Edmund, "I have always thought it the sweetest thing in nature! even in her nurse's arms I can remember being delighted with it; when the darling used to stretch out its little hands to come to me!" [288]

And he looked, as he spoke, into the full, uplifted, liquid eyes of his little, listening favourite, with a thrill of tenderness, but too prophetic of the future.

"There! look how she blushes!" he continued, collecting the quantity of fair hair which hung around her neck, and playfully strewing it again over her shoulders.

"I think her beautiful, of course, my dear," answered Mrs. Montgomery; "but I am partial, you know: and so indeed are you. You began to love her, I believe, on the very evening she was born! I shall never forget how carefully you supported the baby's head on your little arm as you sat on this very table, I think it was, and asked leave to kiss her."

"And was my presumptuous request granted, ma'am?" asked Edmund, laughing, and drawing little Julia kindly towards him, as though he had some thought of repeating the presumption of which he spoke; but she now began to twist her head away, blush, and look half angry: for little girls of her age, though, as we before observed, too young to be bashful, are very apt to be furiously modest. [289]

"Certainly, my dear," replied Mrs. Montgomery: "you were but six years of age, you know, and poor Julia there, not an hour old at the time."

Her voice here faltered, her tears began to flow again, and her head shook a little; an infirmity she was able to suppress, except when much moved. Julia, who knew the symptom well, stole her arms round her grandmamma's neck, and tried all the little coaxing ways which she had long found the most effectual on such occasions of mournful recollection.

“What tho’

No chiefs were they; their hands were strong in fight:
They were our rock in danger; in triumph,
The mountain whence we spread our eagle wing!”

LET those who are fond of dramatizing their ideas, picture to themselves the scene opening, and displaying the wardroom of the *Erina*; its centre occupied by a long breakfast-table, at which a number of the officers are already ranged.

Our hero enters, and takes his seat among them for the first time, having joined but the night before, just as the ship was getting under way.

Thus situated, he feels a very natural curiosity to observe what his new messmates are like. He looks around him accordingly; and every face being equally strange to him, he begins to amuse himself, by wondering at the manifold and ingenious contrivances of nature, to make such variety out of the old materials, of eyes, nose, and mouth. [291]

One gentleman sat eating an egg with great solemnity; his elongated countenance, resembling one seen on the back of a table-spoon, held up the long way; while his next neighbour smiled on a roll, with a face that seemed reflected from the same part of the same utensil, turned the cross way. The next, a portly gentleman, looked as though he had stowed away, preparatory to the long voyage, good sea-store of claret in his cheeks, nose, and double chin. The next to him, as spare as Don Quixote, had a countenance the colour of a blanket; while the hollow of his cheeks, which he had ingeniously endeavoured to fill, by encouraging the growth of his whiskers, resembled excavations in a disused quarry, where tangled brambles had long been permitted to flourish undisturbed. One of the good-looking sat next; and the eye that was going the circle of the table, found agreeable rest, for a moment, on his oval countenance, adorned by a healthful complexion, fine eyes, and chesnut-brown hair. Next to him appeared a bluff-looking fellow; his face deeply pitted with the small-pox, and of a dark-red colour, relieved only by the sooty black of beard, hair, eye-brows, eye-lashes, eyes and whiskers. His neighbour had a merry face, of a lighter and brighter red, with the exception of the forehead, which was high, open, and brilliantly white, skirted by a thick forest of red hair; while a vigorous growth of whiskers, of the same colour, stood on each plump cheek, like underwood on the side of a hill. [292]

Nearest him, sat a tall gentleman, whom our hero, on a further acquaintance, considered handsome; for he had a fine fresh skin and colour, a well-set mouth, good teeth, a high nose, and large blue eyes; but the rise on the nose was placed so much too high up, that it gave a ludicrous air of mock pomp to the whole countenance; while the eyes, peculiarly round, opened with that species of stare, which looks as though the cravat were tied too tight; and the cheeks, that seemed to have been plumped by practising the trumpet, wanting, alas! the sheltering grace of whiskers, but too much resembled, save in their hue, very large apple dumplings. [293]

After thus scanning the faces of so many good fellows, brave and jovial, though not, at first sight, perfect beauties; our hero’s wandering eye arrived, at length, at a vacant seat, before which was placed a plate, carefully covered. At this seat and plate, he observed many of the party looking, from time to time, with various knowing winks and smiles, accompanied by glances directed towards a door, leading from one of the cabins. The said door opening shortly, admitted a perfect personification of Sir John Falstaff. [294]

“Mr. Barns, our chaplain,” whispered Edmund’s neighbour. Our hero felt uneasy: he saw, at a glance, that Barns was the butt of the mess; and it was not accordant with his habits, to make a jest of the sacred office, be it held by whom it might.

Mr. Barns rolled towards his seat; placed himself upon it, and as he settled in it, seemed to spread with his own weight. He made a sort of grunt, intended for the morning salutation; then, stretching forward his arms, a certain protuberance of chest and abdomen, not permitting a nearer approach of the rest of the person to the table, he touched lightly, with the fore-finger and thumb of both hands, the cover; when, finding that he was in no danger of burning himself, he raised it. His countenance had begun to fall a little on finding the cover cold; but now, aghast, his under jaw hung on his double chin; while the tongue, spread and slighted protruded, rested on the under-lip; for, lo!—the plate contained but atmospheric air, and Mr. Barns was not used to feed on the camelion. [295]

He clapped down the cover, which, during his first astonishment, he had held suspended; and, leaning back in his chair, said, in a surly tone;—“Come, come, gentlemen; this making a jest of your chaplain, and that on Sunday morning too, is not very becoming, let me tell you! What must this gentleman, who is a stranger, think of such behaviour? I am very good-natured, sir, you must know,” he added, looking towards our hero, “and these gentlemen presume upon it.” Edmund bowed assent. [296]

“I hope, Mr. Barns,” said the claret-faced gentleman, by name Warburton, “you mean to make your sermon to-day at least one minute the shorter, for this extempore lecture. Ten minutes, you know—we never listen after ten minutes; but promise, on the faith of a true divine, that you will not this day exceed nine minutes, and you shall have the real broil, that the steward is keeping hot without.” Mr. Barns’ countenance became less severe, when he heard that there actually was a real broil!

“Nonsense! nonsense!” he said; “but, there, call for the broil, or it will be too much done: a broil is not worth a farthing without the red gravy in it!” [297]

The broil was called for accordingly.

"You are a man of honour, Barns," continued Warburton; "remember the conditions: the sermon is not to exceed nine minutes this morning, or ten on any future occasion."

"I don't know that I shall preach at all to-day," said Barns.

"Not preach at all!" echoed the gentleman with the high nose, making his eyes rounder than before.

"But, why? but, why?" demanded various voices.

"I don't think the day will suit," said Barns, taking his eye from the door for a moment, to glance it at the windows.

"You are always too timid of the weather, Mr. Barns," observed Mr. Elliot, the long-faced gentleman: "a moderate sermon, such as Warburton spoke of, no man can object to. Those things, in my opinion, should not be entirely neglected, were it but for the sake of example to the youngsters and ship's company." [298]

"Example!" repeated Barns; "that's all very proper ashore, sir; and no man set a better example to his flock, when on terra firma, than I did; but I have no idea of being made an example of myself, in the fullest sense of the word, by having my pulpit blown over board, as might be the case, were it erected on deck without due regard to the weather, Mr. Elliot."

"Nay, nay, Barns!" interrupted Warburton, "there can be no danger of that, when you are in it!"

"I don't sail without ballast, I grant you, sir. But here comes the broil!" said Barns. [299]

The bluff gentleman, Mr. Thomson, asked the steward, as he entered, how the day was on deck.

"Very fine, sir."

"Will it do for the pulpit?" asked Mr. Jones, the red-haired gentleman.

"The pulpit is erected already, sir, by order of the captain," replied the steward.

"I thought," said Jones, aside, "this no preaching was too good news to be true."

"Why," asked Edmund, aside also, for Jones sat next to him, "is Mr. Barns's preaching so very bad?"

"No—yes—I don't know, faith!" answered Jones.

"Have you never heard Mr. Barns, then?" again asked Edmund.

"Oh, a thousand times!—That is—but you see, I never listen to prosing: it's a bad sort of thing, I think. In short, I generally box the compass, or something of the sort, to amuse myself. It's the best way, in my opinion," he added, "never to think at all!" [300]

"There you are quite wrong, sir," observed Mr. Barns, catching the last words as he wiped his mouth, having finished his broil; "for spiritual food is as needful to the soul, as our common nutriment is to the body: and inasmuch as that body thrives best, which is best nurtured, so will that soul, which is best instructed!"

"That argument, from Mr. Barns, is certainly conclusive," observed Mr. White, the thin gentleman.

"White," whispered Jones to Edmund, "thin as he is, eats more than Barns does!"

All now repaired on deck, where, it is reported, that Mr. Barns's presentiment proved but too well-founded; for, that while he was preaching, a most unexpected squall came on a sudden—took hold of the ship—gave her one thorough shake—and laid her on her beam-ends; and, that all being in confusion, the men in crowds running forward with the ropes to shorten sail, &c. &c., it was some time before he, Mr. Barns, was missed, and that when he was missed, while one talked of lowering a boat down, and another ran to look over the ship's side, it was Mr. Montgomery, who at length discovered him, feet uppermost, in the lee scuppers, where the first reel of the vessel had tumbled him, with the heavy cannonade slides, and what not else besides, heaped on top of him. [301]

Edmund very soon perceived, that this unbecoming levity of his messmates on sacred subjects, had much of its origin in the character of the admiral himself: for Lord Fitz-Ullin, though a man of so much personal dignity, that in his own manners he never offended against outward decorum, had, unfortunately, no settled principle on religious subjects—no happy conviction, that moral obligations, with all the thousand blessings that flow from them, have but one pure and inexhaustible source, in that simple, practical religion, which the universal Father gave his children to promote their happiness, temporal as well as eternal; that religion which saith, "Do unto others, as you would that they should do unto you;" that religion, which for every possible duty, hath a plain, practicable precept, which if followed by all, would realize the bliss of heaven even upon earth. [302]

But Lord Fitz-Ullin had been disgusted, by frequently, during a considerable portion of very early life, being compelled to hear the irrational railing of a fanatical preacher against good works. The man might have meant right, but he knew not how to express himself; and Lord Fitz-Ullin, unable to adopt his doctrine, such as it met the ear, without further examination, rejected, or at least thenceforward neglected, all religion. Something of this was felt, if not seen, by those who looked up to the admiral, as to a man older than themselves—a man at the head of the honourable profession to which they had devoted themselves—and a man, as eminent in brilliancy of courage and talent, as in rank, both hereditary and acquired. The mischief done, therefore, bore proportion to the extensive influence which those shining qualities and exalted circumstances [303]

bestowed on their possessor.

With respect to his lordship's choice of a chaplain, being blameably indifferent on the subject, he had appointed Mr. Barns, on the application of a friend, without any regard whatever to his fitness or unfitness to fill the situation. Our hero, notwithstanding, found his patron both a kind and most agreeable friend; and one, whose partiality to him daily increased. Lord Fitz-Ullin had been, all his life, in love with glory; in Edmund he recognized much of the same spirit, accompanied, too, by all that romance and enthusiasm of youth, so delightful to those, who, having retained such feelings longer than the usual period, find little that is congenial in the minds of people of their own age. [304]

"I wish, Montgomery," said the Earl, one day that Edmund dined with his lordship, "I wish you could inspire Ormond by your example—he is so indolent. I fear," he continued, "I have given him bad habits: he has always, in fact, been sure of whatever he wished for, without the slightest exertion on his own part." [305]

"Why, yes," said Ormond, playfully; "you know, sir, I am aware that I shall be an admiral one of those days, without taking any trouble about the matter."

"Oscar," said his father, "remember, that though you may attain to rank by interest, you can never obtain glory, but by deserving it!"

"Have I not the glory of being your son, sir!" replied Oscar, smiling.

"I have not even a name by inheritance!" thought Edmund; "I, therefore, must endeavour to earn one."

As intercourse continued, and friendship grew, Edmund saw in his young friend daily evidences of a heart overflowing with every amiable and generous sentiment; also, a high sense of honour—worldly honour, we mean, which had been carefully inculcated by his father. [306]

Of any other standard of right, Oscar Ormond had little or no idea. The predominant weakness of his character, was an idle degree of vanity about his rank—the consequence of the early lessons of his nurse. This uneducated and ill-judging woman, with whom he was too much left, used carefully to give him his title from infancy, always telling him what a grand thing it was for him to be a lord already, when there were so many big men, who would never be lords! Yet, strange to say, Oscar was, as we have seen, devoid of ambition in his profession, to the infinite regret of his father; but he had got it into his head, that his own hereditary rank was something much greater than any thing that could be acquired, and also, that all future steps would come, as all past ones had done—as mere matters of course. The natural consequences of his exalted birth! [307]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

 [308]

"Doest thou not know me?"

A FEW days after the fleet under the command of Lord Fitz-Ullin had arrived on its station, the Glorious, Edmund's old ship, joined, and making the usual signal for a lieutenant from each vessel at anchor, our hero, as officer from the Erina, went on board. While receiving the salutations of his former friends, his attention, as well as theirs, was arrested by the appearance of a boat, which was falling alongside, and in which, if they could believe their own eyes, they beheld, in the shape of a lieutenant, Mr. St. Aubin. [309]

Henry came on board. All his old messmates collecting round him, demanded clamourously how he had got out of the scrape in which they had left him.

"Scrape!" repeated Henry, in a contemptuous tone. "The best thing that ever happened to me; I might have been a poor devil of a middy, down there in your confounded cockpit yet, but for it!"

"Why, d— it," said Walton, "if I thought they would make me a post-captain for it, I would get drunk to night! but tell us how you got made, man, after our throwing you out, like spare ballast, on that rascally beach at Plymouth?"

"Why," answered Henry, "I waited upon the first lord of the Admiralty, and informed him that I should prefer being a lieutenant to remaining a midshipman: upon which his lordship very politely gave me the commission I now have the honour to hold." [310]

"Yier taste was sae vara uncommon, sir!" observed the Scot, "that his lordship did na care te balk ye?"

"Precisely so, sir," said Henry, with a bow.

"But, joking apart, Henry," said Edmund, "do tell us how it happened."

In fact, the friend Henry had met with at Plymouth, but whom he did not name even to Edmund, had informed him that Lord L. was just returned to England on business connected with his diplomacy, and was at that time actually in London. Henry had set out that night for London, waited on Lord L., and, without any mention of his being in disgrace, said that his time being served, he had hastened to town to secure, if possible, his promotion while his lordship was on the spot. Lord L., accordingly, taking Henry with him, made his application in person. The commission was granted so immediately, that the business was concluded before Captain B.'s [311]

report, respecting Mr. St. Aubin's unofficer-like conduct, had reached the Admiralty. Lord L., however, highly resented the trick thus put upon him, and declared himself determined never again to use any interest of his on Henry's behalf. And in this resolve he persevered.

CHAPTER XXIX.

[312]

"Through the wide heaving of the strife,
Are the strides of Fingall, like some strong ship
Cutting through wintry seas. The dark tumbling
Of death, the gleams of broken steel, mingle
Round him; the waves of war part before him
And roll along the field."

Now followed that most brilliant era of our naval history, which confirmed to the British flag its supremacy on the world of waters! Lord Fitz-Ullin had the good fortune to command in some of the greatest, and, in their results, the most glorious engagements of the period: and, in each of these, Edmund distinguished himself. Lord Fitz-Ullin consequently made such creditable mention of our hero's name in every account he sent home, that, after being about two years in the *Erina*, he was appointed to fill an Admiralty vacancy, as commander of the *Desdemona*, a sloop-of-war, on the same station.

[313]

Shortly after, another general, and to the English successful, engagement took place. On this occasion the services of the vessel commanded by our hero proved so important, that when the glorious affair was drawing to a close, Lord Fitz-Ullin appointed Edmund to the command of a post-ship, the *Euphrasia*, a very fine frigate which had that day lost her captain.

"The vacancy is one which I am entitled to fill," said his lordship, as he signed dispatches in which the name of Captain Montgomery again stood conspicuous: "and were this not the case," he continued, "I could have no doubt of the Admiralty confirming such an officer. Oscar," he then said, turning kindly to his son, "I am sorry to leave you behind, my boy; but I cannot, even in a public point of view, pass over merit so distinguished as Montgomery's: and, you know, Oscar, you have never taken the trouble of doing more than the mere routine of duty required. In short, I have never been able to make you fond of the service. Yet you shall have the very next ship, though it is thus I have ever spoiled you. I have made every step too easy," he added, after a moment of silence.

[314]

"I know it, sir," replied Oscar: "you have always been kind and indulgent." Then turning to Edmund, and shaking hands with him, he continued, "Montgomery well deserves his promotion, and I am the first to give him joy of it."

"Well, Oscar," said the earl, "you certainly have a good heart; and that, after all, is, perhaps, the first of good qualities."

[315]

In the next three years, every newspaper was emblazoned with the brilliant deeds of the gallant Captain Montgomery! We need scarcely add, that each such newspaper was, with proud enthusiasm, read aloud by Mr. Jackson at Lodore House; and, by the quiet home circle there, listened to with the liveliest interest. An immensity of prize-money also had, from time to time, been shared by the fleet; and Edmund having been one year a commander, and nearly two a post captain, his proportion of the various sums so shared was very considerable, amounting, in all, to upwards of fifteen thousand pounds.

Henry, whose advancement had, as we have seen, received a check, happened to be lieutenant in the *Euphrasia*, when our hero was appointed her captain.

CHAPTER XXX.

[316]

"Their eyes roll in search of the foe."

THE *Euphrasia* was detached from the fleet, with instructions to cruise in the Archipelago, and look out for, capture, sink, or otherwise destroy, a formidable Turkish corsair, which had lately committed great depredations. On making the little island of Patras, every speck which the face of the water presented was accordingly examined with more than usual eagerness. In a few hours the words, "A sail! a sail!" were heard from aloft, and echoed throughout the ship. All hands were summoned, and the vessel crowded with canvass.

About six o'clock, it being then sun-set, they had approached near enough to the stranger for Edmund, with the assistance of his glass, to ascertain that she was a frigate of the largest description, standing towards them under a press of sail. He gave orders accordingly to clear for action; but the wind decreasing, and the night closing in, they lost sight of the enemy for a considerable time. About nine o'clock, however, they beheld much nearer, but imperfectly seen in consequence of the darkness, a vessel evidently manœuvring to gain the weather-gauge of them. They soon found that she had failed in this attempt; upon which they observed her stand

[317]

off a little, and show great indecision, making signals, burning blue lights, and, at intervals, firing guns. About ten o'clock a flash, which preceded its report longer than usual, was observed in a different direction; and, immediately after, a second large sail was discovered bearing down, as if to join the first.

Edmund and his officers, having no doubt that this was the consort of the ship with which they had been about to engage, held a short consultation, as to the propriety of giving battle to so unequal a force. It was, however, unanimously decided, that they should confide in the superior courage and seamanship of British sailors, and commence the attack forthwith. [318]

The plan to be pursued was, if possible, to separate the enemy, in such a manner as to be subject to the fire of one only of their vessels at a time; but this was very shortly discovered to be impracticable, for at the moment the moon, which had lately risen, shining out from behind a range of thick clouds, near the horizon, with sudden splendour, the expanse of waters, the distance, nature, and movements of the enemy—all, in short, which had been obscure or doubtful, was at once presented to the view; and the two strangers were seen to close with each other, and shorten sail, at the same time displaying their sable flags and crescents. [319]

All this was clearly discernible with the naked eye from the deck of the *Euphrasia*, and placed it beyond a doubt, that the vessels in question were Algerine corsairs.

Edmund gave orders to run his ship in between the two Turkish frigates, that he might thus, if he must receive two broadsides, at least have one for each in return. Having succeeded in gaining this position, and being within pistol-shot of both ships, he opened his two broadsides at once, with a fire so destructive, and so much better sustained than that of the enemy, that, in less than an hour, one of the Turks had lost her main and mizen masts, and the other, being much shattered in the hull, put her helm up, for the purpose of boarding. Our hero, perceiving this, had the guns on the quarter-deck loaded with grape shot and musket balls, in place of the usual charge; and thus prepared, waited, with perfect coolness, till the Musselmen, armed with battle-axes and cymetars, and uttering hideous yells, had nearly filled the lower rigging, into which they had leaped from that of their own ship, and whence, in another second, they would have descended in hordes on the forecastle and gangway, when, giving the signal, the whole of the thus loaded ordnance was discharged full upon the barbarians, and with such effect, that multitudes of bodies fell at one and the same instant; while turbans rolled along, appearing, in the partial light of the moon, like so many heads severed at the same moment from so many trunks. Such as descended alive, were instantly charged by the pikemen and marines; while the few who escaped, being cut down, fell over the ship's side into the water, in attempting to regain their own vessel. [320]

The *Euphrasia* herself, having by this time lost all her masts, and in other particulars sustained much injury, the three ships ceased firing, as if by general consent; the Turks making every effort their crippled condition would permit, to get clear of the English frigate. [321]

Hostilities were now therefore suspended for some hours, which hours were employed by our hero, in causing all hands to work with such unexampled diligence in making temporary repairs, especially erecting jury masts, that, in that short time, they had effected so much, as to be again able to work the ship, and once more to attack the enemy.

The two Turkish frigates lay at a little distance, like logs on the face of the water; unable to move from the relative situations into which they had drifted during the cessation of the battle, and too much separated to afford each other any assistance. It was therefore with as much dismay as astonishment, that they beheld the *Euphrasia* approach one of them, take up a raking position within pistol shot of her, and open a well-directed fire. This was but feebly answered by the Turks, who, little expecting a renewal of the combat before daylight, were not prepared to fire more than one or two of their stern chasers with any effect. Stubborn, however, and desperate to the last, they continued to fight with musketry, till their decks were heaped with dead and dying; when, their captain, losing all hope of escape, snatched up a lighted match, and brandishing it in a species of mad triumph, ran with it to fire the magazine. At this point the frantic valour of this remnant of a crew forsook them: they cut down their captain ere he could effect his desperate purpose, cried for quarter, and struck their colours. [322]

Edmund now made sail towards the other frigate. She had already lost the greater part of her crew, being the vessel which had boarded: she could therefore make scarcely any resistance; and, seeing the fate of her consort, she struck her colours, after firing but one or two guns. [323]

The object for which Edmund had been detached being thus happily accomplished, he rejoined Lord Fitz-Ullin as quickly as possible, taking with him his two disabled prizes; both, notwithstanding, valuable frigates. He was received, as may well be imagined, with loud cheers from the crews of all the vessels in the fleet.

Thus did our hero, in less than five years from the date of his last visit to his friends at Lodore, see himself, at the early age of four-and-twenty, risen to the rank of post-captain, possessed of prize-money to a large amount, and crowned with laurels so gallantly won, as to render his name known and respected in every part of the world to which a newspaper could find its way.

"HERE, Alice, bairn, here, tack it fray me; and mind ye, mack it light and flecky, like to the leaves o' a reading buke," cried our old friend, Mrs. Smyth; who stood up to her elbows in flour, and up to her eyes in business, in the housekeeper's room at Lodore House; "and mind ye dinna pit the raspberry in 'till the puffs be mair nor half baked; or it 'ill be bubbling o'er, and spoiling the edges o' the pastry. Bless me weel, sich a fuss! Ye mun mind a' the'e thing soon bairn. I'm no used till them noo, and, indeed, I'm getting auld. Nell, woman! rin, will ye, till the ice-hoose, there's a canny wife! and see if yon jelly will turn oot yet. What will come o' me, if the jelly will no turn oot affoor dinner-time! Maister Donald," said she, to the butler, who had just entered, and who was a countryman of her own, being one of the old Scotch establishment, "hoo cum ye on? As for my auld head, it's fairly bothered: we are no used to such doings o' late years, Maister Donald!"

[325]

"Vara true, Mrs. Smyth," said the butler, "it's thirteen years, I believe, sin we have had to say, reg'lar coompany in this hoose."

"Aye, thirteen years," rejoined Mrs. Smyth, "and some three or four weeks, it is noo sin that awfu' neght, (and here she turned to Lady Arandale's woman, who sat beside her,) when the hale country roud was shining wi' bonfires and illuminations; for every ane at had a pane o' glass, woman, pit a candle in't, till the bonny smooth lake yonder fairly glittered! I mind it as weel, as it had been but yestereen—bit, affoor the lights o' joy were put oot, him, for the birth o' whom they were lighted, and her, wha gave him birth, baith lay dead! Aye, cauld corses they were, afoor ever the embers o' the bonfires had ceased to reek!" Here a few tears fell from the eyes of poor Mrs. Smyth; for the present bustle had brought that which preceded the melancholy event to which she alluded, fresh to her mind.

[326]

"It was a sair blow, in truth!" said the butler; "and sairly did the mistress take it to heart; and wha could blame her?"

"It's time, however," replied Mrs. Smyth, "that the peur lasses, wha were o'er young to ken ony thing about the loss o' their mither, peur things, should see a little o' the warl, and ha'e some youthfu' divartions. They are baith i' their eighteenth year noo," she added, again addressing the stranger; "and if they dina ha'e their sport, peur things, a wee while, afoor they git a gliff o' the ills o' this mortal life, they'l set little count by dancing, and the like, by and bye! Bit here comes Nell wi' the jelly! That's right—my mind's easy noo! Come awa, will ye, Maister Donald, and look o'er the things wi' me: I's feard for my life, at I shall forgit someot at's maist material."

[327]

CHAPTER XXXII.

[328]

"Like sounds that are no more, past is Erin's
Strife; and Ingall is returned with his fame."

LORD Arandale, the eldest brother of Mrs. Montgomery; his lady; their daughter, Lady Susan Morven; their son, Lord Morven; and a nephew, Colonel Morven, had all come from Scotland, on a visit to their relative, and a tour to the lakes.

Mrs. Montgomery, in compliment to these friends, and also for the purpose of affording some little society to her hitherto secluded grand-daughters, had determined, though she never would herself go out again, to see company at home, as before the death of Lady L. In pursuance of this plan, a large and gay party was now assembled in the drawing-room of Lodore House, awaiting the important summons to that very dinner which we have just seen Mrs. Smyth so anxiously preparing. There was also to be a dance in the evening, to which all the neighbouring families for many miles round were invited.

[329]

Julia, now about eighteen, according to the account given us in the last chapter by Mrs. Smyth, was endeavouring, for the whim of the thing, to learn from Lady Susan Morven, the Scotch pronunciation of the words of "Auld Lang Syne," of which she was playing the accompaniment on the harp; Mrs. Montgomery and Lady Arandale were seated on a sofa, engaged in conversation; Lord Arandale was talking politics in a window with Mr. Jackson; Frances, Lord Morven, and Colonel Morven, were standing near the harp, laughing at Julia's attempts at Scotch; and the rest, in various groupes, were exerting their patience, or their wit, to pass away the time till dinner.

[330]

"That is not right," said Lady Susan, "can't you say it as I do? We twa ha'e climed aboot the hills."

Julia recommenced accordingly; "We twa ha'e climed"— The unfinished sentence died away on her lips, her hands ceased to move on the strings, she arose slowly from her seat, stood some seconds motionless as a statue, her colour mounting gradually, then darted past Frances and the gentlemen. They turned to look after her, and beheld her standing in the centre of the room; her hand in that of an extremely handsome young man, in a travelling dress. The stranger appeared to be about four-and-twenty, but was strikingly like the picture of a lad, some three or four years younger, which hung over the chimney-piece.

In short, it was Edmund. The fleet had returned to England; the Euphrasia wanted repairs, that must require some months for their completion; and our hero had availed himself of the

[331]

opportunity thus afforded him of visiting Lodore House—setting out without even delaying to write; and while the carriage in which he had arrived, was driving round, he had entered the drawing-room, according to his old custom, from the lawn, by one of the open glass doors. He had been dazzled by the unexpected sight of a large company in rooms so long devoted to mourning and quiet affections, while the first distinct object which had fixed his eyes, (guided possibly by certain sweet sounds,) was the glittering pillar of a harp, the chords of which, were vibrating at the moment in harmony with the tones of a mellow, yet almost infantine voice. A step more, and he beheld, seated at the said harp — impossible!—it cannot be!—yet it must be, his darling little Julia that was, but transformed from the child she had been when he last saw her, into a seeming woman of perfect beauty, nay, almost majesty; for Julia was not only tall of her age, but as fully rounded as symmetry would permit. She was dressed too, preparatory to the ball of the evening, in a much too fashionable full-dress (she had not yet arrived at choosing for herself) sent from town by a fashionable milliner, who wished to send also a long bill.

[332]

It was this artificial costume, in fact, though Edmund was not aware of its power, which had, at first sight, added years to Julia's apparent age, and inspired our amazed hero with absolute awe of his former playfellow. In the crayon drawing he had of both sisters in one frame, (full-length, age thirteen,) they wore each a frock, without flounce or tucker, and their fair hair loose on their shoulders.

While lost in astonishment, he gazed, yet saw in the well-remembered expression of the soft hazel eyes, so often raised to his in the undisguised fondness of childhood; but it was indeed the same Julia; a vivid recollection of their last meeting in that room, on that very spot, and of the boat-cloak, in the folds of which he had then, without hesitation, wrapped his little favourite, as he clasped her to his heart, presented itself most inopportunistly, to his imagination. Now the very retrospect seemed presumption; yet the years that had intervened, were to memory but as hours; while the pressure of the soft hand, which kindly returned that of his, did not at all tend to the regulation of his already confused ideas. Nor, indeed, had he any leisure whatever afforded him for such an undertaking; for Frances, as soon as she had turned and seen the cause of Julia's emotion, had flown towards him; and Mrs. Montgomery, on hearing Frances' exclamation of —“Oh, grandmamma, here's Edmund!” had called him to her; and Mr. Jackson, on catching the same sounds, had left Lord Arandale and his politics, and hastened to greet his young friend. In short, he was surrounded in a moment, and overwhelmed with rejoicings, questionings, congratulations, and, finally, introductions; being presented, in due form, to Lord and Lady Arandale, and all the family party.

[333]

[334]

The low growl of the gong, preceding its fearful bellowings, was now heard; and Mrs. Montgomery reminded our hero, that the ten minutes it usually sounded was all the time he would have to make his preparations for dinner. He retired accordingly, and changed his travelling dress for one more suitable to the occasion.

On his return to the drawing-room, Julia was still engaged playing Scotch airs, and learning the pronunciation of the words. Without being conscious of the direction he gave his steps, he went as directly towards her, as though he had been the bearer of a message which he was about to deliver. He stopped short, however, when arrived within a pace or two of the harp, where he remained standing. Julia continued playing, but performed very badly; for she was wishing to speak to Edmund in the kind manner that every recollection of her habitual feelings towards him dictated. She had never, on any former occasion, found the least difficulty in expressing those feelings. What an awkward thing it is, she thought, to meet an old friend, after a long absence, before so many strangers!

[335]

She returned in a playful manner to the song of “Auld lang syne,” for the sake of the reference the words have to old times, and old friends; but, when she looked up, very innocently, intending, as a sort of friendly welcome, to enforce the application by a kind smile, and met the eyes of Edmund fixed upon her, she looked down, blushed, felt an undefined uneasiness as if she had done something wrong, and did not venture to look up again; though she said to herself, “It is only Edmund!”

[336]

Edmund's gaze was so continued, that Mrs. Montgomery asked him if Julia was much more grown than he expected.

“Yes, ma'am—oh, no!” answered Edmund. “That is, I always thought—that Julia—but—but” — He coloured and stammered.

“I always thought, myself, she would be tall,” said Mrs. Montgomery; “but you think her more grown than you could have supposed, perhaps?”

“Yes—ma'am—yes—I do,” he replied, glad to be spared the task of translating himself.

Dinner was at this moment announced; and, the next, Edmund heard the words:—“Lady Julia L., allow me——” pronounced by Lord Morven, who, at the same time, presented his arm to Julia. She accepted it, and the couple fell into the rear of the battalion, marching towards the dining-room. Edmund felt an odd sort of sensation, which he did not wait to define, but, offering his arm to Frances, who was busy, declaring that she wanted but half an inch of Julia's height; he followed with her, and, on taking his seat at the table, between her ladyship and Lady Susan Morven, found himself placed opposite to Julia and Lord Morven.

[337]

[338]

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Thou, fairer than the spirit of the hills,
And blooming as the bow of the shower,
With thy soft hair, floating round thy beauty
Thus, like the bright curling mist of Cona,
Hast thou no welcome for Fingall?”

THE likeness between the twins had nearly disappeared. The uncommon colour of the hair, indeed, blended of flaxen and light brown, with the luxuriance of its growth, and the peculiar golden lustre received by the curls when the light shone on them, was still the same in both sisters. The fairness of the skin, too, was much the same; but the rest will require separate portraits.

Frances' colour was not quite so brilliant as her sister's; yet it was, at once, lively and delicate, and came and went, in a slight degree, at every movement. Her blue eyes sparkled, almost continually, with unmixed delight. Her mouth was small, pretty, and peculiarly flexible, every moment escaping from any attempt at gravity, into smiles and laughs of various degrees, displaying the white, small, regular, pearly teeth. Her figure was slight and light, to a sylph-like degree, and so frequently seen in the active pursuit of some medium of pleasure, or means of mirth, that had her picture been taken in any attitude that did not indicate passing, that did not keep the beholder in constant dread of its disappearance, it would not have been like. [339]

Julia's figure was perfectly formed, taller than her sister's, and, as we have before observed, as fully rounded as symmetry would permit; her neck and shoulders particularly fine. Her characteristic attitudes were those of graceful quiescence; yet, when she did move, it was with a freedom from effort, that preserved unbroken that dignity of carriage, for which, young as she was, she was already remarkable. She had an air too of quiet composure, equally beyond her years; though in this Julia was, unintentionally, a hypocrite, her seeming stillness of manner being the result of a conscious depth of enthusiastic feeling, sedulously concealed by extreme timidity, yet so pre-occupying her entire nature, that trifles had no power to excite, even in their due proportion. Her colour, as well as Frances', came and went, but seldomer, and on greater occasions; and then its rising was more gradual, as if a silent effort to avoid the exposure of emotion had delayed, though it could not prevent, the blush. Nay, from the moment it did dawn on the cheek, it continued heightening, till it arrived at a painful degree of intensity, and then was as slow in retiring. Her mouth was perfectly formed, the lips fuller than her sister's, but only sufficiently so, to give an additional luxuriance to her beauty; while her smile had a witchery about it, that no man whatever could behold with entire composure. Her nose was straight, her eyes hazel, their habitual expression softness; but, when she listened to any thing that interested her much, they assumed an eagerness of look, so enthusiastic, so natural, that it was at such moments her character was best understood. [340] [341]

At the dinner table, around which we left our party placing themselves, Edmund happened to be, as we have already noticed, seated facing Julia and Lord Morven. Thus situated, our ill-starred hero felt a fatal desire to watch the countenances and movements of his opposite neighbours. He did so, as closely as politeness would permit.

Lord Morven, in the course of conversation, observed (aside) to his companion, that Captain Montgomery was a very handsome fellow; and then talked (but still in an under tone, to avoid being heard by him who was the subject of his remarks,) of how gallantly he, the said captain, had behaved in his professional character; how highly he was esteemed by Lord Fitz-Ullin, &c. [342]

A gradually spreading smile lit up every feature of Julia's, as she listened.

Edmund, it may be remembered, had long ago said, that he had always thought Julia's smile the thing in all nature the most beautiful to look on! He now thought so with more fervour than ever, but with less pleasure; for he now envied Lord Morven, each of whose supposed soft whispers seemed to be welcomed by the growing brightness of that smile, and by the corresponding glow that grew with it on the cheek, where sparkling dimples momentarily came, and went, and came again. And then, without distinctly determining why, he suddenly began to think of the vast disparity of birth, and consequent place in society, between himself and Julia; while some busy fiends seemed to press on his notice the exact suitability of Lord Morven's rank and circumstances, in every particular. [343]

Julia made some observation to his lordship.

Edmund's eyes rested on the motions of her lips while she spoke; and (strange flight of fancy!) he, at this critical moment, called to mind an ancient family legend, which asserted, that eighteen years since he had actually kissed those lips—those very lips! Eighteen years! nay, five years since, could he not himself perfectly remember having, as a matter of course, on his arrival, kissed little Julia most affectionately; while those white arms, which now dazzled his sight across the table, had hung around his neck. He wondered if she remembered it, and what she thought about it, if she did. He supposed such a salutation would now be considered very strange—indeed quite improper, quite impertinent, even had they not met before so large a company. He wondered too, how little consequence he had attached to the circumstance at the time, though he had always idolized her as a child, from the enthusiastic fondness she had always shown for him. Did any of that feeling still exist? How well he could remember her insisting on sitting close beside him, with a hand of his in both of hers, and her full eyes raised to his, to watch his every look. Unlucky recollections! for, in efforts of the imagination to identify the Julia so remembered, [344]

with the Julia now before him, he nearly lost his dinner. He rejected and accepted, in the same breath, whatever was offered him; allowed the plates that had each, for a limited time, stood before him in due succession, to go away almost untouched; and when rallied by Lord Arandale on his want of appetite, and asked whether he had left his heart with some foreign fair one, or eat luncheon, he replied, that he had made an excellent dinner. When, however, convicted of having scarcely tasted any thing, by the united testimony both of Frances and Lady Susan, who had hitherto only suppressed their laughter, for fear of awaking him from his reverie, he changed his ground of defence, said he was too much fatigued to eat, and called for wine and water.

[345]

Mrs. Montgomery feared he was ill. He declared he was perfectly well, and helped himself largely from a fluted shape of jelly just set down before him; the elegant form of which he thus cruelly defaced, without the slightest consideration for all the anxiety it had cost good Mrs. Smyth.

On the gentlemen repairing to the drawing-room, Edmund, who entered the apartment immediately after Lord Morven, saw his lordship go forward and take up a lover-like position, leaning on the back of Julia's chair. Frances and Lady Susan were at the pianoforte, singing a duet. Our hero, who thought that under the circumstances he must not approach Julia, as, after his so recent return, had else been natural, possessed himself of a sort of neutral ground between the parties, where he stood listening to, or intending to listen to, the music. His attention, however, was much disturbed by observing the confidential manner of Julia and Lord Morven, and the interest with which they seemed to converse. He had certainly no intention of becoming a listener; nor, for some time, did a single word alarm his sense of honour by reaching his sense of hearing.

[346]

At length, during a diminuendo passage in the singing, he distinctly heard Lord Morven say, "We can spend a couple of years abroad while the building of our new house is completing."

And Julia's sweet voice reply, with perfect complacency,

"That will be rather agreeable than otherwise."

Edmund's heart beat to such an excess that he could scarcely breathe; but he resolutely moved to a greater distance: the duet, too, having just concluded, the final symphony began to thunder away, drowning all other sounds, so that, for the present, he heard no more.

[347]

When the music had ended, however, Frances sent him (for by that time he was standing by the pianoforte) to request that Julia would sing. He went towards her accordingly; but before he could draw her attention, her head being turned back over her shoulder speaking to Lord Morven, he was in a manner compelled to hear her say:

"Remember, the promise I have given is only conditional; my father's consent, of course, must be obtained, before I can be considered to have formed an engagement of so serious a nature."

Edmund, confounded, uncertain whether he ought to retreat or speak immediately, stammered out her name. She looked round with a sort of start, and blushed. He hastened to relieve her embarrassment by delivering his message; but so confused were his own ideas, that he could scarcely find words in which to make himself understood. When at length he succeeded in doing so, Julia declined singing: her alleged reason was, that dancing, she believed, was about to commence. Music, at the same time, striking up in an adjoining apartment, the company, in general, directed their steps towards the inspiring sounds.

[348]

"She is going to marry him!" thought Edmund, as he moved unconsciously in the same direction with those around him.

He next began to think, would there be any use in asking Julia to dance, and to fear that, of course, Lord Morven had already done so, when he heard a stranger behind him say:

"I suppose Lady Julia L. will commence the dancing with Lord Borrowdale;" and at the same moment he saw a young man of very fashionable appearance go towards Julia, and lead her to the head of the room. He turned towards Frances, whom next to Julia he loved; but, just as he reached her, she took the arm of Lord Morven, and moved on. Edmund now gave up all thoughts of dancing, and stood with his arms folded, watching every movement of Julia's. His thoughts adverted, with strong emotion, to his boyish days, when he had ever found Lodore House in quiet seclusion; when his return thither seemed to be considered as an event; when neither of his little sisters, as he called them then, seemed to have a thought, a wish, an amusement, or a happiness, that was not found in his society. But the scene was changed; his play-fellows were become women, were surrounded by men of their own rank in life; while the affection, which he had hitherto freely declared for them, and which he, who had no other friends, still fondly felt for them, now seemed, even to himself, a sort of presumption.

[349]

The sisters, with their respective partners, stood opposite couples. Lord Borrowdale took Julia's hand, and, leading her forward, left her beside Lord Morven, and returned to his place. Lord Morven took her hand: Edmund thought lords very disagreeable sort of people. Lord Morven proceeded to lead both sisters forward, then all three fell back to the position they had left: and Lord Borrowdale, coming forward alone, figured before them, laughing and talking carelessly; then joining all hands round, led Julia back to her place, (Edmund thought,) with an air of triumph that seemed to say, "this is my share;" at the same time, his lordship, stooping towards her and whispering something, she looked up and smiled as she replied. Edmund thought Lord Borrowdale an insolent, conceited-looking puppy. Lord Morven then led Frances forward, and, while leaving her on the further hand of Lord Borrowdale, bent across and said something to Julia: she answered with another smile, and Edmund came to the sage conclusion that exalted rank and sounding titles were quite indispensable to happiness.

[350]

[351]

"While I," he mentally continued, "have not even a name, but a borrowed one, for the use of which I am indebted to the compassionate kindness of her grandmother."

Julia, at this moment, looked towards Edmund, and perceiving that he seemed grave and was not dancing, she smiled, and made a signal with her fan for him to approach. He was at her elbow in a moment, his heart beating, and his hatred to lords considerably diminished.

"Why are you not dancing, Edmund?" asked Julia.

"You were engaged," he replied, "and so was Frances; and I, you know, have been scarcely ashore since I was a boy, and am, therefore, quite a stranger. But—the next dance—perhaps—you —"

"Unfortunately," she replied, "I have just promised Lord Morven to dance with him: and Frances too, I know, is engaged to Lord Borrowdale." [352]

"The deuce take those lords!" thought Edmund.

"Unfortunately for me, certainly!" he replied aloud; the smile, with which Julia's summons had lit up his features, fading quite away.

"But Lady Susan," continued Julia, "perhaps she is not engaged: or, if she is, grandmamma, I am sure, can get you a partner."

"You, then, are engaged for the whole evening, I suppose?" said Edmund.

"Oh, no! only for the next set."

"Then, will you dance the one after with me?"

"Certainly! and Frances the one after that. But I am so sorry," she added, "that you have not been dancing all the time."

At this instant, Lord Borrowdale snatched up her hand, as the music indicated the moment, and led her forward again to perform some new evolution of the dance. When the music ceased, Julia said something to Lady Susan: and, on receiving her reply and smile, looked towards Edmund, and telegraphed the smile with the yes it implied. Our hero was accustomed in his own profession to understanding and obeying signals; he, therefore, stepped forward, requested the honour of Lady Susan's hand for the next set, and received a ready assent. [353]

The music now commenced a waltz tune, and Lord Morven immediately began to wheel himself round and round, and holding up his arms in a circular position, to approach Julia.

"Just one round of the room!" he cried; "pray do!"

Edmund's heart stopped beating to await her reply, while one foot was unconsciously advanced at the moment, as if to avert the apprehended catastrophe. Julia laughed at the many entreating attitudes Lord Morven thought fit to assume, but shook her head, and answered, "No! no!" on which his lordship seized his sister, Lady Susan, in his arms, and whirled her round and round the room. [354]

"It would, I fear," said Lord Borrowdale, addressing our heroine, with affected humility, "be too great presumption in me, after Morven's discomfiture, to think of changing your ladyship's determination?" Julia declined. "Morven," proceeded his lordship, "certainly has no right to esteem himself quite irresistible, notwithstanding the present favourable juncture of his stars. In a day or two, at farthest, this gay monopolizer of all that is brightest and loveliest, must, I understand, withdraw from Cupid's lists, and confess himself a mere married man!"

Edmund, though he heard not a word of what Frances was very kindly saying to him about not having danced, yet heard every word of Lord Borrowdale's speech. All the blood in his system seemed to rush to his face, it suffused even his forehead, and mounted to the very roots of his hair. "In a day or two! In a day or two!" he repeated to himself. "So public, so ascertained a thing, that other men think themselves at liberty to speak to her on the subject in this free and careless manner!" [355]

Lady Susan, whirling over at the moment, almost fell against Edmund's arm, on which, laughing at the reeling of her head, she rested a finger to steady herself. Her ladyship was all fair, all soft, and without much form; but, being young, she was by no means forbidding; and her countenance exhibited such a ceaseless sunshine of smiles, and was so much adorned by the undulating movement of its dimples, now deepening, now spreading on rosy cheeks, or playing around ruby lips, that the beholder had no leisure to observe its dumpling contour, or criticise its want of feature.

"How fond my brother is of being a beau!" observed Lady Susan to her partner, as Julia and Lord Morven took their places opposite. [356]

"His lordship must resign that character shortly, I understand," said Edmund, with effort.

"In a day or two, I suppose," replied her ladyship. "You have observed, I dare say, what an admirer he is of his cousin, Lady Julia?"

"It is very apparent, certainly," replied Edmund.

"There!" exclaimed her ladyship, "so I tell him! I don't know what his wife will say to all this, when she comes!"

"His wife!" exclaimed Edmund, unable to trust his ears.

"She has no right to complain, to be sure!" continued Lady Susan, "for she is an unconscionable

flirt herself!"

"His wife!" again reiterated Edmund.

"Yes, his wife," she repeated.

"So, then, Lord Morven is a married man!" said Edmund.

"Is there any thing so very astonishing in that?" demanded her ladyship.

"No—oh no," he stammered out.

"Lady Morven is expected here in a few days,—that is, if she does not disappoint, as usual," continued Lady Susan.

"In a few days!" repeated Edmund.

"Did you then think my brother so very disagreeable, or ugly, or what, that he could not get a wife?" she asked, laughing.

"Ugly! disagreeable!" repeated Edmund, glancing a complacent look at Lord Morven, (for his own good-humour was fast returning,) "quite the contrary; your brother is extremely handsome!" and he might have added, "so is your ladyship," had he spoken all he thought: for Lady Susan's smiling countenance, just then, appeared the most charming in the world, Julia's only excepted, at which, from an involuntary impulse, he at the instant stole a glance. He met her eyes—she smiled—a kind of intoxication came over his spirits—he danced as if on air, and talked an immensity. His partner thought him quite fascinating. When the dance was over, Frances and several other ladies congratulated Lady Susan, with much laughing, on her sudden conquest, telling her she had already made quite another being of Captain Montgomery! Frances said she should resign any claims she might have on the score of old acquaintanceship, for she thought Edmund quite spoiled, he was grown so affected.

He, for his part, had flown to avail himself of Julia's promise. He had forgotten disparity of rank, want of fortune, mystery of birth, everything, but that she was not going to be married to Lord Morven! He could now feel only, that he was near to, dancing with, looking upon a being altogether captivating; and experiencing, in so doing, a delight he had never known before; while blending itself with, and lending an additional interest to, the natural admiration of personal loveliness, there was, as he gazed, an unexamined, yet endearing consciousness, that this was indeed the self-same being, not only whom he had all his life tenderly loved, but, still more, who had always shown the strongest, the most enthusiastic affection for him. It was as a child, certainly—but it was delightful to remember it! And as she sat at the supper-table, trying with now downcast, now averted eyes, to laugh off the blushes which Edmund's extravagant compliments on her growth and improvement had called up; and that he, turning towards her, his arm leaning on the table before her, forgetting all present but herself, the moments flew in a delirium of absolute happiness, till all but the thus engrossed couple having risen from their seats, they too were reminded that it was time to move: and the gay scene closed for the night.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"The bright vision lasted not."

WHEN Edmund retired to rest, all his ideas were in such a state of confusion, that sleep was absolutely out of the question. He found it equally impossible to arrange his thoughts. All came and went in a constant whirl, over which he seemed to have no controul. Yet, at first, all were blissful: fond recollections again and again presented themselves, of the endearing attachment which Julia had in childhood evinced for him; and these again and again blended themselves with intoxicating visions of her present loveliness, and while the tenderness he had ever cherished for her, was all at once converted into an overwhelming passion; so entirely was every reasoning faculty subdued, that with no better foundation than these same recollections, a delightful feeling, almost approaching a sense of mutual affection, glowed at his heart, and unconsciously strengthened his own infatuation.

When it so happens, that the same object which has engrossed the tenderest affections of the child; and which, if we may be allowed the expression, is, as it were, at home in the heart, associated with all its best, its purest feelings, becomes also the first object to awaken passion, the feeling, so produced, is as rare as the combination of circumstances out of which it arises. This is *First Love*, indeed, with all its own luxuriance of blossom, yet as deep-rooted as the ties of kindred: how unlike the surface-sown plant, *Love at First Sight*.

As, however, the delightful sensations derived from seeing and speaking to Julia, from receiving her smiles, and listening to the sweet accents of her voice; as these, we say, began to subside, other, and less pleasing thoughts, like spectres, arose and crossed his imagination: at first singly, and at a great distance, and causing only momentary panics; afterwards, nearer and nearer; till, at length, they collected around him, closed in upon him, awoke him from his dream of unfounded, unjustifiable happiness, and compelled him to look on the realities of his situation.

"Though," said he to himself, "she is not to be, thank heaven!—cannot be married to Lord Morven, I am not the less altogether unworthy of her! It would not be the less of presumption,

the less of ingratitude, the less of baseness in me, to indulge for a moment in such a thought. Though Lord Morven happens to be a married man, it is to some one of rank and fortune equal to his, that Lord L. will think of uniting his daughter. That Lord Borrowdale!—he is not married, and it was with him she danced the first set—and they are neighbours too. But of what avail is it for me to torture myself with conjectures?—it is enough for me, that she can never, never—no, never be——” He paused—then recommenced—“I must fly her presence! I must return to the wild waves which have long been my home, and make them my home still! There I have earned a sort of claim; elsewhere I have none! On no one spot of earth can the wretched Edmund place the wanderer’s foot, and say, ‘This is my native soil!’—and for a name——!” Here the painful thought pressed upon him, that he had no actual right to any. He then remembered, with a sigh, the many useless efforts which had been made to discover his birth. Then a burning blush tingled on his cheek, as the sudden thought struck him, and for the first time, that he might possibly be the child of shame, and that therefore it was that no one would claim him. He strove to shake off the idea; then, as if to drown an intruding voice, which seemed to whisper that the suggestion was probable, he thus continued:—“Wrapped in mystery, as every thing concerning me is, I must, all my life, remain an isolated, a miserable being! A home of joy—sweet domestic affections—all, in short, that renders life desirable, is forbidden to me! Under what name dare I present myself before heaven’s holy altar? What appellation dare I offer to that woman who would share my fortunes?”

[363]

[364]

Engaged in reflections such as these, every delightful vision vanished, the tumultuous beatings of each pulse subsided; and, under the sobering, yet soporific influence of sadness, he at length fell asleep—a long and tremulous sigh, as his eye-lids closed, breaking, for the last time, the regulated breathing which nature was endeavouring to establish. His dreams, however, by an extraordinary contradiction, took their colour from his first feelings. Julia seemed to be before him; to smile sweetly upon him; to raise her full eyes to his. Their expression carried absolute conviction to his heart that he was beloved: the impression was irresistible: he thought he declared his own mad passion; he thought he saw her covered with blushes indeed, but there was no reproof in her manner, and all his own scruples, too, had somehow vanished! He thought he held her soft hand; (for he remembered, particularly when he awoke, how soft it had felt;) she did not withdraw it; nay, it seemed to return the pressure of his! Then he thought, with all the strange and sudden inconsistency of dreams, that he had actually been married to Julia for some time, though he could not remember how or where the ceremony had taken place; yet he saw her so distinctly that he was sure he was awake. Her appearance was what it had been the evening before at the supper table; but her manners, what they had used to be in childhood: the same endearing, enthusiastic, unreserved affection; manifesting itself, with all the happy confidence of mutual and habitual fondness.

[365]

[366]

But the feelings such visions excited were not calm enough for undisturbed repose: he heard the beating of his own heart, through his sleep; he began to fear he was dreaming; he tried not to awake—but it would not do: his eyes opened; he saw the sun shining through his window-curtains; he started upright in his bed. A tide of contradictory recollections poured in upon him; but, alas! where were those so full of bliss?—They were in his dream!—they were not to be recalled; yet, while he could contrive to discourage all thought, a vaguely pleasing impression remained, as though something very delightful had lately happened! He dressed mechanically; when, crossing his apartment to step forth by a glass door, which opened on the lawn, he caught a glimpse of Julia, turning into one of the walks of the shrubbery. His heart began again to beat audibly, as it had done in his dream; he stumbled against his valet, who stood offering him his hat, and, going out without it, flew across the green to join her. She, too, had had her reflections: she had reproached herself for having treated Edmund quite like a stranger. “And without any fault of his,” said she to herself—for Julia was a great respecter of justice, and, on the present occasion, fancied herself guided entirely by its dictates. There was not one hour of her whole existence, (that she could remember,) when Edmund had not shared with Frances her sisterly affection; and he had not done any thing wrong, she argued with herself—any thing unkind, any thing to forfeit any one’s regard; then would it not be very wrong, very unjust of her, if she did not still love—that is to say, still consider him as her brother. Had not grandmamma and Mr. Jackson always loved him as much as if he was really so; and, of course, they did so still, and so ought Frances and herself.

[367]

[368]

Had she been aware how very complimentary to Edmund were the causes which had unconsciously operated upon her manner, in producing the unusual restraint of which she was so painfully conscious, she would have acquitted herself of unkindness to an old friend, and want of generous feeling towards the friendless; for we can venture to assert, upon our own knowledge of her warm-hearted character, that had Edmund not been tall or handsome; had his figure and carriage had no air, no look of consequence, no dignity, no grace; had there been no expression in his eyes, particularly when he looked at her; no glow on his cheek, especially when he spoke to her; nothing at all dangerous in his smile, or persuasive in the tones of his voice, particularly when he spoke to her; had she never heard his gallant actions and high character extolled; had she never known Mr. Jackson, as he laid down the newspaper, exclaim, “There is true nobility for you! Pray what is it that you titled people inherit from your ancestors, but the distant reflection of some great exploit performed by some one of them, for which he was ennobled! Then, is not that man, in whom the splendour of noble deeds is self-existent, in whom it shines independent of reflection, greater than any of you? And yet,” would he add, with that glaring inconsistency of which the wisest of us are often guilty, “I have not a doubt that my Edmund, my boy, will yet prove the descendant of a line of ancestry as exalted as his own merits, and I need say no more!” Had nothing, we say, of all this been the case; on the contrary, had all this been reversed—had

[369]

Edmund been, as indeed he might have been, and yet have been a very worthy personage, a little, insignificant-looking, diminutive-faced, bandy-legged fellow, with a grey freckled skin, light red hair, and green-gooseberry eyes, who had never done any thing remarkable in his life, of whom nobody spoke, whose entrance into a room created no sensation,—in this case, we maintain that Julia would have felt, forcibly, his situation as the protégé of her family; that she would have dreaded the thoughts of his feeling himself little among so many great people; and that, therefore, she would have shown him, particularly on his return home, the most marked attention, and bestowed, too, with the utmost frankness. [370]

This morning, however, she had not yet seen him, to remind her of the tall and awful hero he now appeared in her eyes; and she had been studiously bringing to her recollection what he had been, when Frances and herself used to vie with each other in declarations of how much they loved him, and ask him, again and again, which he loved best; and she well remembered (but, of course, as the nonsense of children) that he used to tell her, when Frances would get tired of the subject, and run away to play, that it was her he loved best; that she was his favourite, his darling Julia! &c. &c. [371]

Finally, she came to the valiant resolve, to shake off the artificial manner, made up of too much, perhaps sometimes, and, certainly, often too little courtesy, which she felt she had had a part, at least, of yesterday, and to be, what she had ever been, towards one, who had no friends but those at Lodore House. "I don't mean," said she to herself, "flying into his arms at meetings and partings, as I used to do, when I was a foolish child;" and here she blushed, and felt astounded, at the recollection; "but I mean to show him frank and unaffected kindness, always the same."

As she arrived at this sage conclusion, Edmund stood before her, looking not the worse for the want of his hat, the careless arrangement the breeze had thought fit to make of his hair, and the heightened colour caused by running; to say nothing of a certain beaming light, which thoughts, that lovers' lips dare not confess, sometimes shed through lovers' eyes. In short, his dream had given a most dangerous, delighted, bridegroom-like expression to his countenance! [372]

On first seeing him Julia blushed, as though, in her late conference with herself, she had been speaking, instead of only thinking, and might have been overheard. In pursuance, however, of her resolve, she extended towards him the open palm of welcome, as she bade him good morning.

When he felt her hand within his, soft as it had been in his dream; when he saw her cheek glowing, and in her eyes, as she lifted them to his, beheld the blended expression of kindness and timidity, called up by the yet unsubdued current of such reflexions as had just passed through her mind; he could not help thinking how like she, at that moment, looked, to what she had appeared in the too delightful vision, from which he had so lately and so unwillingly awakened. [373]

He was so much absorbed by this idea, that his eyes dwelt on her face, till hers were bent on the ground: her blush, too, deepened. She wished to speak, but felt there was something in his manner, which made it impossible for her to keep her resolution of behaving with perfect ease; both remained silent, and she withdrew her hand.

Edmund, who had continued gazing, till aroused by this movement, now felt that some apology was necessary. He stammered out one about her being so much grown, and about trying to trace, in her present appearance, the little favourite of his boyish days. "After the first surprise is over," he added, encouraged by a gentle look, and playfully lowering his tone, and smiling, as he drew her hand over his arm, and walked slowly on, his head turned towards his companion—"after the first surprise is over, of finding her, whom I can remember carrying about in my arms through these very woods, become,—while I was so busy ploughing the wide ocean, that I observed not the lapse of time,—a full-grown, fashionable, awe-inspiring woman!—when this surprise is over, I say, you will find that I shall learn to behave myself with all due propriety, and not stare grownup young ladies out of countenance, as if they were still children." [374]

Julia, remembering her resolution, seized this opening, and said, "I hope, Edmund, I shall never prove so much the woman of fashion, as to be capricious or unsisterly, in my manners or conduct. Perhaps you think I have been so?"

"You quite mistake my meaning, Julia," said Edmund.

"But,"—she continued, hesitating, "I trust you will find that the regard which Frances and I have felt for you, from our earliest childhood, will prove, through life, an unshaken friendship!" [375]

This was valiantly said of Julia; and the speech took all the breath, of which she was mistress, to bring it to so handsome a conclusion.

"If your friendship," he replied, with sudden depression of manner, "and that of your family were withdrawn, what would be left to the desolate Edmund!" A short silence ensued. "Promise me, Julia," he recommenced, taking again the hand that leaned on his arm, and trembling as he reflected that he might yet lose all share in her regard, if his rash passion should ever be discovered; "promise me, that you never will, under any circumstances, withdraw your friendship from me."

Julia, after hesitating a little, said—"I may, I think, make that promise, Edmund, for I am sure you never will deserve to lose it, and—even—" She stopped as if uncertain whether or not she ought to proceed. [376]

"Do not check that kind sentence, Julia!" he exclaimed, in a tone of entreaty. "You were going to say, that you would still regard and pity the unfortunate Edmund, even if he were in fault, and condemned by strangers!"

"Well, I am sure I would, Edmund," she replied, after a moment's pause; "and so would Frances, and so would grandmamma," she added, eagerly, as Edmund pressed the hand which leaned on his arm against his heart, to express his gratitude.

At this moment, Henry, who had been sent to call them in to breakfast, came up. He curled his lip as he observed Edmund let go the hand of Julia, and all three walked towards the house in silence. [377]

"That won't do, Captain Montgomery," whispered Henry, as they entered, affecting a laugh.

Edmund reddened, and turning on him with a frown, said, "I request, sir, that you will spare yourself the trouble of thinking for me."

Julia was a few steps in advance.

"On the quarter-deck, sir," said Henry, with mock deference, "I bow to your opinions; but here, I too must request the liberty of thinking for myself, as well as feeling solicitude for a lady, towards whom I stand somewhat, though not absolutely, I am happy to say, in the situation of a brother, being one of her nearest male relatives."

"Sir!" said Edmund, "till I request your confidence on the subject of your solitudes, I beg I may not be troubled with the recital of them."

This short scene passed while the various morning salutations which Julia's appearance had called forth were going round the breakfast-table, and, consequently, entirely escaped her notice. Lord Borrowdale, starting up, on her first entrance, had given her his seat, and found, or rather made room for himself beside her. [378]

Lady Susan, whom Frances had laughed into a belief that she had achieved a first-sight conquest of Captain Montgomery, now made room for Edmund near herself, and all the time of breakfast, simpered, dimpled, laughed, and talked to him, while he thought only of how he could, with most propriety, resent the insolence of Henry. Lord Borrowdale composed and delivered elaborate compliments to Julia on the roses she had collected during her morning ramble, directing, from time to time, rather inquisitive, and not very well-satisfied glances, towards the much too handsome companion of her walk. Lord Morven mentioned to Mrs. Montgomery how much he wished Julia and Frances to accompany Lady Morven and himself in the Italian trip they proposed making, while their new house was finishing; and added, that Julia had half-promised him, in case Lord L. gave his consent. Mrs. Montgomery shook her head, and Edmund almost smiled to think how much unnecessary misery this subject had caused him only the evening before. [379]

The smile, however, was but languid, for of what avail was it that this source of uneasiness was removed; was not Lord Borrowdale's admiration declared? and was it not probable that he would be approved of by all her friends? Or, if Lord Borrowdale were not in existence, he himself, at least, had no pretensions—worse than none! he was peculiarly bound by honour, gratitude, every good feeling, not even to stand the competition, had he the egregious vanity to hope that such treachery could avail him. Henry's interference, indeed, he despised as much as he resented; and had he been capable of doing wrong, from a feeling of false pride, he would, from that moment, have paid Julia pointed attention; but his own sense of right was too strong to permit such a line of conduct. The impulse, indeed, was felt, but instantly rejected; for now that reason, which his dream for a time had banished, was restored, by seeing Julia join the circle of the proud, the gay, the titled, (which was surely her natural sphere,) honour and duty predominated even over passion. He still, however, resented the liberty Henry had taken, and immediately after breakfast sought an interview with him, which ended in that gentleman finding himself compelled to make an ample apology, though with a very bad grace. [380]

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FIRST LOVE: A NOVEL. VOL. 1 OF 3 ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive

Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.