



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

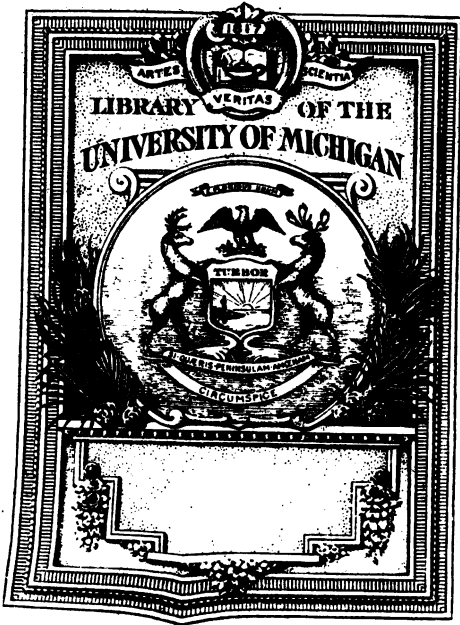
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





Jenny Maynard
812

828

E235t

1809

V.5

TALES
OF
FASHIONABLE LIFE,

BY
MISS EDGEWORTH,^{maria}

AUTHOR OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION, BELINDA, CASTLE RACKRENT,
ESSAY ON IRISH BULLS, &c.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

CONTAINING
EMILIE DE COULANGES

AND THE BEGINNING OF
THE ABSENTEE.

Tutta la gente in lieta fronte udiva
Le graziose e finte istorielle
Ed i difetti altrui tosto scopriva
Ciascuno, e non i proprj espressi in quelle;
O se de proprj sospettava, ignoti
Credeasi a ciascun altro, e a se nol noti.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON AND CO.,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1812.

**Printed by C. Wood,
Poppin's Court, Fleet Street.**

Director
Blackwell
3-8-47
57560

EMILIE DE COULANGES.

3-24-47 mfp

EMILIE de Coulanges was a young French emigrant, of a noble family, and heiress to a large estate; but the property of her family had been confiscated during the revolution. She and her mother, la comtesse de Coulanges, made their escape to England. Madame de Coulanges was in feeble health, and much dispirited by the sudden loss of rank and fortune. Mademoiselle de Coulanges felt the change more for her mother, than for herself; she always spoke of her mother's misfortunes, never of her own.

“I am young, I am in good health,” said she; “I am not to be pitied.—But

my poor mamma, who has been used all her life to such luxuries!— And now to have only her Emilie to wait upon her!— Her Emilie, who is but an awkward femme de chambre!— But she will improve, it must be hoped;— and as to the rest, things, which are now always changing, and which cannot change for the worse, must soon infallibly change for the better— and mamma will certainly recover all her property, one of these days. — In the mean time, (if mamma is tolerably well,) we shall be perfectly happy in England— that charming country, which, perhaps, we should never have seen, but for this terrible revolution. — Here we shall assuredly find friends. — The English are such good people! — Cold, indeed, at first— that's their misfortune! — But then the English coldness is of manner, not of heart. — Time immemorial, they have been famous for making the best friends in the world; and even to us, who are their *natural enemies*, they are generous in our distress.

I have heard innumerable instances of their hospitality to our emigrants; and mamma will certainly not be the first exception. At her Hotel de Coulanges, she always received the English with distinguished attention; and though our hotel, with half Paris, has changed its name, since those days, the English have too good memories to forget it, I am sure."

By such speeches, Emilie endeavoured to revive her mother's spirits. To a most affectionate disposition and a feeling heart she joined all the characteristic and constitutional gayety of her nation; a gayety, which, under the pressure of misfortune, merits the name of philosophy, since it produces all the effects, and is not attended with any of the parade of stoicism.

Upon their arrival in London, Emilie, full of life and hope, went to present some of her mother's letters of recommendation. One of them was addressed to Mrs. Somers. Mademoiselle de Coulan-

ges was particularly delighted by the manner, in which she was received by this lady.

“No English coldness! — no English reserve! — so warm in her expressions of kindness! — so eager in her offers of service!” — Emilie could speak of nothing for the remainder of the day, but — “cette charmante madame Somers!” The next day, and the next, and the next, she found increasing reasons to think her charming. Mrs. Somers exerted herself, indeed, with the most benevolent activity, to procure for madame de Coulanges every thing, that could be convenient or agreeable. She prepared apartments in her own house for the mother and daughter, which she absolutely insisted upon their occupying immediately: she assured them, that they should not be treated as visitors, but as inmates and friends of the family. She pressed her invitation with such earnestness, and so politely urged her absolute right to show her remembrance of the civilities, which she had.

received at Paris, that there was no possibility of persisting in a refusal. The pride of high birth would have revolted at the idea of becoming dependant, but all such thoughts were precluded by the manner in which Mrs. Somers spoke; and the comtesse de Coulanges accepted of the invitation, resolving, however, not to prolong her stay, if affairs in her own country should not take a favourable turn. She expected remittances from a Paris banker, with whom she had lodged a considerable sum—all that could be saved in ready money, in jewels, &c., from the wreck of her fortune: with this sum, if she should find all schemes of returning to France and recovering her property impracticable, she determined to live, in some retired part of England, in the most economic manner possible. But, in the mean time, as economy had never been either her theory or her practice, and as she considered retreat from *the world* as the worst thing, next to death, that could befall a woman, she was

glad to put off the evil hour. She acknowledged, that ill health made her look some years older than she really was; but she could not think herself yet old enough to become *devout*; and, till that crisis arrived, she, of course, would not willingly be banished from *society*. So that, upon the whole, she was well satisfied to find herself established in Mrs. Somers's excellent house; where, but for the want of three antichambers, and of the Parisian quantity of looking-glass on every side of every apartment, la comtesse might have fancied herself at her own Hotel de Coulanges. Emilie would have been better contented to have been lodged and treated with less magnificence; but she rejoiced to see, that her mother was pleased, and that she became freer from her *vapeurs noirs* *. Emilie began to love Mrs. Somers for making her mother well and happy — to

* *Vapeurs noirs* — vulgarly known by the name of *blue devils*.

love her with all the fearless enthusiasm of a young, generous mind, which accepts of obligation without any idea, that gratitude may become burdensome. Mrs. Somers excited not only affection — she inspired admiration. Capable of the utmost exertion and of the most noble sacrifices for her friends, the indulgence of her generosity seemed not only to be the greatest pleasure of her soul, but absolutely necessary to her nature. To attempt to restrain her liberality was to provoke her indignation, or to incur her contempt. To refuse her benefits was to forfeit her friendship. She grew extremely fond of her present guests, because, without resistance, they permitted her to load them with favours: according to her custom, she found a thousand perfections in those, whom she obliged. She had considered la comtesse de Coulanges, when she knew her at Paris, as a very well bred woman, but as nothing more: yet now she discovered, that madame de Coulanges had a superior

understanding and great strength of mind;—and Emilie, who had pleased her when a child, only by the ingenuous sweetness of her disposition and vivacity of her manners, was now become a complete angel—no angel had ever such a variety of accomplishments—none but an angel could possess such a combination of virtues. Mrs. Somers introduced her charming and noble emigrants to all her numerous and fashionable acquaintance; and she would certainly have quarrelled with any one, who did not at least appear to sympathise in her sentiments. Fortunately, there was no necessity for quarrelling; these foreigners were well received in every company, and Emilie pleased universally; or, as madame de Coulanges expressed it, “*Elle avoit des grands succès dans la société.*” The French comtesse herself could hardly give more emphatic importance to the untranslateable word *succès*, than Mrs. Somers annexed to it upon this occasion. She was proud of producing Emilie as

her protégées; and the approbation of others increased her own enthusiasm; much as she did for her favourite, she longed to do more. — An opportunity soon presented itself.

One evening, after madame de Coulanges had actually tired herself with talking to the crowd, which her vivacity, grace, and volubility, had attracted about her sofa, she ran to entrench herself in an arm chair by the fireside, sprinkled the floor round her with *eau de senteur*, drew, with her pretty foot, a line of circumvallation, and then, shaking her tiny fan at the host of assailants, she forbade them, under pain of her sovereign displeasure, to venture within the magic circle, or to torment her by one more question or compliment. It was now absolutely necessary to be serious, and to study the politics of Europe. She called for the French newspapers, which Mrs. Somers had on purpose for her; and, provided with a pinch of snuff, from the ever-ready box of a French abbé, whose arm

was permitted to cross the line of demarcation, madame de Coulanges began to study. Silence ensued — for novelty always produces silence in the first instant of surprise. — An English gentleman wrote on the back of a letter an offer to his neighbour of a wager, that the silence would be first broken by the French countess, and that it could not last above two minutes. The wager was accepted, and watches were produced. Before the two minutes had expired, the pinch of snuff dropped from the countess's fingers, and, clasping her hands together, she exclaimed — “ Ah! ciel!” — The surrounding gentlemen, who were full of their wager, and who had heard from the lady, during the course of the evening, at least a dozen exclamations of nearly equal vehemence, about the merest trifles, were more amused than alarmed at this instant: but Emilie, who knew her mother's countenance, and who saw the sudden change in it, pressed through the circle, and just caught her mother in her

arms, as she fainted. Mrs. Somers, much alarmed, hastened to her assistance. The countess was carried out of the room, and every body was full of pity and of curiosity. — When madame de Coulanges recovered from her fainting fit, she was seized with one of her nervous attacks; so that no explanation could be obtained. Emilie and Mrs. Somers looked over the French paper, but could not find any paragraph unusually alarming. At length, more composed, the countess apologized for the disturbance which she had occasioned; thanked Mrs. Somers repeatedly for her kindness; but spoke in a hurried manner, as if she did not well know what she said. She concluded by declaring, that she was subject to these nervous attacks, that she should be quite well the next morning, and that she did not wish that any one should sit up with her during the night, except Emilie, who was used to her ways. With that true politeness, which understands quickly the

feelings and wishes of others, Mrs. Somers forbore to make any ill-timed inquiries or officious offers of assistance; but immediately retired, and ordered the attendants to leave the room, that madame de Coulanges and her daughter might be at perfect liberty. Early in the morning, Mrs. Somers heard somebody knock softly at her door. It was Emilie.

“Mrs. Masham told me, that you were awake, madam, or I should not ——”

“Come in, come in, my dearest Emilie — I am awake — wide awake. Is your mother better?”

“Alas! no, madam!”

“Sit down, my dear, and do not call me *madam*, so coldly. — I do not deserve it.”

“My dear friend! friend of mamma! my dearest friend!” cried Emilie, bursting into tears, and seizing Mrs. Somers’s hand, “do not accuse me of coldness to you. — I am always afraid, that my French expressions should sound exag-

gerated to English ears, and that you should think I say too much to be sincere in expressing my gratitude."

"My sweet Emilie, who could doubt your sincerity? — none but a brute or a fool: but do not talk to me of gratitude."

"I must," said Emilie; "for I feel it."

"Prove it to me, then, in the manner I like best — in the only manner I like — by putting it in my power to serve you. — I do not intrude upon your mother's confidence — I make no inquiries — but do me the justice to tell me, how I can be of use to her — or rather to you. — From you I expect frankness. — Command my fortune, my time, my credit, my utmost exertions — they are all, they ever have been, they ever shall be, whilst I have life, at the command of my friends. — And are not you my friend?"

"Generous lady! — You overpower me with your goodness —"

"No praises, no speeches! — Actions for me! — Tell me how I can serve you."

“ Alas! *you*, even *you*, can do us no good in this business.”

“ That I will never believe, till I know the business ——”

“ The worst of it is,” said Emilie, “ that we must leave you.”

“ Leave me! Impossible!” cried Mrs. Somers, starting up. — “ You shall not leave me, that I am determined upon. — Why cannot you speak out, at once, and tell me what is the matter, Emilie? — How can I act, unless I am trusted? — and who deserves to be trusted by you, if I do not?”

“ Assuredly, nobody deserves it better; and, if it were only my affair, dear Mrs. Somers, you ~~should~~ have known it as soon as I knew it myself; but it is mamma’s, more than mine.”

“ Madame la comtesse, then, does not think me worthy of her confidence?” said Mrs. Somers, in a haughty tone, whilst displeasure clouded her whole countenance. —— “ Is that what I am to un-

derstand from you, mademoiselle de Coulanges?"

"No, no; that is not what you are to understand, dear madam — my dear friend, I should say" — cried Emilie, alarmed. — "Certainly I have explained myself ill, or you could not suspect mamma, for a moment, of such injustice. She knows you to be most worthy of her confidence; but, on this occasion, her reserve, believe me, proceeds solely from motives of delicacy, which you could not but approve."

"Motives of delicacy, my dear Emilie," said Mrs. Somers, softening her tone, but still with an air of dissatisfaction. — "Motives of delicacy, my dear Emilie, are mighty pretty sounding words; and, at your age, I used to think them mighty grand things: but I have long since found out, that *motives of delicacy* are usually the excuse of weak minds for not speaking the plain truth to their friends. — People quit the straight path from motives of delicacy, may-be, to a worm or a

beetle — vulgar souls, observe, I rank only as worms and beetles; they cross our path every instant in life; and those, who fear to give them offence, must deviate and deviate, till they get into a labyrinth, from which they can never extricate themselves or be extricated. — My Emilie, I am sure, will always keep the straight road — I know her strength of mind. — Indeed, I did expect strength of mind from her mother; but, like all, who have lived a great deal in the world, she is, I find, a slave to motives of delicacy.”

“ Mamma’s delicacy is of a very different sort from what you describe, and what you dislike,” said Emilie. “ But, since persisting in her reserve would, as I see, offend one, whom she would be most sorry to displease, permit me to go, this moment, and persuade her to let me tell you the simple truth.”

“ Go — run, my dear. — Now I know my Emilie again. — Now I shall be able to do some good.”

By the time that Emilie returned, Mrs. Somers was dressed; she had dressed in the greatest hurry imaginable, that she might be ready for action, instantaneous action, if the service of her friends, as she hoped, required it. Emilie brought the newspaper in her hand, which her mother had been reading the preceding night.

“Here is all the mystery,” said she, pointing to a paragraph, which announced the failure of a Paris banker. — “Mamma lodged all the money she had left in this man’s hands.”

“And is that all? — I really expected something much more terrible.”

“It is terrible to mamma; because, depending on this man’s punctuality, she has bought, in London, clothes and trinkets — chiefly for me indeed — and she has no immediate means of paying these debts. But, if she will only keep her mind tranquil, all will yet be well. You flatter me, that I play tolerably on the piano forte and the harp; you will commend me, and I can endeavour to

teach music. — So that, if mamma will but be well, we shall not be in any great distress — except in leaving you : — that is painful — but must be done. — Yes, it absolutely must. — Mamma knows what is proper, and so do I. — We are not people to encroach upon the generosity of our friends. — I need not say more; for I am sure, that Mrs. Somers, who is herself so well born and well educated, must understand and approve of mamma's way of thinking."

Mrs. Somers replied not one word, but rang her bell violently — ordered her carriage.

"Do not you breakfast, madam, before you go out?" said the servant.

"No — no."

"Not a dish of chocolate, ma'am?"

"My carriage, I tell you. — Emilie, you have been up all night. — I insist upon your going to bed this minute, and upon your sleeping till I come back again. — La comtesse always breakfasts in her own room; so I have no apologies

to make for leaving her.—I shall be at home before her toilette is finished, and hope she will then permit me to pay my respects to her—you will tell her so, my dear.—I must be gone, instantly.—Why will not they let me have this carriage?—Where are those gloves of mine?—and the key of my writing desk?—Ring again for the coach.”

Between the acting of a generous thing and the first motion, all the interim was, with Mrs. Somers, a delicious phantasma; and her ideas of time and distance were as extravagant as those of a person in a dream. She very nearly ran over Emilie in her way down stairs, and then said—“Oh! I beg pardon a thousand times, my dear!—I thought you had been in bed an hour ago.”

The toilette of madame de Coulanges, this morning, went on at the usual rate. Whether in adversity or prosperity, this was, to la comtesse, an elaborate, but never a tedious work.—Long as it had lasted, it was, however, finished; and she

had full leisure for a fit and a half of the vapours, before Mrs. Somers returned. — She came in with a face radiant with joy.

“Fortunately! most fortunately!” cried she, “I have it in my power to repair the loss occasioned by the failure of this good for nothing banker! Nay, positively, madame de Coulanges, I must not be refused,” continued she, in a peremptory manner. — “You make an enemy, if you refuse a friend —”

She laid a pocketbook on the table, and left the room instantly. The pocketbook contained notes to a very considerable amount, surpassing the sum, which madame de Coulanges had lost by her banker; and, on a scrap of paper, was written, in pencil —

“Madame de Coulanges must never return this sum, for it is utterly useless to Mrs. Somers; as the superfluities it was appropriated to purchase are now in the possession of one, who will not sell them.”

Astonished equally at the magnitude

and the manner of the gift, madame de Coulanges repeated, a million of times, that it was “noble! très noble! une belle action!”—that she could not possibly accept of such an obligation—that she could not tell how to refuse it—that Mrs. Somers was the most generous woman upon Earth—that Mrs. Somers had thrown her into a terrible embarrassment.

Then la comtesse had recourse to her smelling bottle—consulted Emilie’s eyes—and answered them.

“Child! I have no thoughts of accepting; but I only ask you how I can refuse, after what has been said, without making Mrs. Somers my enemy?—You see her humour—English humours must not be trifled with—her humour, you see, is to give.—It is a shocking thing for people of our birth to be reduced to receive—but we cannot avoid it without losing Mrs. Somers’s friendship entirely; and that is what you would not wish to do, Emilie?”

“ Oh! no, indeed!”

“ Now we must be under obligations to our milliner and jeweller, if we do not pay them immediately; for these sort of people call it a favour to give credit for a length of time: and I really think, that it is much better to be indebted to Mrs. Somers, than to absolute strangers and to rude tradespeople. It is always best to have to deal with polite persons.”

“ And with generous persons!” cried Emilie; “ and a more generous person than Mrs. Somers, I am sure, cannot exist.”

“ And then,” continued madame de Coulanges, “ like all these rich English, she can afford to be generous. I am persuaded, that this Mrs. Somers is as rich as a Russian princess; yes, as rich as the Russian princess with the superb diadem of diamonds.— You remember her at Paris?”

“ No, mamma, I forget her,” answered Emilie, with a look of absence of mind.

“ Bon Dieu! what can you be thinking

of!" exclaimed madame de Coulanges—
"You forget the Russian princess, with the diamond diadem, that was valued at 200,000 livres!—she wore it at her presentation—it was the conversation of Paris for a week—You must recollect it, Emilie?"

"Oh! yes; I recollect something about it's cutting her forehead."

"Not at all, my dear; how you exaggerate! The princess only complained, by way of something to say, that the weight of the diamonds made her head ache."

"Was that all?"

"That was all.—But I will tell you what you are thinking of, Emilie—quite another thing—quite another person—broad madame Vanderbenbruggen: her diamonds were not worth looking at; and they were so horribly set, that she deserved all manner of misfortunes, and to be disgraced in public, as she was.—For you know the bandeau slipt over her great forehead; and, instead of turning

to the gentlemen, and ordering some man of sense to arrange her head-dress, she kept holding her stiff neck stock still, like an idiot; she actually sat, with the patience of a martyr, two immense hours, till somebody cried — ‘ Ah! madame, here is the blood coming!’ — I see her before me this instant. — Is it possible, my dear Emilie, that you do not remember the difference between this *bûche* of a madame Vanderbenbruggen, and our charming princess; but you are as dull as madame Vanderbenbruggen herself this morning.”

The vivacious countess having once seized upon the ideas of madame Vanderbenbruggen, the charming princess, and the fine diamonds, it was some time before Emilie could recal her to the order of the day — to the recollection of her banker’s failure, and of the necessity of giving an answer to generous Mrs. Somers. — The decision of madame de Coulanges was, probably, at last influenced materially by the gay ideas of “ stars

and dukes, and all their sweeping train," associated with madame Vanderbenbruggen's image. The countess observed, that, after the style, in which she had been used to live, in the first company at Paris, it would be worse than death to be buried alive in some obscure country town in England; and that she would rather see Emilie guillotined at once, than condemned, with all her grace and talents, to work, like a galley slave, at a tambour frame, for her bread, all the days of her life. — Emilie assured her mother, that she should cheerfully submit to much greater evils, than that of working at a tambour frame; and that, as far as her own feelings were concerned, she should infinitely prefer living by labour to becoming dependent. She therefore entreated, that her mother might not, from any false tenderness for her Emilie, decide contrary to her own principles or wishes. — Madame de Coulanges, after looking in the glass, at length determined,

that it would be best to accept of Mrs. Somers's generous offer: and Emilie, who usually contrived to find something agreeable in all her mother's decisions, rejoiced, that, by this determination, Mrs. Somers, at least, would be pleased. Mrs. Somers, indeed, was highly gratified; and her expressions of satisfaction were so warm, that any body would have thought she was the person receiving, instead of conferring a great favour. She thanked Emilie, in particular, for having vanquished her mother's false delicacy. Emilie blushed at hearing this undeserved praise; and assured Mrs. Somers, that all the merit was her mother's.

"What!" cried Mrs. Somers hastily, "was it contrary to your opinion?— Were you treacherous— were you my enemy— mademoiselle de Coulanges?"

Emilie replied, that she had left the decision to her mother; that she confessed she had felt some reluctance to receive a pecuniary obligation, even from

Mrs. Somers ; but that she had rather be obliged to her, than to any body in the world, except to her mamma.

This explanation did not perfectly satisfy Mrs. Somers, and there was a marked coldness in her manner towards Emilie during the remainder of the day: her affectionate and grateful disposition made her extremely sensible to this change; and, when she retired to her own room at night, she sat down beside her bed, and shed tears, for the first time since she had been in England. Mrs. Somers happened to go into Emilie's room to leave some message for madame de Coulanges — she found Emilie in tears — inquired the cause — was touched and flattered by her sensibility — kissed her — blamed herself — confessed she had been extremely unreasonable — acknowledged, that her temper was naturally too hasty and susceptible, especially with those she loved. — But assured Emilie, that this, which had been their first, should be their last quarrel. — A rash promise,

considering the circumstances in which they were both placed!—Those who receive and those who confer great favours are both in difficult situations: but the part of the benefactor is the most difficult to support with propriety. What a combination of rare qualities is essential for this purpose. Amongst others, sense, delicacy, and temper.—Mrs. Somers possessed all but the last; and, unluckily, she was not sensible of the importance of this deficiency. Confident and proud, that, upon all the grand occasions, where the human heart is put to the trial, she could display superior generosity, she disdained attention to the minutiae of kindness. This was inconvenient to her friends; because occasion for a great sacrifice of the heart occurs, perhaps, but once in a life, whilst small sacrifices of temper are requisite every day, and every hour of the day*.

* Since this was written, the author has seen the same thoughts so much better expressed in the following lines, that she cannot forbear to quote them.

Mrs. Somers had concealed from madame de Coulanges and from Emilie the full extent of their obligation: she told them, that the sum of money, which she offered, had become useless to her, because it had been destined for the purchase of some superfluities, which were now in the possession of another person. The fact was, that she had been in treaty for two fine pictures, a Guido and a Correggio; these pictures might have been hers, but that, on the morning when she heard of the failure of the banker of madame de Coulanges, she had hastened to prevent the money from being paid for them. She was extremely fond of paintings, and had long and earnestly desired to

Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our mis'ry from our foibles springs;
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And few can save or serve, but all may please:
Oh! let th' ungentle spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
Large bounties to bestow we wish in vain;
But all may shun the guilt of giving pain.

SENSIBILITY. By *Mrs. H. More.*

possess these celebrated pictures; so that she had really made a great sacrifice of her taste and of her vanity. For some time, she was satisfied with her own self-complacent reflections; but presently she began to be displeased, that madame de Coulanges and Emilie did not see the full extent of her sacrifice. She became provoked by their want of penetration, in not discovering all, that she studiously concealed; and her mind, going on rapidly from one step to another, decided, that this want of penetration arose from a deficiency of sensibility.

One day, some of her visitors, who were admiring the taste, with which she had newly furnished a room, inquired for what those two compartments were intended, looking at the compartments, which had been prepared for the famous pictures.—Mrs. Somers replied, that she had not yet determined what she should put there: she glanced her eye upon madame de Coulanges and upon Emilie, to observe whether they *felt as they ought*

to do. Madame de Coulanges imagining that an appeal was made to her taste, decidedly answered, that nothing would have so fine an effect as handsome looking-glasses. "Such," added she, "as we have at Paris.—No house is furnished without them—they are absolute necessities of life. And, no doubt, these places were originally intended for mirrors."

"No," said Mrs. Somers, drily, and with a look of great displeasure—"No, madame la comtesse, those places were not originally intended for looking-glasses."

The countess secretly despised Mrs. Somers, for her want of taste; but, being too well bred to dispute the point, she confessed, that she was no judge—that she knew nothing of the matter; and then immediately turned to her abbé, and asked him, if he remembered the superb mirrors in madame de V———'s charming house, on the Boulevards.—"It is," said she, "in my opinion, one of the very best houses in Paris. There

you enter the principal apartments by an antichamber, such as you ought to see in a great house, with real ottomanes, covered with black velvet; and then you pass through the spacious *salle à manger* and the delightful saloon, hung with blue silk, to the *bijou* of a *boudoir*, that looks out upon the garden, with the windows shaded by the most beautiful flowering shrubs in summer, and in winter adorned with exotics. Then you see, through the plate-glass door of the *boudoir*, into the gallery of paintings — I call it a gallery, but it is in fact a delightful room, not a gallery — where you are not to perish with cold, whilst you admire the magnificence of the place. Not at all: it is warmed by a large stove, and you may examine the fine pictures at your ease, or, as you English would say, in comfort. This gallery must have cost M. de V—— an immense sum. The connoisseurs say, that it is really the best collection of Flemish pictures in the possession of any individual in France. By

the by, Mrs. Somers, there is, amongst others, an excellent Van Dyck, a portrait of your Charles the First, when a boy, which, I wonder, that none of you rich English have purchased."

The countenance of Mrs. Somers had clouded over more and more during this speech; but the heedless countess went on, with her usual volubility.

"Yet, no doubt, M. de V—— would not sell this Van Dyck: but he would, I am told, part with his superb collection of prints; which cost him 30,000 of your pounds. He must look for a purchaser amongst those Polish and Russian princes, who have nothing to do with their riches—for instance, my friend Lewenhof, who complained, that he was not able to spend half his income in Paris; that he could not contrive to give an entertainment, that cost him money enough. What can he do better, than commence amateur?—then he might throw away money as fast as his heart

could wish. M. l'Abbé, why do not you, or some man of letters, write directly, and advise him to this, for the good of his country? What a figure those prints would make in Petersburg!—and how they would polish the Russians!—But, as a good Frenchwoman, I ought to wish them to remain at Paris — they certainly cannot be better than where they are.”

“ True,” cried Emilie, “ they cannot be better than where they are, in the possession of those generous friends. I used to love to see madame de V———, in the midst of all her fine things, of which she thought so little. I never saw a woman, (did you, mamma?) who seemed better suited to be mistress of a large fortune — no ostentation — no formality; but so easy, and so desirous, that every body round her should enjoy all the advantages of her wealth. — Her very looks are enough to make one happy — all radiant with good humoured benevolence. I am sure one might always salute ma-

dame de V—— with the Chinese compliment—‘Felicity is painted in your countenance.’”

This was a compliment, which could not be paid to Mrs. Somers at the present instant; for her countenance was as little expressive of felicity, as could well be imagined. Emilie, who suddenly turned and saw it, was so much struck, that she became immediately silent. There was a dead pause in the conversation. Madame de Coulanges was the only unembarrassed person in company: she was very contentedly arranging her hair upon her forehead opposite to a looking-glass. Mrs. Somers broke the silence by observing, that, in her opinion, there was no occasion for more mirrors in this room; and she added, in a voice of suppressed anger, “I did originally intend to have filled those unfortunate blanks with something more to my taste——”

Madame de Coulanges was too much occupied with her ringlets to hear or heed

this speech. Mrs. Somers fixed her indignant eyes upon Emilie, who, perceiving that she was offended, yet not knowing by what, looked embarrassed, and simply answered,

“ Did you? — ”

This reply, which seemed as neutral as words could make it, and which was uttered, not only with a pacific, but with an intimidated tone, incensed Mrs. Somers beyond measure. It put the finishing stroke to the whole conversation. All that had been said about elegant houses — antichambers — mirrors — pictures — amateurs — throwing away money; and the generous madame de V———, *who was always good humoured*, Mrs. Somers fancied was meant *for her* — She decided, that it was absolutely impossible, that Emilie could be so stupid, as not to have perfectly understood, that the compartments had been prepared for the Guido and Coreggio, which she had so generously sacrificed; and the total want of feeling — of common civility — evinced

by Emilie's reply, was astonishing, was incomprehensible. The more she reflected upon the words, the more of artifice, of duplicity, of ingratitude, of insult, of meanness, she discovered in them. In her cold fits of ill humour, this lady was prone to degrade, as monsters below the standard of humanity, those, whom, in the warmth of her enthusiasm, she had exalted to the state of angelic perfection. Emilie, though conscious, that she had unweetingly offended, was not aware how low she had sunk in her friend's opinion: she endeavoured, by playful wit and caresses, to atone for her fault, and to reinstate herself in favour. But playful wit and caresses were aggravating crimes: they were proofs of obstinacy in deceit, of a callous conscience, and of a heart, that was not to be touched by the marked displeasure of a benefactress. Three days and three nights did the displeasure of Mrs. Somers continue in full force, and manifest itself by a variety of signs, which were lost upon madame de

Coulanges, but which were all intelligible to poor Emilie. She made several attempts to bring on an explanation, by saying — “ Are not you well? — Is any thing the matter, dear Mrs. Somers? ” — But these questions were always coldly answered by — “ I am perfectly well, I thank you, mademoiselle de Coulanges — Why should you imagine, that any thing is the matter with me? ”

At the end of the third day of reprobation, Emilie, who could no longer endure this state, resolved to take courage and to ask pardon for her unknown offence. That night, she went, trembling like a real criminal, into Mrs. Somers's dressing room, kissed her forehead, and said —

“ I hope you have not, such a head-ache as I have? ”

“ Have you the head-ache? — I am sorry for that,” said Mrs. Somers — “ But you should take something for it. — What will you take? ”

“ I will take nothing — except — your forgiveness.”

“My forgiveness! — you astonish me, mademoiselle de Coulanges! — I am sure, that I ought to ask yours, if I have said a word, that could possibly give you reason to imagine I am angry — I really am not conscious of any such thing; but if you will point it out to me——”

“You cannot imagine, that I come to accuse you, dear Mrs. Somers; I do not attempt even to justify myself; I am convinced, that, if you are displeased, it cannot be without reason.”

“But still you do not tell me how I have shown this violent displeasure: I have not, to the best of my recollection, said an angry or a hasty word.”

“No; but when we love people, we know when they are offended, without their saying a hasty word — Your manner has been so different towards me these three days past.”

“My manner is very unfortunate. It is impossible always to keep a guard over our manners — it is sufficient, I think, to guard our words.”

“Pray do not guard either with me,” said Emilie; “for I would a thousand times rather, that a friend should say or look the most angry things, than that she should conceal from me what she thought; for then, you know, I might displease her continually, without knowing it, and perhaps lose her esteem and affection, irretrievably, before I was aware of my danger — and with *you*, with you, to whom we owe so much!”

Touched by the feeling manner, in which Emilie spoke, and by the artless expression of her countenance, Mrs. Somers's anger vanished, and she exclaimed — “I have been to blame — I ask your pardon, Emilie — I have been much to blame — I have been very unjust — very ill humoured — I see I was quite wrong — I see that I was quite mistaken in what I imagined.”

“And what did you imagine?” said Emilie.

“*That* you must excuse me from telling,” said Mrs. Somers — “I am too much

ashamed of it—too much ashamed of myself. Besides, it was a sort of thing, that I could not well explain, if I were to set about it; in short, it was the silliest trifle in the world: but I assure you, that, if I had not loved you very much, I should not have been so foolishly angry. You must forgive these little infirmities of temper—you know my heart is as it should be.”

Emilie embraced Mrs. Somers affectionately; and, in her joy at this reconciliation, and in the delight she felt at being relieved from the uneasiness, which she had suffered for three days, loved her friend the better for this quarrel; she quite forgot the pain in the pleasure of the reconciliation, and thought, that, even if Mrs. Somers had been in the wrong, the candour, with which she acknowledged it, more than made amends for the error.

“ You must forgive these little infirmities of temper—you know my heart is as it should be.”

Emilie repeated these words, and said to herself—"Forgive them! yes, surely; I should be the most ungrateful of human beings, if I did otherwise."

Without being the most ungrateful of human beings, Emilie, however, found it very difficult to keep her resolution.

With the most benevolent, and even magnanimous intentions, Mrs. Somers often tormented her friends cruelly; and the more they admired and were obliged to her; and the more sensibility they possessed, the greater were their sufferings. Almost every day, Emilie felt the apprehension or the certainty of having offended her benefactress; and the causes, by which she gave offence, were sometimes so trifling, as to elude her notice; so mysterious, that they could not be discovered; or so various and anomalous, that, even when she was told in what manner she had displeased, she could not form any rule, or draw any inference, for her future conduct. Sometimes she offended by differing, sometimes by agree-

ing, in taste or opinion with Mrs. Somers. Sometimes she perceived, that she was thought positive; at other times, too complying. A word, a look, or even silence—passive silence—was sufficient to affront this susceptible lady. Then she would go on with a string of deductions, or, rather, of imaginations, to prove, that there must be something wrong in Emilie's disposition; and she would insist upon it, that she knew better what was passing, or what would pass, in her mind, than Emilie could know herself. Nothing provoked Mrs. Somers more, than the want of success in any of her active attempts to make others happy. She was continually angry with Emilie for not being sufficiently pleased or grateful for things, which she had not the vanity to suspect were intended for her gratification, or which were not calculated to contribute to her amusement: this humility, or this difference of taste, was always considered as affectation or

perversity. One day, Mrs. Somers was angry with Emilie, because she did not thank her for inviting a celebrated singer to her concert; but Emilie had no idea, that the singer was invited on her account: of this, nothing could convince Mrs. Somers. Another day, she was excessively displeased, because Emilie was not so much entertained as she had expected her to be at the installation of a knight of the garter.

“Madame de Coulanges expressed a wish to see the ceremony of the installation; and, though I hate such things myself, I took prodigious pains to procure tickets, and to have you well placed——”

“Indeed, I was very sensible of it, dear madam.”

“May-be so, my dear; (but you did not look as if you were :) you seemed tired to death, and said you were sleepy; and ten times repeated, ‘Ah! qu’il fait chaud!’——But this is what I am used

to—what I have experienced all my life. The more pains a person takes to please and oblige, the less they can succeed, and the less gratitude they are to expect.”

Emilie reproached herself, and resolved, that, upon the next similar trial, she would not complain of being sleepy or tired; and that she would take particular care not to say—“Ah! qu’il fait chaud!” A short time afterwards, she was in a crowded assembly, at the house of a friend of Mrs. Somers, a *route*—a species of entertainment, of which she had not seen examples in her own country: (it appeared to her rather a barbarous mode of amusement, to meet in vast crowds, to squeeze or to be squeezed, without a possibility of enjoying any rational conversation.) Emilie was fatigued, and almost fainting, from the heat, but she bore it all with a smiling countenance and heroic gayety; for, this night, she was determined not to displease Mrs. Somers.—On their return

home, she was rather surprised and disappointed to find this lady in a fit of extreme ill humour.

“ I wanted to get away two hours ago,” cried she, “ but you would not understand any of my hints, mademoiselle de Coulanges ; and, when I asked you whether you did not find it very hot, you persisted in saying, ‘ Not in the least—not in the least.’ ”

Mrs. Somers was the more angry, upon this occasion, because she recollected having formerly reproached Emilie, at the installation, for complaining of the heat ; and she persuaded herself, that this was an instance of perversity in Emilie’s temper, and a sly method of revenging herself for the past. Nothing could be more improbable, from a girl of such a frank, forgiving, sweet disposition ; and no one would have been so ready to say so as Mrs. Somers in another mood ; but, the moment that she was irritated, she judged without common sense—never from general observations, but always

from particular instances. It was in vain, that Emilie disclaimed the motives attributed to her ; she was obliged to wait the return of her friend's reason, and, in the mean time, to bear her reproaches—which she did with infinite patience. Unfortunately, this patience soon became the source of fresh evils. Because Emilie was so gentle, and so ready to acknowledge and to believe herself to be in the wrong, Mrs. Somers became convinced, that she herself was in the right, in all her complaints ; and she fancied, that she had great merit in passing over so many defects in one, whom she had so much obliged, and who professed so much gratitude. — Between the fits of her ill humour, she would, however, waken to the full sense of Emilie's goodness, and would treat her with particular kindness, as if to make amends for the past. Then, if Emilie could not immediately resume that easy, gay familiarity of manner, which she used to have, before experience had taught her the fear of offending,

Mrs. Somers grew angry again, and decided, that Emilie had not sufficient elevation of soul to understand her character, or to forgive the *little infirmities* of the best of friends.—When she was under the influence of this suspicion, every thing, that Emilie said or looked, was confirmation strong. Mrs. Somers was apt, in conversation, to throw out general reflections, that were meant to apply to particular persons; or to speak with one meaning, obvious to all the company, and another, to be understood only by some individual, whom she wished to reproach. This art, which she had often successfully practised upon Emilie, she, for that reason, suspected, that Emilie tried upon her. And then the utmost ingenuity was employed to torture words into strange meanings: she would misinterpret the plainest expressions, or attribute to them some double, mysterious signification.

One evening, Emilie had been reading a new novel, the merits of which were

eagerly discussed by the company. Some said, that the heroine was a fool; others, that she was a mad woman; some, that she was not either, but that she acted as if she were both; another party asserted, that she was every thing, that was great and good, and that it was impossible to paint, in truer colours, the passion of love.—Mrs. Somers declared herself of this opinion; but Emilie, who happened not to be present when this declaration was made, on coming into the room and joining in the conversation, gave a diametrically opposite judgment; she said, that the author had painted the enthusiasm, with which the heroine yielded to her passion, instead of the violence of the passion to which she yielded.—The French abbé, to whom Emilie made this observation, repeated it triumphantly to Mrs. Somers, who immediately changed colour, and replied, in a constrained voice —

“Certainly that is a very apposite remark, and vastly well expressed; and I

give mademoiselle de Coulanges infinite credit for it."

Emilie, who knew every inflection of Mrs. Somers's voice, and every turn of her countenance, perceived, that these words of praise were accompanied with strong feelings of displeasure. She was much embarrassed, especially as Mrs. Somers fixed her eyes upon her whilst she blushed; and this made her blush ten times more: she was afraid, that the company, who were silent, should take notice of her distress; and, therefore, she went on talking very fast about the novel, though scarcely knowing what she said. She made sundry blunders, in names and characters, which were eagerly corrected by the astonished madame de Coulanges, who could not conceive how any body could forget the dramatis personæ of the novel of the day. Mrs. Somers, all the time, preserved silence, as if she dared not trust herself to speak; but her compressed lips showed sufficiently the constraint under which she laboured. Whilst

every body else went on talking, and helping themselves to refreshments, which the servants were handing about, Mrs. Somers continued leaning on the mantle-piece in a deep reverie, pulling her bracelet round and round upon her wrist, till she was roused by madame de Coulanges, who appealed for judgment upon her new method of preparing an orange.

“C'est à la corbeille — Tenez!” cried she, holding it by a slender handle of orange-peel; “Tenez! c'est à la corbeille! —”

Mrs. Somers, with a forced smile, admired the orange basket; but said, that, for her part, her hands were not sufficiently dexterous to imitate this fashion: “I,” said she, “can only do like the king of Prussia and *other people* — squeeze the orange, and throw the peel away. By the by, how absurd it was of Voltaire to be angry with the king of Prussia for that witty and just apologue.”

“*Just!*” repeated Emilie.

“Just!” reiterated Mrs. Somers, in a harsh voice — “Surely you think it so. For my part, I like the king the better for avowing his principles — all the world act as he did, though few avow it.”

“What!” said Emilie, in a low voice, “do not you believe in the reality of gratitude?”

“Apparently” — cried madame de Coulanges, who was still busy with her orange — “apparently, madame is a disciple of our Rochefoucault, and allows of no principle but self-love. In that case, I shall have as bitter quarrels with her as I have with you, mon chér abbé; — for Rochefoucault is a man I detest, or, rather, I detest his maxims — the duke himself, they say, was the most amiable man of his day. Only conceive, that such a man should ascribe all our virtues to self-love and vanity!”

“And, perhaps,” said the abbé, “it was merely vanity, that made him say so — he wished to write a witty, satirical

book; but, I will lay a wager, he did not think as ill of human nature as he speaks of it."

"He could hardly speak or think too ill of it," said Mrs. Somers, "if he judged of human nature by such speeches as that of the king of Prussia about his friend and the orange."

"But," said Emilie, in a timid voice, "would it not be doing poor human nature injustice, to judge it by such words as these? I am convinced, with M. l'abbé, that some men, for the sake of appearing witty, speak more malevolently than they feel: and, perhaps, this was the case with the king of Prussia."

"And mademoiselle de Coulanges thinks, then," said Mrs. Somers, "that it is quite allowable, for the sake of appearing witty, to speak malevolently?"

"Dear madam! dear Mrs. Somers!—no!" cried Emilie, "you quite misunderstood me——"

"Pardon me, I thought you were justifying the king of Prussia," continued

Mrs. Somers; "and I do not well see how that can be done without allowing — what many people do in practice, though not in theory — that it is right, and becoming, and prudent, to sacrifice a friend for a bon-mot——"

The angry emphasis and pointed manner, in which Mrs. Somers spoke these words, terrified and completely abashed Emilie, who saw, that something more was meant than met the ear. In her confusion, she ran over a variety of thoughts; but she could not recollect any thing, that she had ever said, which merited the name of a bon-mot — and a malevolent bon-mot! "Surely what I said about that foolish novel cannot have offended Mrs. Somers? — How is it possible! — She cannot be so childish, as to be angry with me merely for differing with her in opinion. What I said might be bad criticism, but it could not be malevolent; it referred only to the heroine of a novel. Perhaps the author may be a friend of hers, or some person, who is in

distress, and whom she has generously taken under her protection. Why did not I think of this before?—I was wrong, to give my opinion so decidedly—but then my opinion is of so little consequence; assuredly it can neither do good nor harm to any author. When Mrs. Somers considers this, she will be pacified; and, when she is once cool again, she will feel, that I could not mean to say any thing ill natured.”

The moment Mrs. Somers saw, that Emilie was sensible of her displeasure, she exerted herself to assume, during the remainder of the evening, an extraordinary appearance of gayety and good humour. Every body shared her smiles and kindness, except the unfortunate object of her indignation; she behaved towards mademoiselle de Coulanges with the most punctilious politeness; but “all the cruel language of the eye” was sufficiently expressive of her real feelings. Emilie bore with this infirmity of temper with resolute patience; she expected, that the fit would last only till she could

ask an explanation; and she followed Mrs. Somers, as was her usual custom, upon such occasions, to her room at night, in order to assert her innocence. Mrs. Somers walked into her room in a reverie, without perceiving, that she was followed by Emilie — threw herself into a chair — and gave a deep sigh.

“What is the matter, my dear friend!” Emilie began; but, on hearing the sound of her voice, Mrs. Somers started up, with sudden anger; then, constraining herself, she said —

“Pardon me, mademoiselle de Coulanges, if I tell you, that I really am tired to night — body and mind — I wish to have rest for both, if possible — Would you be so very obliging as to pull that bell for Masham? — I wish you a very good night — I hope madame de Coulanges will have her ass’s milk at the proper hour to morrow — I have given particular orders for that purpose——”

“Your kindness to mamma, dear Mrs. Somers,” said Emilie, “has been invariable, and ——”

“ Spare me, I beseech you, mademoiselle de Coulanges, all these *grateful speeches* — I really am not prepared to bear them with temper to night. Were you so good as to ring that bell — or will you give me leave to ring it myself? —”

“ If you insist upon it,” said Emilie, gently withholding the tassel of the bell; but if you would grant me five minutes — one minute — you might perhaps save yourself and me a sleepless night.”

Mrs. Somers, incapable of longer commanding her passion, made no reply, but snatched the bell-rope, and rang violently — Emilie let go the tassel, and withdrew. She heard Mrs. Somers say to herself, as she left the room — “ This is too much — too much — really too much! — hypocrisy I cannot endure. — Any thing but hypocrisy! —”

These words hurt Emilie more than any thing Mrs. Somers had ever said: her own indignation was roused, and she was upon the point of returning to vindicate

cate herself; but gratitude, if not prudence, conquered her resentment: she recollected her promise, to bear with the temper of her benefactress; she recollected all Mrs. Somers's kindness to her mother; and quietly retired to her room, determining to wait till morning, for a more favourable opportunity, to speak. — After passing a restless night, and dreaming the common dream of falling down precipices, and the uncommon circumstance of dragging Mrs. Somers after her by a bell-rope, she wakened, to the confused, painful remembrance, of all that had passed the preceding evening. She was anxious to obtain admittance to Mrs. Somers, as soon as she was dressed; but Masham informed her, that her lady had given particular orders, that she should "*not be disturbed.*" When Mrs. Somers made her appearance late at breakfast, there was the same forced good humour in her countenance towards the company in general, and the same punctilious politeness towards Emilie,

which had before appeared. She studiously avoided all opportunity of explaining herself, and every attempt of Emilie's towards a reconciliation, either by submissive gentleness or friendly familiarity, was disregarded, or noticed with cold disdain. Yet all this was visible only to her; for every body else observed, that Mrs. Somers was in remarkably good spirits, and in the most actively obliging humour imaginable: after breakfast, she proposed and arranged various parties of pleasure: she went with madame de Coulanges to pay several visits; a large company dined with her, and at night she went to a concert. In the midst of these apparent amusements, Emilie was made as unhappy as the marked, yet mysterious displeasure of a benefactress could render a person of real sensibility. As she did not wish to expose herself to a second repulse, she forbore to follow Mrs. Somers to her room at night, but she sent her this note by Mrs. Masham.

“ I have done or said something to
“ offend you, dear Mrs. Somers. If you
“ knew how much pain I have felt, from
“ your displeasure, I am sure you would
“ explain to me what it can be. Is it
“ possible, that my differing in opinion
“ from you about the heroine of the
“ novel can have offended you? — Per-
“ haps the author of the book is a friend
“ of yours, or under your protection? —
“ Be assured, that, if this be the case, I
“ did not in the least suspect it, at the
“ time I made the criticism. Perhaps it
“ was this, to which you alluded, when
“ you said, that the king of Prussia was
“ not the only person, who would not
“ hesitate to sacrifice a friend for a bon-
“ mot? ——— What injustice you do me
“ by such an idea! I will not here say
“ one word about my gratitude or my
“ affection, lest you should again re-
“ preach me with hypocrisy — any thing
“ else, I am able to bear. Pray write, if
“ you will not speak to me.

“ EMILIE.”

When Emilie was just falling asleep, Masham came into her room with a note in her hand.

“Mademoiselle, I am sorry to waken you; but my mistress thought you would not sleep, unless you read this note to night.”

Emilie started up in her bed, and read the following *note* of four pages.

“Yes, I will write, because I am ashamed to speak to you, my dear Emilie. I beg your pardon for pulling the bell-cord so violently from your hand last night — you must have thought me quite ill-bred; and, still more, I reproach myself for what I said about *hypocrisy* — You have certainly the sweetest and gentlest temper imaginable — Would to Heaven I had! But the strength of my feelings absolutely runs away with me. It is the doom of persons of great sensibility to be both unreasonable and unhappy; and often, alas! to involve in their misery those,

“ for whom they have the most enthusi-
“ astic affection. You see, my dear Emi-
“ lie, the price you must pay for being
“ my friend ; but you have strength of
“ mind joined to a feeling heart, and
“ you will bear with my defects—Dis-
“ simulation is not one of them. In spite
“ of all my efforts, I find it is impossible
“ ever to conceal from you any of even
“ my most unreasonable fancies—your
“ note, which is so characteristically
“ frank and artless, has opened my eyes
“ to my own folly. I must show you,
“ that, when I am in my senses, I do you
“ justice.—You deserve to be treated with
“ perfect openness—therefore, however
“ humiliating the explanation, I will
“ confess to you the real cause of my
“ displeasure.—When you spoke of the
“ heroine of this foolish novel, what you
“ said was so applicable to some parts of
“ my own history and character, that I
“ could not help suspecting you had
“ heard the facts from a person, with
“ whom you spent some hours lately ;

“ and I was much hurt by your alluding
“ to them in such a severe and public
“ manner. You will ask me, how I
“ could conceive you to be capable of
“ such unprovoked malevolence; and my
“ answer is, ‘I cannot tell;’ I can only
“ say, such is the effect of the unfortu-
“ nate susceptibility of my heart, or, to
“ speak more candidly, of my temper.
“ I confess, I cannot, in these particulars,
“ alter my nature. Blame me, as much
“ as I blame myself; be as angry as you
“ please, or as you can, my gentle friend:
“ but, at last, you must pity and forgive
“ me.

“ Now that all this affair is off my
“ mind, I can sleep in peace; and so, I
“ hope, will you, my dear Emilie — Good
“ night! — If friends never quarrelled,
“ they would never taste the joys of re-
“ conciliation. Believe me,

“ Your ever sincere and affectionate

“ A. SOMERS.”

No one tasted the joys of reconciliation.

more than Emilie; but, after reiterated experience, she was inclined to believe, that they cannot balance the evils of quarrelling. Mrs. Somers was one of those ladies, who "confess their faults, but never mend; and who expect, for this gratuitous candour, more applause, than others would claim for the real merit of reformation." So far did Mrs. Somers carry her admiration of her own candour, that she was actually upon the point of quarrelling with Emilie again, the next morning, because she did not seem sufficiently sensible of the magnanimity, with which she had confessed herself to be ill tempered. These few specimens are sufficient to give an idea of this lady's powers of tormenting; but, to form an adequate notion of their effect upon Emilie's spirits, we must conceive the same sort of provocations to be repeated, every day, for several months. Petty torments, incessantly repeated, exhaust the most determined patience. It is said, that the continual falling of a

single drop of water upon the head, is the most violent torture, that human cruelty has yet invented.

All this time, madame de Coulanges went on very smoothly with Mrs. Somers; for she had not Emilie's sensibility; and, notwithstanding her great quickness, a hundred things might pass, and did pass, before her eyes, without her seeing them. She examined no farther than the surface; and, provided that there was not any deficiency of those *little attentions*, to which she had been accustomed, it never occurred to her, that a friend could be more or less pleased: she did not understand or study physiognomy; a smile of the lips was, to her, always a sufficient token of approbation; and, whether it were merely conventional, or whether it came from the heart, she never troubled herself to inquire. Provided that she saw at dinner the usual *couverts*, and that she had a sufficient number of people to converse with, or, rather, to talk to, she was satisfied, that

every thing was right. All the variations in Mrs. Somers's temper were unmarked by her, or went under the general head, *vapeurs noirs*. This species of ignorance, or confidence, produced the best effects; for as Mrs. Somers could not, without passing the obvious bounds of politeness, make madame de Coulanges sensible of her displeasure, and as she had the utmost respect for the countess's opinion of her good breeding, she was, to a certain degree, compelled to command her temper. Madame de Coulanges, often without knowing it, tried it terribly, by differing from her in taste and judgment, and by supporting her own side of the question with all the enthusiastic volubility of the French language. Sometimes, the English and French music were compared—sometimes, the English and French painters; and every time the theatre was mentioned, madame de Coulanges pronounced a eulogium on her favourite French actors, and triumphed over the comparison between the elegance

of the French and the *grossièreté* of the English taste for comedy.

“Good Heaven!” said she, “your fashionable comedies would be too absurd to make the lowest of our audiences at the Boulevards laugh; you have excluded sentiment and wit, and what have you in their place?—Characters, out of drawing and out of nature; grotesque figures, such as you see in a child’s magic lantern. Then you talk of English humour—I wish I could understand it; but I cannot be diverted with seeing a tailor turned gentleman pricking his father with a needle, or a man making grimaces over a jug of sour beer——”

Mrs. Somers, piqued, perhaps, by the justice of some of these observations, would drily answer, that it was impossible for a foreigner to comprehend English humour—that she believed the French, in particular, were destitute of taste for humour.

Madame de Coulanges insisted upon it, that the French have humour; and Mo-

liere furnished her with many admirable illustrations.

Emilie, in support of her mother, read a passage from that elegant writer *, M.

* " Il est très-difficile de se faire une idée nette de ce que les Anglais entendent par ce mot; on a tenté plusieurs fois sans succès d'en donner une définition précise. Congreve qui assurément a mis beaucoup d'*humour* dans ses comédies, dit, que c'est une manière singulière et inévitable de faire ou de dire quelque chose, qui est naturelle et propre à un homme seul, et qui distingue ses discours et ses actions, des discours et des actions de tout autre.

Cette définition, que nous traduisons littéralement n'est pas lumineuse; elle conviendrait également à la manière dont Alexandre parle et agit dans Plutarque, et à celle dont Sancho parle et agit dans Cervantes. Il y a apparence que l'*humour* est comme l'esprit, et que ceux qui en ont le plus ne savent pas trop bien ce que c'est.

Nous croyons que ce genre de plaisanterie consiste surtout dans des idées ou des tournures originales, qui tiennent plus au caractère qu' à l'esprit, et qui semblent échapper à celui qui les produit.

L'homme d'*humour* est un plaisant sérieux, qui dit des choses plaisantes sans avoir l'air de vouloir être plaisant. Au reste, une scène de Vanbrugh ou une satire de Swift, feront mieux sentir ce que c'est, que toutes les définitions du monde. Quant à la

Suard, who has lately attacked, with much ability, the pretensions of the English to the exclusive possession of humour.

Mrs. Somers then changed her ground, and inveighed against French tragedy, and the unnatural tones and attitudes of the French tragic actors.

“Your heroes, on the French stage,” said she, “always look over their right shoulders, to express magnanimous disdain; and a lover, whether he be Grecian or Roman, Turk, Israelite, or American,

prétention de quelques Anglais sur la possession exclusive de l'Amour, nous pensons que si ce qu'ils entendent par ce mot est un genre de plaisanterie qu'on ne trouve ni dans Aristophane, dans Plaute et dans Lucien, chez les anciens; ni dans l'Arioste, le Berni, le Pulai et tant d'autres, chez les Italiens; ni dans Cervantes, chez les Espagnols; ni dans Rabelais, chez les Allemands; ni dans le Pantagruel, la satire Ménippée, le Roman comique, les comédies de Molière, de Dufreny, de Regnard, etc., nous ne savons pas ce qui c'est, et nous ne prendrons pas la peine de la chercher.”—*Suard Mélanges de Littérature*, vol. iv, p. 366.

must regularly show his passion by the pompous emphasis, with which he pronounces the word MADAME!—a word, which must certainly have, for a French audience, some magical charm, incomprehensible to other nations.”

What was yet more incomprehensible to madame de Coulanges was the enthusiasm of the English for that bloody-minded barbarian, Shakspeare, who is never satisfied, till he has strewed the stage with dead bodies; who treats his audience like children, that are to be frightened out of their wits by ghosts of all sorts and sizes, in their winding sheets; or by a set of old beggarmen, dressed in women's clothes, armed with broomsticks, and dancing and howling out their nonsensical song round a black kettle.

Mrs. Somers, smiling; as in scorn, would only reply — “Madame la comtesse, yours is Voltaire's Shakspeare, not ours.—Have you read Mrs. Montague's essay upon Shakspeare?”

• “No.”

“Then positively you must read it before we say one word more upon the subject.”

Madame de Coulanges, though unwilling to give up the pleasure of talking, took the book, which Mrs. Somers pressed upon her, with a promise to read it through some morning; but, unluckily, she chanced to open it towards the end, and happened to see some animadversions upon Racine, by which she was so astonished and disgusted, that she could read no more. She threw down the book, defying *any good critic to point out a single bad line in Racine*. “This is a defiance I have heard made by men of letters of the highest reputation in Paris,” added la comtesse. “Have not you, mon abbé?”

The abbé, who was madame’s common voucher, acceded, with this slight emendation — that he had heard numbers defy any critic of good taste to point out a flat line in *Phædre*.

Mrs. Somers would, perhaps, have

acknowledged the beauties of Phædre, if she had not been piqued by this defiance ; but exaggeration on one side produced injustice on the other ; and these disputes about Racine and Shakspeare were continually renewed, and never ended to the satisfaction of either party. Those, who will not make allowances for national prejudice, and who do not consider how much all our tastes are influenced by early education, example, and the accidental association of ideas, may dispute for ever without coming to any conclusion ; especially, if they avoid stating any distinct proposition ; if each of the combatants set up a standard of his own, as the universal standard of taste ; and if, instead of arguments, both parties have recourse to wit and ridicule. In these skirmishes, however, madame de Coulanges, though apparently the most eager for victory, never seriously lost her temper — her eagerness was more of manner, than of mind ; after pleading the cause of Racine, as if it were a matter of life

and death, as if the fate of Europe or the universe depended upon it, she would turn to discuss the merits of a riband with equal vehemence, or coolly observe, that she was hoarse, and that she would quit Racine for a better thing — *de l'eau sucré*. Mrs. Somers, on the contrary, took the cause of Shakspeare, or any other cause, that she defended, seriously to heart. The wit or raillery of her adversary, if she affected not to be hurt by it at the moment, left a sting in her mind, which rankled long and sorely. Though she often failed to refute the arguments brought against her, yet she always rose from the debate precisely of her first opinion; and even her silence, which madame de Coulanges sometimes mistook for assent or conviction, was only the symptom of contemptuous pity — the proof, that she deemed the understanding of her opponent beneath all fair competition with her own. The understanding of madame de Coulanges had, indeed, in the space of a few months,

sunk far below the point of mediocrity, in Mrs. Somers's estimation — she had begun by overvaluing, and she ended by underrating it. She at first had taken it for granted, that madame de Coulanges possessed “a very superior understanding and great strength of mind;” then she discovered, that la comtesse was “uncommonly superficial, even for a “Frenchwoman;” and at last she decided, that — “really madame de Coulanges was a very silly woman.”

Mrs. Somers now began to be seriously angry with Emilie, for always being of her mother's opinion — “It is really, mademoiselle de Coulanges, carrying your filial affection too far. We cold-hearted English can scarcely conceive this sort of fervid passion, which French children express about every thing, the merest trifle, that relates to *maman*! — Well! it is an amiable national prejudice; and one cannot help wishing, that it may never, like other amiable enthusiasms, fail in the moment of serious trial.”

Emilie, touched to the quick, upon a subject nearest her heart, replied, with a degree of dignity and spirit, which surprised Mrs. Somers, who had never seen in her any thing but the most submissive gentleness —

“ The affection, whether enthusiastic or not, which we French children profess for our parents, has been, of late years, put to some strong trials, and has not been found to fail. In many instances, it has proved superior to all earthly terrors — to imprisonment — to torture — to death — to Robespierre ! — Daughters have sacrificed themselves for their parents — Oh ! if *my* life could have saved my father’s ! — ”

Emilie clasped her hands, and looked up to Heaven, with the unaffected expression of filial piety in her countenance. Every body was silent. Mrs. Somers was struck with regret — with remorse — for the taunting manner, in which she had spoken —

“ My dearest Emilie, forgive me ! ”

cried she; "I am shocked at what I said ——"

Emilie took Mrs. Somers's hand between hers, and endeavoured to smile. Mrs. Somers resolved, that she would keep, henceforward, the strictest guard upon her own temper; and that she would never more be so ungenerous, so barbarous, as to insult one, who was so gentle, so grateful, so much in her power, and so deserving of her affection. These good resolutions, formed in the moment of contrition, were, however, soon forgotten: strong emotions of the heart are transient in their power; habits of the temper, permanent in their influence. — Like a child, who promises to be always good, and forgets it's promise in an hour, Mrs. Somers soon grew tired of keeping her temper in subjection: it did not, indeed, break out immediately towards Emilie; but, in her conversations with madame de Coulanges, the same feelings of irritation and contempt recurred; and Emilie, who was a clear-sighted by-

stander, suffered continual uneasiness upon these occasions — uneasiness, which appeared, to madame de Coulanges, perfectly causeless; and at which she frequently expressed her astonishment. Emilie's nice prescient kindness often, indeed, "felt the coming storm," while her mother's careless eye saw not, even when the dark cloud was just ready to burst over her head. With all the innocent address, of which she was mistress, Emilie tried to turn the course of the conversation, whenever it tended towards *dangerous* subjects of discussion; but her mother, far from shunning, would often dare and provoke the war; and she would combat long after both parties were in the dark, even till her adversary quitted the field of battle, exclaiming —

"Trève de discussion! — Let us have peace on any terms, my dear countess! — I give up the point to you, madame de Coulanges."

This last phrase Emilie particularly dreaded, as the precursor of ill humour.

for some succeeding hours. Mrs. Somers, at length, became so conscious of her own inability to conceal her contempt, or to command her temper, that she was almost as desirous as Emilie could be to avoid these arguments; and, the moment the countess prepared for the attack, she would recede, with —

“ Excuse me, madame de Coulanges; — we had better not talk upon these subjects — it is of no use — really of no manner of use — let us converse upon other topics — there are subjects enough, I hope, upon which we shall always agree.”

Emilie was at first rejoiced at this arrangement; but the constraint was insupportable to her mother: indeed, the circle of proper subjects for conversation contracted daily; for not only the declared offensive topics were to be avoided, but innumerable others, bordering on or allied to them, were to be shunned with equal care — a degree of caution, of which the volatile countess was utterly

incapable. One day, at dinner, she asked the gentleman opposite to her — “How long this intolerable rule — of talking only upon subjects where people are of the same opinion — had been the fashion, and what time it would probably last in England? — If it continue much longer, I must fly the country,” said she. “I would almost as soon, at this rate, be a prisoner in Paris, as in your land of freedom. You value, above all things, your liberty of the press — Now to me, liberty of the tongue, which is evidently a part, if not the best part, of personal liberty, is infinitely more dear. Bon Dieu! — even in l’Abbaye one might talk of Racine!”

Madame de Coulanges spoke this half in jest, half in earnest; but Mrs. Somers took it wholly in earnest, and was most seriously offended. Her feelings, upon the occasion, were strongly expressed in a letter to a friend, to whom she had, from her infancy, been in the habit of confiding all her joys and sor-

rows — all the histories of her loves and hates — of her quarrels and reconciliations. This friend was an elderly lady, who, besides possessing superior mental endowments, which inspired admiration, and a character, which commanded high respect, was blest with an uncommonly placid, benevolent temper. This (with the grace of God) enabled her to do, what no other human being had ever accomplished — to continue in peace and amity, for upwards of thirty years, with Mrs. Somers. The following is one of many hundreds of epistolary complaints, or invectives, which, during the course of that time, this “much enduring lady” was doomed to read and answer.

“ *To Lady LITTLETON.*

“ For once, my dear friend, I am secure of your sympathising in my indignation — my long suppressed, just, virtuous indignation — yes, virtuous; for I do hold indignation to be a part of virtue: it is the natural, proper expres-

“ sion of a warm heart and a strong cha-
“ racter against the cold-blooded vices
“ of meanness and ingratitude. Would
“ that those, to whom I allude, could
“ feel it as a punishment! — but no, this
“ is not the sort of punishment they are
“ formed to feel. Nothing but what
“ comes home to their interests — their
“ paltry interests! — their pleasures —
“ their selfish pleasures! — their amuse-
“ ments — their frivolous amusements!
“ can touch souls of such a sort. To this
“ half-formed race of *worldlings*, who are
“ scarce endued with a moral sense, the
“ generous expression of indignation al-
“ ways appears something incomprehensi-
“ ble — ridiculous; or, in their language,
“ *outré! inoui!* With such beings,
“ therefore, I always am — as much as
“ my nature will allow me to be — upon
“ my guard; I keep within, what they
“ call, the bounds of politeness — their
“ dear politeness! What a system of
“ *simagrée* it is, after all! and how can
“ honest human nature bear to be penned

“ up all it's days by the Chinese paling
“ of ceremony, or that French filagree
“ work, *politesse*? English human nature
“ cannot endure this, as *yet*: and I am
“ glad of it — heartily glad of it——Now
“ to the point —

“ You guess, that I am going to speak
“ of the Coulanges. Yes, my dear
“ friend, you were quite right, in advis-
“ ing me, when I first became acquainted
“ with them, not to give way blindly to
“ my enthusiasm — not to be too gene-
“ rous, or to expect too much grati-
“ tude——Gratitude! why should I ever
“ expect to meet with any? — Where I
“ have most deserved, most hoped for it,
“ I have been always most disappointed.
“ My life has been a life of sacrifices
“ — thankless and fruitless sacrifices!
“ There is not any possible species of sa-
“ crifice of interest, pleasure, happiness,
“ which I have not been willing to
“ make — which I have not made — for
“ my friends — for my enemies. Early
“ in life, I gave up a lover I adored to a

“ friend, who afterwards deserted me.—
“ I married a man I detested to oblige a
“ mother, who, at last, refused to see me
“ on her death-bed. What exertions I
“ made, for years, to win the affection of
“ the husband, to whom I was only
“ bound in duty!—My generosity was
“ thrown away upon him — he died — I
“ became ambitious — I had means of
“ gratifying my ambition — a splendid al-
“ liance was in my power—Ambition is a
“ strong passion, as well as love — but I
“ sacrificed it, without hesitation, to my
“ children — I devoted myself to the edu-
“ cation of my two sons, one of whom
“ has never, in any instance, since he
“ became his own master, shown his mo-
“ ther tenderness or affection; and who,
“ on some occasions, has scarcely be-
“ haved towards her with the common
“ forms of respect and duty——Despair-
“ ing, utterly despairing, of gratitude
“ from my own family and natural
“ friends, I looked abroad, and endea-
“ voured to form friendships with stran-

“gers, in hopes of finding more conge-
“genial tempers — I spared nothing to
“earn attachment — my time, my health,
“my money. I lavished money, so as
“even, notwithstanding my large in-
“come, to reduce myself frequently to
“the most straitened and embarrassing
“circumstances. And by all I have
“done, by all I have suffered, what have
“I gained? — not a single friend — ex-
“cept yourself — You, on whom I have
“never conferred the slightest favour,
“you are, at this instant, the only friend
“upon Earth, by whom I am really be-
“loved. — To you, who know my whole
“history, I may speak of myself, as I
“have done, Heaven knows! not with
“vanity, but with deep humiliation and
“bitterness of heart. The experience of
“my whole life leaves me only the de-
“plorable conviction, that it is impossi-
“ble to do good, that it is vain to hope
“even for friendship, from those whom
“we oblige.

“My last disappointment has been

“ cruel, in proportion to the fond hopes
 “ I had formed — I cannot cure myself
 “ of this credulous folly — I did form
 “ high expectations of happiness, from
 “ the society and gratitude of this ma-
 “ dame and mademoiselle de Coulanges ;
 “ but the mother turns out to be a mere
 “ frivolous French comtesse, ignorant,
 “ vain, and positive — as all ignorant
 “ people are ; full of national prejudices,
 “ which she supports in the most absurd
 “ and petulant manner. — Possessed with
 “ the insanity, common to all Parisians,
 “ of thinking, that Paris is the whole
 “ world, and that nothing can be good
 “ taste, or good sense, or good manners,
 “ but what is *à-la-mode de Paris* ; through
 “ all her boasted politeness, you see,
 “ even by her mode of praising, that she
 “ has a most illiberal contempt for all ;
 “ who are not Parisians — She considers
 “ the rest of the world as barbarians — I
 “ could give you a thousand instances ;
 “ but her conversation is really so frivo-
 “ lous, that it is not worth reciting. I

“ bore with it, day after day, for several
“ months, with a patience, for which,
“ I am sure, you would have given me
“ credit; and I let her go on eternally
“ with absurd observations upon Shak-
“ speare, and extravagant nonsense about
“ Racine. To avoid disputing with her,
“ I gave up every point — I acquiesced
“ in all she said — and only begged to
“ have peace. Still she was not satisfied.
“ You know there are tempers, which
“ never can be contented, do what you
“ will, to try to please them. Madame
“ de Coulanges actually quarrelled with
“ me for begging, that we might have
“ peace; and that we might talk upon
“ subjects, where we should not be likely
“ to disagree. This will seem to you
“ incredible; but it is the nature of
“ French caprice: and for this I ought
“ to have been prepared. But, indeed, I
“ never could have prepared myself for
“ the strange manner, in which this lady
“ thought proper to manifest her anger
“ this day at dinner, before a large com-

“pany. She spoke absolutely, notwith-
“standing all her good breeding, in the
“most brutally ungrateful manner; and,
“after all I have done for her, she repre-
“sented me as being as great a tyrant as
“Robespierre, and spoke of my house as
“a more intolerable prison than any in
“Paris!!! I only state the fact to you,
“without making any comments — I ne-
“ver yet saw so thoroughly selfish and
“unfeeling a human being.

“The daughter has as far too much,
“as the mother has too little sensibility
“— Emilie plagues me to death with her
“fine feelings, and her sentimentality,
“and all her French parade of affection,
“and superfluity of endearing expres-
“sions, which mean nothing, and disgust
“English ears: she is always fancy-
“ing, that I am angry or displeased
“with her or with her mother; and then
“I am to have tears, and explanations,
“and apologies: she has not a mind
“large enough to understand my cha-
“racter; and, if I were to explain to

“ eternity, she would be as much in the
“ dark as ever. Yet, after all, there is
“ something so ingenuous and affection-
“ ate about this girl, that I cannot help
“ loving her, and that is what provokes
“ me ; for she does not, nor ever can,
“ feel for me the affection, that I have
“ for her. My little hastiness of temper
“ she has not strength of mind sufficient
“ to bear — I see she is dreadfully afraid
“ of me, and more constrained in my
“ company, than in that of any other
“ person.—Not a visitor comes, however
“ insignificant, but mademoiselle de Cou-
“ langes seems more at her ease, and
“ converses more with them, than with
“ me — she talks to me only of gratitude
“ and such stuff. She is one of those
“ feeble persons, who, wanting confi-
“ dence in themselves, are continually
“ afraid, that they shall not be grateful
“ enough ; and so they reproach and tor-
“ ment themselves, and refine and *senti-*
“ *mentalize*, till gratitude becomes bur-
“ densome, (as it always does to weak

“ minds,) and the very idea of a benefac-
 “ tor odious. Mademoiselle de Coulanges
 “ was originally unwilling to accept of
 “ any obligation from me : she knew her
 “ own character better than I did. I do
 “ not deny, that she has a heart ; but
 “ she has no soul: I hope you under-
 “ stand and feel the difference. I re-
 “ joice, my dear lady Littleton, that you
 “ are coming to town immediately. I am
 “ harassed almost to death, between want
 “ of feeling and fine feeling. I really
 “ long to see you, and to talk over all
 “ these things. Nobody but you, my
 “ dear friend, ever understood me.—Fare-
 “ wel !

“ Yours affectionately,

“ A. SOMERS.”

To this long letter lady Littleton replied by the following short note.

“ I hope to see you the day after to-
 “ morrow, my dear friend ; in the mean-
 “ time, do not decide, irrevocably, that

“ *mademoiselle de Coulanges* has no
“ soul.

“ Yours affectionately,

“ L. LITTLETON.”

Mrs. Somers was rather disappointed by the calmness of this note; and she was most impatient to see lady Littleton, that she might work up her mind to the proper pitch of indignation. She stationed a servant at her ladyship's house, to give her notice the moment of her arrival in town. The instant, that she was informed of it, she ordered her carriage; and the whole of her conversation, during this visit, was an invective against Emilie and madame de Coulanges. The next day, Emilie, who had heard the most enthusiastic eulogiums upon lady Littleton, expressed much satisfaction on finding that she was come to town; and requested Mrs. Somers's permission to accompany her on her next visit. The request was rather embarrassing; but Mrs. Somers granted it, with a sort of

constrained civility. It was fortunate for Emilie, that she was so unsuspecting; for her manner was consequently frank, natural, and affectionate; and she appeared to the greatest advantage to lady Littleton. Mrs. Somers threw herself back in her chair, and sat silent, whilst Emilie, in hopes of pleasing her, conversed with the utmost freedom with her friend. The conversation, at last, was interrupted by an exclamation from Mrs. Somers—

“ Good Heavens! my dear lady Littleton, how can you endure this smell of paint?—It has made my head ache terribly—Where does it come from?”

“ From my bedchamber,” said lady Littleton. “ They have, unluckily, misunderstood my orders; and they have freshly painted every one in my house.”

“ Then it is impossible, that you should sleep here—I will not allow you—it will poison you—it will give you the palsy immediately—it is destruction—it is death—You must come home with me directly—I insist upon it———But, no!”

said she, checking herself, with a look of sudden disappointment—"No, my dearest friend! I cannot invite you; for I have not a bed to offer you."

"Yes, mine—you forget mine—dear Mrs. Somers," cried Emilie; "you know I can sleep with mamma."

"By no means, mademoiselle de Coulanges; you cannot possibly imagine——"

"I only imagine the truth," said Emilie, "that this arrangement would be infinitely more convenient to mamma; I know she likes to have me in the room with her.—Pray, dear Mrs. Somers, let it be so."

Mrs. Somers made many ceremonious speeches; but lady Littleton seemed so well inclined to accept Emilie's offered room, that Mrs. Somers was obliged to yield. She was vexed to perceive, that Emilie's manners pleased lady Littleton; and, after they returned home, the activity, with which Emilie moved her books, her drawing box, work, &c., furnished

Mrs. Somers with fresh matter for displeasure. At night, when lady Littleton went to take possession of her apartment, and when she observed how active and obliging mademoiselle de Coulanges had been, Mrs. Somers shook her head and replied—

“ All this is just a proof to me of what I asserted, lady Littleton—and what I must irrevocably assert — that mademoiselle de Coulanges has no soul. You are a new acquaintance, and I am an old friend. She exerts herself to please you; she does not care what I think, or what I feel about the matter.—Now this is just what I call having no soul.”

“ My dear Mrs. Somers,” said lady Littleton, with a composed gentleness of manner, “ be reasonable; and you must perceive, that Emilie’s eagerness to please me arises from her regard and gratitude to you: she has, I make no doubt, heard, that I am your intimate friend, and your praises have disposed her to like me.

— Is this a proof, that she has no soul? —”

“ My dear lady Littleton, we will not dispute about it—I see you are fascinated, as I was at first—Manner is a prodigious advantage—But I own I prefer solid English sincerity—Stay a little—As soon as *mademoiselle de Coulanges* thinks herself secure of you, she will completely abandon me. I make no doubt, that she will complain to you of my bad temper and ill usage; and, I dare say, that she will succeed in prejudicing you against me.”

“ She will succeed only in prejudicing me against herself, if she attempt to injure you,” said Lady Littleton; “ but, till I have some plain proof of it, I cannot believe, that any person has such a base and ungrateful disposition.”

Mrs. Somers spent an hour and a quarter in explaining her causes of complaint against both mother and daughter; and she at last retired, much dissatisfied, be-

cause her friend was not as angry as she was, but persisted in the resolution, to see more before she decided. After passing a few days in the house with mademoiselle de Coulanges, lady Littleton frankly declared to Mrs. Somers, that she thought her complaints of Emilie's temper quite unreasonable, and that she was a most amiable and affectionate girl. Respect for lady Littleton restrained Mrs. Somers from showing the full extent of her vexation; she contented herself with repeating—

“Mademoiselle de Coulanges is certainly a very amiable young woman.—I by no means would prejudice you against her—but, when you know her, as well as I do, you will find, that she has no soul.”

Mrs. Somers, in the course of four and twenty hours, found a multitude of proofs in support of her opinion; but they were none of them absolutely satisfactory to lady Littleton's judgment. Whilst they were debating about her character, Emi-

lie came into the room to show Mrs. Somers a *French* translation, which she had been making, of a pretty little English poem, called "The Emigrant's Grave."—It was impossible to be displeased with the translation, or with the motive, from which it was attempted; for it was done at the particular request of Mrs. Somers. This lady's ingenuity, however, did not fail to discover some cause for dissatisfaction. Mademoiselle de Coulanges had adapted the words to a French, and not to an English air.

"This is a favourite air of mamma's," said Emilie; "and I thought, that she would be pleased by my choosing it."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Somers, in her constrained voice, "I remember, that the countess de Coulanges and her friend—or your friend—M. de Brisac, were charmed with this air, when you sang it the other night—I found fault with it, I believe—But then you had a majority against me, and, with some people, that is sufficient.—Few ask themselves, *what*

constitutes a majority— numbers or sense. Judgments and tastes may differ in value; but one vote is always as good as another, in the opinion of those, who are decided merely by numbers.”

“ I hope, that I shall never be one of those,” said Emilie— “ Upon the present occasion, I assure you, my dear Mrs. Somers, that I was influenced by——”

“ O! my dear mademoiselle de Coulanges!” interrupted Mrs. Somers, “ you need not give yourself the trouble to explain about such a trifle—the thing is perfectly clear. And nothing is more natural, than that you should despise the taste of a friend, when put in competition with that of a lover.”

“ Of a lover!”

“ Yes, of a lover.—Why should mademoiselle de Coulanges think it necessary to look astonished? But young ladies imagine this sort of dissimulation is becoming—And can I hope to meet with an exception, or to find one superior to the *finesse* of her sex?—I beg your

pardon, mademoiselle de Coulanges, I really forgot, that lady Littleton was present, when this terrible word lover escaped—But I can assure you, that frankness is not incompatible with *her* ideas of delicacy.”

“You are mistaken, dear Mrs. Somers; indeed you are mistaken,” said Emilie: “but you are displeased with me now, and I will take a more favourable moment to set you right. In the mean time, I will go and water the hydrangia, which I forgot, and which I reproached myself for forgetting yesterday.”

Emilie left the room —

“Are you convinced now, my dear lady Littleton,” cried Mrs. Somers, “that this girl has no soul—and very little heart?”

“I am convinced only, that she has an excellent temper,” said lady Littleton. “I hope you do not think a good temper is incompatible with a heart or a soul.”

“I will tell you what I think, and what I am sure of,” cried Mrs. Somers, raising

her voice, "that mademoiselle de Coulanges will be a constant cause of dispute and uneasiness between you and me, lady Littleton—I foresee the end of this. As a return for all I have done for her and her mother, she will rob me of the affections of one, whom I love and esteem, respect and admire—as she well knows—above all other human beings—She will rob me of the affections of one, who has been my friend, my best, my only constant friend, for twenty years!—Oh! why am I doomed eternally to be the victim of ingratitude?—"

In spite of lady Littleton's efforts to stop and calm her, Mrs. Somers burst out of the room in an agony of passion. She ran up a back staircase, which led to her dressing room, but suddenly stopped, when she came to the landing place, for she found **Emilie** watering her plants.

"Look, dear Mrs. Somers, this hydrangia is just going to blow; though I was so careless as to forget to water it yesterday."

“ I beg, mademoiselle de Coulanges, that you will not trouble yourself,” said Mrs. Somers, haughtily—“ Surely there are servants enough, in this house, whose business it is to remember these things.”

“ Yes,” said Emilie, “ it is their business, but it is my pleasure—You must not, indeed you must not, take my watering pot from me!”

“ Pardon me, I must, mademoiselle—you are very condescending and polite, and I am very blunt and rude, or whatever you please to think me—But the fact is, that I am not to be flattered by what the French call *des petites attentions*—They are suited to little minds, but not to me—You will never know my character, mademoiselle de Coulanges—I am not to be pleased by such means.”

“ Teach me, then, better means, my dear friend, and do not bid me despair of ever pleasing you,” said Emilie, throwing her arms round Mrs. Somers to detain her.

“ Excuse me—I am an Englishwoman,

and do not love *embrassades*, which mean nothing," said Mrs. Somers, struggling to disengage herself; and she rushed suddenly forward, without perceiving, that Emilie's foot was entangled in her train. Emilie was thrown from the top of the stairs to the bottom. Mrs. Somers screamed—Lady Littleton came out of her room.

"She is dead!—I have killed her!"—cried Mrs. Somers. Lady Littleton raised Emilie from the ground—she was quite stunned by the violence of the fall.

"Oh! speak to me! dearest Emilie, speak once more!" said Mrs. Somers.

As soon as Emilie could speak, she assured Mrs. Somers, that she was not dead, and that she should be quite well in a few minutes. When she attempted, however, to walk, she found she was unable to move, for her ankle was violently sprained: she was carried into lady Littleton's room, and placed upon a sofa. She exerted herself to bear the pain she felt, that she might not alarm or seem to

reproach Mrs. Somers; and she repeatedly blamed herself for the awkwardness, with which she had occasioned her own fall. Mrs. Somers, in the greatest bustle and confusion, called every servant in the house about her, sent them different ways for all the remedies she had ever heard of for a sprain; then was sure Emilie's skull was fractured—asked fifty times in five minutes, whether she did not feel a certain sickness in her stomach, which was the infallible sign of "*something wrong*"—insisted upon her smelling at salts, vinegar, and various essences—made her swallow, or at least taste, many sorts of drops and cordials. By this time madame de Coulanges, who was at her toilette, had heard of the accident, and came running in half dressed; the hurry of Mrs. Somers's manner, the crowd of assistants, the quantity of remedies, the sight of Emilie stretched upon a sofa, and the sound of the word *fracture*, which caught her ear, had such an effect upon the countess, that she was instantly seized with

one of her nervous attacks—and Mrs. Somers was astonished to see Emilie spring from the sofa to assist her mother. When madame de Coulanges recovered, Emilie used all her powers of persuasion to calm her spirits, laughed at the idea of her skull being fractured, and said, that she had only twisted her ankle, which would merely prevent her from dancing for a few days. The countess pitied herself, for having such terribly weak nerves—congratulated herself upon her daughter's safety—declared, that it was a miracle, how she could have escaped, in falling down such a narrow staircase—observed, that, though the stairs in London were cleaner and better carpetted, the staircases of Paris were at least four times as broad, and, consequently, a hundred times as safe. She then reminded Emilie of an anecdote mentioned by madame de Genlis about a princess of France, who, when she retired to a convent, complained bitterly of the narrowness of the staircase, which, she said, she found a

real misfortune to be obliged to descend
——“Tell me, Emilie, what was the
name of the princess?”

“The princess Louisa of Savoy, I be-
lieve, mamma,” replied Emilie.

Madame de Coulanges repeated—“Ay,
the princess Louisa of Savoy;” and then,
well satisfied, returned to finish her toi-
lette.

“You have an excellent memory, ma-
demoiselle de Coulanges,” said Mrs. So-
mers, looking with an air of pique at
Emilie. “I really am rejoiced to see you
so much yourself again—I thought you
were seriously hurt.”

“I told you that I was not,” said
Emilie, forcing a smile.

“Yes, but I was such a fool, as to be
terrified out of my senses by seeing you
lie down on a sofa—I might have saved
myself and you a great deal of trouble.
I must have appeared ridiculously offi-
cious. I saw, indeed, that I was trouble-
some; and I seem to be too much for you
now. I will leave you with lady Little

ton, to explain to her how the accident happened. Pray tell the thing just as it was—do not spare me, I beg. I do not desire, that lady Littleton, or any friend I have upon Earth, should think better of me than I deserve.—Remember, you have my free leave, mademoiselle de Coulanges, to speak of me as you think—so don't spare me!" cried Mrs. Somers, shutting the door with violence, as she left the room——

"Lean upon me, my dear," said lady Littleton, who saw, that Emilie turned exceedingly pale, and looked towards a chair, as if she wished to reach it, but could not.

"I thought," said she, in a faint voice, "that this pain would go off, but it is grown more violent." Emilie could say no more; she had born intense pain as long as she was able; and now, quite overcome, she leaned back, and fainted. Lady Littleton threw open the window, sprinkled water upon Emilie's face, and gave her assistance in the kindest man-

ner, without calling any of the servants; she knew, that the return of Mrs. Somers would do more harm than good. Emilie soon recovered her recollection; and, whilst lady Littleton was rubbing the sprained ankle with ether, in hopes of lessening the pain, she asked how the accident had happened.—Emilie replied simply, that she had entangled her foot in Mrs. Somers's gown. "I understand, from what Mrs. Somers hinted, when she left the room," said lady Littleton, "that she was somehow in fault in this affair, and that you could blame her, if you would; but I see, that you will not; and I love you the better for justifying the good opinion, that I had formed of you, ~~Emilie~~.—But I will not talk sentiment to ~~you now~~—you are in too much pain to relish it."

"Not at all," said Emilie—"I feel more pleasure than pain at this moment—Indeed my ankle does not hurt me now that I am quite still—the pleasant cold of the ether has relieved the pain."

How kind you are to me, lady Littleton, and how much I am obliged to you for judging so favourably of my character!"

"You are not obliged to me, my dear, for I do you only justice."

"Justice is sometimes felt as the greatest possible obligation; especially by those, who have experienced the reverse——But," said Emilie, checking herself, "let me not blame Mrs. Somers, or incline you to blame her. I should do very wrong, indeed, if I were, in return for all she has done for us, to cause any jealousies or quarrels between her and her best friend——Oh! that is what I most dread! To prevent it, I would——it is not polite to say so——but I would, my dear lady Littleton, even withdraw myself from your society. This very day, you return to your own house. You were so good, as to ask me to go often to see you——Forgive me, if I do not avail myself of this kind permission.——You will know

my reasons; and, I hope, they are such as your ladyship will approve."

A servant came in, to say, that her ladyship's carriage was at the door.

"One word more, before you go, my dear lady Littleton," said Emilie, with a supplicating voice and countenance. "Tell me, I beseech you—for you have been her friend from her childhood, and must know better than any one living—tell me how I can please Mrs. Somers. I begin to be afraid, that I shall at last be weary of my fruitless efforts, and I dread—above all things I dread—that my affection for her should be worn out. How painful it would be to sustain the continual weight of obligation, without being able to feel the pleasure of gratitude!——"

Lady Littleton was going to reply, but she was prevented by the sudden entrance of Mrs. Somers with her face of wrath.

"So, lady Littleton, you are actually going, I find!—And I have not had one

moment of your conversation. May I be allowed—if mademoiselle de Coulanges has finished her mysteries—to say a few words to you?”

“You will give me leave, I am sure, Emilie,” said lady Littleton, “to repeat to Mrs. Somers every word, that you have said to me?”

“Yes, every word,” said Emilie, blushing, yet speaking with firmness—“I have no mysteries—I do not wish to conceal from Mrs. Somers any thing, that I say or think——”

Mrs. Somers seized lady Littleton’s arm, and left the room; but, when she had entire possession of her friend’s ear, she had nothing to say, or nothing that she would say, except half sentences, reproaching her for not staying longer, and insinuating, that Emilie would be the cause of their separating for ever.—

“Now, as you have her permission, will you favour me with a repetition of her last conversation?”

“Not in your present humour, my

dear," said lady Littleton. "This is not the happy moment to speak reason to you—Adieu!—I give you four and twenty hours' grace before I declare you a bankrupt in temper. You shall hear from me to morrow; for, on some subjects, I have always found it better to write, than to speak to you——"

Mrs. Somers continued during the remainder of the day in a desperate state of ill humour; which was increased by finding, that mademoiselle de Coulanges could neither stand nor walk: Mrs. Somers was persuaded, that Emilie, if she would have exerted herself, could have done both, but that she preferred exciting the pity of the whole house; and this, "all circumstances considered, was a proof of total want of generosity and gratitude." The next morning, however, she was alarmed by hearing from Mrs. Masham, whom she had sent to attend upon mademoiselle de Coulanges, that her ankle was violently swelled and inflamed—Just when the full tide of

her affections was beginning to flow in Emilie's favour, Mrs. Somers received the following letter from lady Littleton.

“ Enclosed, I have sent you, as well
“ as I can recollect it, every word of the
“ conversation, that passed yesterday be-
“ tween mademoiselle de Coulanges and
“ me. If I were less anxious for your
“ happiness, and if I had not so high an
“ opinion of the excellence of your dis-
“ position, I should wish, my dear friend,
“ to spare both you and myself the pain
“ of speaking and hearing the truth.
“ But I know, that I have preserved your
“ affection, many years beyond the usual
“ limits of female friendship, by daring
“ to speak to you with perfect sincerity,
“ and by trusting to the justice of your
“ better self. Perhaps you would rather
“ have a compliment to your generosity,
“ than to your justice; but in this I shall
“ not indulge you, because I think you
“ already set too high a value upon genero-
“ sity. It has been the misfortune of your

“ life, my dear friend, to believe, that, by
“ making great sacrifices, and conferring
“ great benefits, you could ensure to
“ yourself, in return, affection and grati-
“ tude—you mistake both the nature of
“ obligation, and the effect which it pro-
“ duces on the human mind. Obliga-
“ tions may command gratitude, but can
“ never ensure love. If the benefit be of
“ a pecuniary nature, it is necessarily at-
“ tended with a certain sense of humilia-
“ tion, which destroys the equality of
“ friendship. Of whatever description
“ the favour may be, it becomes burden-
“ some, if gratitude be expected as a tri-
“ bute, instead of being accepted as the
“ free-will offering of the heart—‘ Still
“ paying still to owe,’ is irksome, even to
“ those, who have nothing satanic in
“ their natures. A person, who has re-
“ ceived a favour, is in a defenceless state,
“ with respect to a benefactor; and the
“ benefactor, who makes an improper use
“ of the power, which gratitude gives,
“ becomes an oppressor. I know your
“ generous spirit, and I am fully sensible,

“ that no one has a more just idea than
 “ you have of the delicacy, that ought to
 “ be used towards those, whom you have
 “ obliged; but you must permit me to
 “ observe, that your practice is not always
 “ conformable to your theory. Temper
 “ is doubly necessary to those, who love,
 “ as you do, to confer favours: it is the
 “ duty of a benefactress to command her
 “ feelings, and to refrain absolutely from
 “ every species of direct or indirect re-
 “ proach; else her kindness becomes only
 “ a source of misery; and even from the
 “ benevolence of her disposition, she de-
 “ rives the means of giving pain. It
 “ is said, that the bee extracts the
 “ venom of her sting from her own ho-
 “ ney * ———

“ I have said enough; and I know that
 “ you will not be offended. — The mo-
 “ ment your understanding is convinced,
 “ and your heart touched, all paltry jea-
 “ lousies and petty irritations subside,
 “ and you are always capable of acting

* Paley.

“ in a manner worthy of yourself.—Adieu !
“ — May you, my dear friend, preserve
“ the affections of one, who feels for you,
“ I am convinced, the most sincere gra-
“ titude.—You will reap a rich harvest,
“ if you do not, with childish impatience,
“ disturb the seeds, that you have sown,
“ to examine whether they are grow-
“ ing.

“ Your faithful friend,

“ L. LITTLETON.”

This letter had an immediate and strong effect upon the mind of Mrs. Somers: she went directly with it open in her hand to Emilie—“ Here,” said she, “ is the letter of a noble-minded woman, who dares to speak truth, painful truth, to her best friend.—She does me justice, in being convinced, that I shall not be offended; she does me justice, in believing, that an appeal to my candour and generosity cannot be in vain, especially when it is made by her voice. Emilie, you shall see, that I am worthy

to have a sincere friend; you shall see, that I can even command my temper, when I have what, to my own feelings and understanding, appears adequate motive. But, my dear, you are in pain — Let me look at this ankle — I am absolutely afraid to see it — Good Heavens! how it is swelled! — And I fancied, all yesterday, that you could have walked upon it! — And I thought you wanted only to excite pity! — My poor child! — I have used you barbarously — most barbarously!” cried Mrs. Somers, kneeling down beside the sofa — “And can you ever forgive me? — Yes! that sweet smile tells me that you can.”

“All I ask of you,” said Emilie, embracing Mrs. Somers, “is to believe that I am grateful, and to continue to make me love you as long as I live. — This must depend upon you more than upon myself.”

“I know it, my dear,” said Mrs. Somers. — “Be satisfied — I will not wear out your affections — You have dealt

fairly with me. I love you, for having the courage to speak as you think — But now that it is all over, I must tell you what it was, that displeased me — for I hate half reconciliations. I will tell you all that passed in my mind.”

“ Pray do,” said Emilie ; “ for then I shall know how to avoid displeasing you another time.”

“ No danger of that, my dear — You will never make me angry again ; for I am sure you will now be as frank towards me, as I am towards you. It was not your adapting that little poem to a French, rather than to an English air, that displeased me—I am not quite so childish, as to be offended by such a trifle ; but I own I did not like your saying, that you chose it merely to comply with your mother’s taste — And you will acknowledge, Emilie, there was a want of sincerity, a want of candour, in your affected look of astonishment, when I mentioned M. de Brisac. I do not claim your confidence as a right — God forbid ! But if the

warmest desire for your happiness, the most affectionate sympathy, can merit confidence——But I will not say a word, that can imply reproach—On the contrary, I will only assure you, that I have penetration sufficient always to know your wishes, and activity enough to serve you effectually, even without being your confidante. I shall this night see a friend, who is in power—I will speak to him about M. de Brisac—I have hopes, that his pension from our government may be doubled.”

“I wish it may, for his sake,” said Emilie; “but certainly not for my own.”

“Oh! mademoiselle de Coulanges!——But I have no right to extort confidence—I will not, as I said before, utter a syllable, that can imply reproach.—Let me go on with what I was telling you of my intentions.—As soon as the pension is doubled, I will speak to madame de Coulanges about M. de Brisac.”

“For Heaven’s sake, do not!” interrupted Emilie; “for you would do me the

greatest possible injury — Mamma would then think it a suitable match, and she would wish me to marry him; and nothing could make me more unhappy, than to be under the necessity of acting contrary to my duty—of disobeying and displeasing her for ever — or else of uniting myself to M. de Brisac, whom I can neither love nor esteem.”

“ Is it possible !” exclaimed Mrs. Somers, with joyful astonishment — “ Is it possible, that I have been under a mistake all this time ! — My dearest Emilie ! now you are every thing I first thought you ! — Indeed, I could not think with patience of your making such a match ; for M. de Brisac is a mere nothing — worse than a mere nothing — a coxcomb, and a peevish coxcomb ———”

“ And how could you suspect me of loving such a man ?” said Emilie.

“ I never thought you loved him, but I thought you would marry him. French marriages, you know, according to *l'ancien régime*, in which you were brought up, were never supposed to be affairs of

the heart, but mere alliances of interest, pride, or convenience."

"Yes—des mariages de convenance," said Emilie—"We have suffered terribly by the revolution; but I owe to it one blessing, which, putting what mamma has felt out of the question, I should say has overbalanced all our losses: I have escaped—what must have been my fate, in the ancient order of things—*un mariage de convenance*. I must tell you how I escaped, by a happy misfortune," continued Emilie, suddenly recovering her vivacity of manner. "The family of M. de Brisac had settled, with mine, that I was to be la comtesse de Brisac—But we lost our property, and M. le comte his memory. Mamma was provoked and indignant—I rejoiced. When I saw how shabbily he behaved, could I do otherwise than rejoice, at having escaped being his wife? M. le comte de Brisac soon lost his hereditary honours and possessions—Heaven forgive me, for not pitying him! I was only glad mamma now

agreed with me, that we had nothing to regret. I had hoped, that we should never have heard more of him — But, lo! here he is again in my way, with a commission in your English army, and a pension from your generous king, which make him, amongst poor emigrants, a man of consequence — And he has taken it into his head to sigh for me, because I laugh at him; and he talks of his sentiments — — — sentiments! — he who has no principles! — — —”

“My noble-minded Emilie!” cried Mrs. Somers, “I cannot express to you the delight I feel at this explanation. How could I be such an idiot, as not sooner to see the truth! But I was misled by the solicitude, that madame de Coulanges showed about this M. de Brisac; and I foolishly concluded, that you and your mother were one — On the contrary; no two people can be more different, thank Heaven! — I beg your pardon for that thanksgiving — I see it distresses you, my dear Emilie — and, believe me, I

never was less disposed to give you pain — I have made you suffer too much already both in mind and body — This terrible ankle ——”

“It does not give me any pain,” said Emilie, “except when I attempt to walk; and it is no great misfortune to be obliged to be quiet for a few days.”

Mrs. Somers's whole soul was now intent upon the means of making her young friend amends for all she had suffered: this last conversation had raised her to the highest point, both of favour and esteem. Mrs. Somers was now revolving in her mind a scheme, which she had formed in the first moments of her partiality for Emilie — a scheme of marrying her to her son. She had often quarrelled with this son; but she persuaded herself, that Emilie would make him every thing, that was amiable and respectable, and that she should form an indissoluble bond of family union and felicity. “Then,” said she to herself, “Emilie will certainly be established ac-

ording to her mother's satisfaction. M. de Brisac cannot possibly stand in the way here; for my son has name and fortune, and every thing, that madame de Coulanges can desire."

Mrs. Somers wrote immediately to summon her son home. In the mean time, delighted with this new and grand project, and thinking herself sure of success, she neglected, according to her usual custom, the "little courtesies of life;" and all lady Littleton's excellent observation upon the nature of gratitude, and the effect produced on the mind by obligations, were entirely obliterated from her memory.

Emilie's sprained ankle confined her to the house for some weeks; both madame de Coulanges and Mrs. Somers began by offering in the most eager manner, in competition with each other, to stay at home every evening, to keep her company; but she found, that she could not accept of the offer of one without offending the other: she knew, that her mother

would have *les vapeurs noirs*, if she was not in *society*; and, as she had reason to apprehend, that Mrs. Somers could not, with the best intentions possible, remain three hours alone, with even a dear friend, without finding, or making some subject of quarrel, she wisely declined all these kind offers. In fact, these were *trifling sacrifices*, which it would not have suited Mrs. Somers's temper to make; for there was no glory to be gained by them. She regularly came every evening, as soon as she was dressed, to pity Emilie — to repeat her wish, that she might be allowed to stay at home — then to step into her carriage, and drive away to spend four hours in company, which she professed to hate.

Lady Littleton made no complimentary speeches, but every day she contrived to spend some time with Emilie; and, by a thousand small, but kind instances of attention, which asked neither for admiration nor gratitude, she contributed to Emilie's daily happiness. In whatever

occupations she was engaged, lady Littleton took an interest; and she was always ready to give her assistance and advice at the time, and in the manner, that Emilie desired.

This ready sympathy, and this promptitude to oblige in trifles, became extremely agreeable to mademoiselle de Coulanges; perhaps from the contrast with Mrs. Somers's defects, lady Littleton's manners pleased her peculiarly. She was under no fear of giving offence, so that she could speak her sentiments or express her feelings without constraint; and, in short, she enjoyed, in this lady's society, a degree of tranquillity of mind and freedom, to which she had long been a stranger. Lady Littleton had employed her excellent understanding in studying the minute circumstances, which tend to make people, of different characters and tempers, agree and live happily together; and she understood and practised so successfully all the *honest* arts of pleasing, that she rendered herself the centre of

union to a large circle of relations, many of whom she had converted into friends. This she had accomplished without any violent effort, without making any splendid sacrifices, but with that calm, gentle, persevering kindness of temper, which, when united to good sense, forms the real happiness of domestic life, and the true perfection of the female character. Those, who have not traced the causes of family quarrels, would not readily guess from what slight circumstances they often originate ; they arise more frequently from small defects in temper, than from material faults of character—People, who would perhaps sacrifice their fortunes or lives for each other, cannot, at certain moments, give up their will, or command their humour, in the slightest degree.

Whilst Emilie was confined by her sprained ankle, she employed herself in embroidering and painting various trifles, which she intended to offer as *souvenirs* to her English friends. Amongst these, the prettiest was one, which she called

the watch of Flora *. It was a dial-plate for a pendule, on which the hours were marked by flowers; by those flowers, which open or close their petals at particular times of the day. "Lin-næus has enumerated forty-six flowers, which possess this kind of sensibility; and has marked," as he says, "their respective hours of rising and setting." From these forty-six Emilie wished to select the most beautiful: she had some difficulty in finding such as would suit her purpose, especially as the observations made in the botanic gardens of Upsal could not exactly agree with our climate. She sometimes applied to Mrs. Somers for assistance; but Mrs. Somers repeatedly forgot to borrow for her the botanical books, which she wanted: this was too small a service for her to remember. She was provoked, at last, by Emilie's reiterated requests, and vexed by her own forgetfulness; so that made-

* See Botanic Garden, canto 2.

moiselle de Coulanges at last determined not to run the risk of offending, and she reluctantly laid aside her dial plate.

Young people, of vivacious and inventive tempers, who know what it is to be eagerly intent upon some favourite little project, will give Emilie due credit for her forbearance. Lady Littleton, though not a young person, could so far sympathise in the pursuits of youth, as to feel for Emilie's disappointment. "No," said she, "you must not lay aside your watch of Flora; perhaps I can help you to what you want." She was indefatigable in the search of books and flowers; and, by assisting her in the pursuit of this slight object, she not only enabled her to spend many happy hours, but was of the most essential service to Emilie. It happened, that one morning, when lady Littleton went to Kew Gardens, to search in the hothouses for some of the flowers, and to ascertain their hours of closing, she met with a French botanist, who had just arrived from Paris, who

came to examine the arrangement of Kew Gardens, and to compare it with that of the Jardin des Plantes. He paid some deserved compliments to the superiority of Kew Gardens; and, with the ease of a Frenchman, he entered into conversation with lady Littleton. As he inquired for several French emigrants, she mentioned the name of madame de Coulanges, and asked, whether he knew to whom the property of her family now belonged. He said, "that it was still in the possession of that *scelerat* of a steward, who had, by his informations, brought his excellent master, le comte de Coulanges, to the guillotine. But," added the botanist, "if you, madam, are acquainted with any of the family, will you give them notice, that this wretch is near his end; that he has, within a few weeks, had two strokes of apoplexy; and that his eldest son by no means resembles him; but is a worthy young man, who, to my certain knowledge, is shocked at his father's crimes, and who might be

prevailed upon, by a reasonable consideration, to restore to the family, to whom it originally belonged, the property that has been seized? I have, more than once, even in the most dangerous times, heard him (in confidence) express the strongest attachment to the descendant of the good master, who loaded him in his childhood with favours. These sentiments he has been, of course, obliged to dissemble, and to profess directly the contrary principles: it can only be by such means, that he can gain possession of the estate, which he wishes to restore to the rightful owners — He passes for as great a scoundrel as his father: this is not the least of his merits. But, madam, you may depend upon the correctness of my information, and of my knowledge of his character. I was once, as a man of science, under obligation to the late comte de Coulanges, who gave me the use of his library; and most happy should I think myself, if I could, by any means, be in-

strumental in restoring his descendants to the possession of that library."

There was such an air of truth and frankness in the countenance and manner of this gentleman, that, notwithstanding the extraordinary nature of his information, and the still more extraordinary facility, with which it was communicated, lady Littleton could not help believing him: he gave her ladyship his address; told her, that he should return to Paris in a few days; and that he should be happy, if he could be made, in any manner, useful to madame de Coulanges. Impatient to impart all this good news to her friends, lady Littleton hastened to Mrs. Somers's; but, just as she put her hand on the lock of Emilie's door, she recollected Mrs. Somers, and determined to tell her the first, that she might have the pleasure of communicating the joyful tidings. From her knowledge of the temper of her friend, lady Littleton thought, that this would be peculiarly gratifying to her; but, con-

trary to all rational expectation, Mrs. Somers heard the news with an air of extreme mortification, which soon turned into anger. She got up, and walked about the room, whilst lady Littleton was speaking; and, as soon as she had finished her story, exclaimed —

“ Was there ever any thing so provoking ! ”

She continued walking, deep in reverie, whilst lady Littleton sat looking at her in amazement. Mrs. Somers, having once formed the *generous* scheme of enriching Emilie by a marriage with her son, was actually disappointed to find, that there was a probability, that mademoiselle de Coulanges should recover a fortune, which would make her more than a suitable match for Mr. Somers. There was another circumstance, that was still more provoking — this property was likely to be recovered without the assistance of Mrs. Somers. There are people, who would rather, that their best friends should miss a piece of good for-

tune, than that they should obtain it without their intervention. Mrs. Somers at length quieted her own mind by the idea, that all lady Littleton had heard might have no foundation in truth.

“ I am surprised, my dear friend, that a person of your excellent judgment can, for an instant, believe such a strange story as this,” said Mrs. Somers. “ I assure you, I do not give the slightest credit to it. And, in my opinion, it would be much better not to say one word about the matter, either to Emilie or madame de Coulanges. It will only fill their minds with false and absurd hopes — madame de Coulanges will torment herself and me to death with conjectures and exclamations ; and we shall hear of nothing but the Hotel de Coulanges, and the Chateau de Coulanges, from morning till night ; and, after all, I am convinced she will never see either of them again.”

To this assertion, which Mrs. Somers could support only by repeating, that it was her conviction — that it was her un-

alterable conviction — lady Littleton simply replied, that it would be improper not to mention what had happened to madame de Coulanges, because this would deprive her of an opportunity of judging and acting for herself in her own affairs. “ This French gentleman has offered to carry letters, or to do her any service in his power ; he informs her, that the steward, who had possessed himself of the family estate, is not expected to live ; and that a young man will succeed to him, who is disposed to restore the whole property to the rightful owners, if he knew where they could be found, and if they would secure to him the means of subsistence. Surely,” said lady Littleton, “ we should not be justifiable in concealing this ; the information may be false, but of that madame de Coulanges should at least have an opportunity of judging ; she should see this botanist, and she will recollect, whether what he says of the count, and his allowing him the use of his library, be true or false :

from these circumstances, we may obtain some farther reason to believe or disbelieve him. I should be sorry to excite hopes, which must end in disappointment; but the chance of good, in this case, appears to me far greater than the chance of evil ——”

“ Very well, my dear lady Littleton,” interrupted Mrs. Somers — “ you will follow your judgment, and I must be allowed to follow mine, though I make no doubt, that yours is superior. — Manage this business as you please — I will have nothing to do with it — It is your opinion, that madame de Coulanges and her daughter should hear this wonderfully fine story; therefore, I beg you will be the relator — I must be excused — for my part, I can’t give any credit to it — no, not the slightest. But your judgment is better than mine, lady Littleton — you will act as you think proper, and manage the whole business yourself. — I am sure I wish you success with all my heart.”

Lady Littleton, by a mixture of firmness and gentleness in her manner, so far worked upon the temper of Mrs. Somers, as to prevail upon her to believe, that the management of the business was not her object; and she even persuaded Mrs. Somers to be present, when the intelligence was communicated to madame de Coulanges and Emilie. She could not, however, forbear repeating, that she did not believe the story:—this incredulity afforded her a plausible pretext for not sympathising in the general joy. Madame de Coulanges was alternately in ecstasy and in despair, as she listened to lady Littleton or to Mrs. Somers: her exclamations would have been much less frequent and violent, if Mrs. Somers had not provoked them, by mixing with her hopes a large portion of fear. The next day, when she saw the French gentleman, her hopes were predominant; for she recollected, perfectly, having seen this gentleman, in former times, at the Hotel de Coulanges; she knew, that he was, *un sa-*

vant; and that he had, before the revolution, the reputation of being a very worthy man. Madame de Coulanges, by lady Littleton's advice, determined, however, to be cautious in what she wrote to send to France by this gentleman — Emilie took the letters to Mrs. Somers, and requested her opinion; but she declined giving any.

“ I have nothing to do with the business, mademoiselle de Coulanges,” said she; “ you will be guided by the opinion of my lady Littleton.”

Emilie saw, that it was in vain to expostulate; she retired in silence, much embarrassed, as to the answer, which she was to give to her mother, who was waiting to hear the opinion of Mrs. Somers. Madame de Coulanges, impatient with Emilie, for bringing her only a reference to lady Littleton's opinion, went herself, with what she thought the most amiable politeness, to solicit the advice of Mrs. Somers; but she was astonished, and absolutely shocked, by the coldness and

want of good breeding, with which this lady persisted in a refusal to have any thing to do with the business, or even to read the letters, which waited for her judgment. The countess opened her large eyes to their utmost orbicular extent; and, after a moment's *silence*—the strongest possible expression, that she could give of amazement—she also retired, and returned to Emilie, to demand from her an explanation of what she could not understand. The ill humour of Mrs. Somers, now that madame de Coulanges was wakened to the perception of it, was not, as it had been to poor Emilie, a subject of continual anxiety and pain, but merely matter of astonishment and curiosity. She looked upon Mrs. Somers as an English *oddity*, as a *lusus naturæ*; and she alternately asked Emilie to account for these strange appearances, or shrugged up her shoulders, and submitted to the impossibility of a Frenchwoman's ever understanding such *extravagances*.

“ Ah que c'est bizarre!—Mais mon enfant expliquez moi donc tout ça?— Mais ça ne s'explique point—Certes c'est une Angloise qui scait donner, mais qui ne scait pas vivre.—Voltaire s'y connoissait mieux que moi apparemment— et heureusement.”

Content with this easy method of settling things, madame de Coulanges sealed and dispatched her letters—appealed no more to Mrs. Somers for advice—and, when she saw any extraordinary signs of displeasure, repeated to herself—“ Ah que c'est bizarre!”—And this phrase was for some time a quieting charm. But as the anxiety of the countess increased, at the time when she expected to receive the decisive answer from her steward's son, she talked with incessant and uncontrollable volubility of her hopes and fears—her conjectures and calculations—and of the Château and Hotel de Coulanges; and she could not endure to see, that Mrs. Somers heard all this with affected coldness or real impatience.

“How is this possible, Emilie!” said she—“Here is a woman, who would give me half her fortune, and who yet seems to wish, that I should not recover the whole of mine!—Here is a woman, who would move Heaven and Earth to serve me, in her own way; but who, nevertheless, will not give me either a word of advice, or a look of sympathy, in the most important affair, and the most anxious moment of my life!—But this is more than *bizarre*—this is intolerably provoking. For my part, I would rather a friend would deny me any thing, than sympathy; without sympathy, there is no society—there is no living—there is no talking. I begin to feel my obligations a burden; and, positively, with the first money I receive from my estates, I will relieve myself from my pecuniary debt to this generous, but incomprehensible Englishwoman.”

Every day Emilie dreaded the arrival of the post, when her mother asked—“Are there any letters from Paris?”—

Constantly the answer was — “No.” — Mrs. Somers’s look was triumphant, and madame de Coulanges applied regularly to her smelling-bottle or her snuff-box, to conceal her emotion, which Mrs. Somers increased by indirect reflections upon the absurdity of those, who listen to idle reports, and build castles in the air. Having set her opinion in opposition to lady Littleton’s, she supported it with a degree of obstinacy, and even acrimony, which made her often transgress the bounds of that politeness, which she had formerly maintained, in all her differences with the comtesse.

Madame de Coulanges could no longer consider her humour as merely *bizarre* — she found it *insupportable*; and Mrs. Somers appeared to her totally changed, and absolutely odious, now that she was roused by her own sufferings to the perception of those evils, which Emilie had long borne with all the firmness of principle, and all the philosophy of gratitude. Not a day passed without her complain-

ing to Emilie of some *grossièreté* from Mrs. Somers; and Emilie found it most difficult to bear to see her mother tormented. Madame de Coulanges suffered so much from irritation and anxiety, that her *vapeurs noirs* returned with tenfold violence. Emilie had loved Mrs. Somers, even when most unreasonable towards herself, as long as she behaved with kindness to her mother; but now that, instead of a source of pleasure, she became the hourly cause of pain to madame de Coulanges, Emilie's affection could no farther go; and she really began to dislike this lady—to dread to see her come into the room—and to tremble at hearing her voice. Emilie could judge only by what she saw, and she could not divine, that Mrs. Somers was occupied, all this time, with the generous scheme of marrying her to her son and heir, and of settling upon her a large fortune; nor could she guess, that all the ill humour, in Mrs. Somers, originated in the fear, that her friends should be made either

rich or happy without her assistance. Her son's delaying to return home, according to her mandate, had disappointed and vexed her extremely. Every day, when the post came in, she inquired for letters with almost as much eagerness as madame de Coulanges. At length, a letter came from Mr. Somers, to inform his impatient mother, that he should certainly be in town the beginning of the ensuing week. Delighted by this news, she could not refrain from the temptation of opening her whole mind to Emilie, though she had previously resolved not to give the slightest intimation of her scheme to any one, not even to lady Littleton, till a definitive answer had been received from Paris, respecting the fortune of madame de Coulanges. Often, when Mrs. Somers was full of some magnanimous design, the merest trifle, that interrupted the full display of her generosity, threw her into a passion, even with those, whom she was going to serve.—So it happened in the present instance.

—She went, with her open letter in her hand, to the countess's apartment, where, unluckily, she found M. de Brisac, who was going to read the French newspapers to madame. Mrs. Somers sat down beside Emilie, who was painting the last flower of her watch of Flora.—Mrs. Somers wrote on a slip of paper—“ Don't ask M. de Brisac to read the papers, for I want to speak to you.”—She threw down the note before Emilie, who was so intent upon what she was about, that she did not immediately see it—Mrs. Somers touched her elbow—Emilie started, and let fall her brush, which made a blot upon her dial-plate.

“ Oh! what a pity!—Just as I had finished my work,” cried Emilie, “ I have spoiled it!—”

M. de Brisac laid down the newspaper to pour forth compliments of condolence—Mrs. Somers tore the piece of paper, as he approached the table, and said, with some asperity—

“ One would think this was a matter

of life and death, by the terms in which it is deplored."

M. de Brisac, who stood so, that Mrs. Somers could not see him, shrugged his shoulders, and looked at madame de Coulanges, who answered him by another look, that plainly said ---

"This is English politeness!"

Emilie, who saw that her mother was displeased, endeavoured to change the course of her thoughts, by begging M. de Brisac to go on with what he was reading from the French papers. This was a fresh provocation to Mrs. Somers, who forgot, that Emilie had not read the words on the slip of paper, which had been torn; and, consequently, she could not know all Mrs. Somers's impatience for his departure. M. de Brisac read, in what this lady called his *unemphatic French tone*, paragraph after paragraph, and column after column, whilst her anxiety to have him go every moment increased. She moulded her son's letter into all manner of shapes, as she sat in

penance. To complete her misfortunes, something in the paper put madame de Coulanges in mind of former times; and she began a long history of the destruction of some fine old tapestry hangings in the Chateau de Coulanges, at the beginning of the revolution: this led to endless melancholy reflections; and at length tears began to flow from the fine eyes of the countess.

Just at this instant, a butterfly flew into the room, and passed by madame de Coulanges, who was sitting near the open window—

“O! the beautiful butterfly!” cried she, starting up to catch it—“Did you ever see such a charming creature!—Catch it, M. de Brisac!—Catch it, Emilie!—Catch it, Mrs. Somers!—”

With the tears yet upon her cheeks, madame de Coulanges began the chase, and M. de Brisac followed, beating the air with his perfumed handkerchief; and the butterfly fluttered round the table, at which Emilie was standing.

“Eh! M. de Brisac, catch it!—Catch it, Emilie!” repeated her mother—“Catch it, Mrs. Somers, for the love of Heaven!”

“*For the love of Heaven!*” repeated Mrs. Somers, who, immovably grave, and sullenly indignant, kept aloof during this chase.

“Ah! pour le coup, papillon, je te tiens!” cried la comtesse, and with eager joy she covered it with a glass, as it lighted on the table.

“Mademoiselle de Coulanges,” cried Mrs. Somers, “I acknowledge, now, that I was wrong in my criticism of Caroline de Lichtfield—I blamed the author for representing Caroline, at fifteen, or just when she is going to be married, as running after butterflies—I said, that, at that age, it was too frivolous—out of drawing—out of nature.—But I should have said, only, that it was out of *English nature*.—I stand corrected—”

Madame de Coulanges and M. de Brisac again interchanged looks, which

expressed "*Est il possible!*" — And la comtesse then, with an unusual degree of deliberation and dignity in her manner, walked out of the room. Emilie, who saw that her mother was extremely offended, was much embarrassed—she went on washing the blot out of her drawing. M. de Brisac stood silently looking over her, and Mrs. Somers opposite to him, wishing him fairly at the antipodes. M. de Brisac, to break the silence, which seemed to him, as if it never would be broken, asked mademoiselle de Coulanges, if she had ever seen the stadholder's fine collection of butterflies, and if she did not admire them extremely—No, she never had ; but she said, that she admired extremely the generosity the stadholder had shown in sacrificing, not only his fine collection of butterflies, but his most valuable pictures, to save the lives of the poor French emigrants, who were under his protection.

At the sound of the word generosity, Mrs. Somers became attentive, and Emi-

lie was in hopes, that she would recover her temper, and apologize to her mother: but at this moment a servant came to tell mademoiselle de Coulanges, that la comtesse wished to speak to her immediately. She found her mother in no humour to receive any apology, even if it had been offered: nothing could have hurt madame de Coulanges more, than the imputation of being frivolous.—

“Frivole! — Frivole! — moi frivole! —” she repeated, as soon as Emilie entered the room. “My dear Emilie! I would not live with this Mrs. Somers, for the rest of my days, were she to offer me Pitt’s diamond, or the whole mines of Golconda! — Bon Dieu! — neither money nor diamonds, after all, can pay for the want of kindness and politeness! — There is lady Littleton, who has never done us any favour, but that of showing us attention and sympathy — I protest I love her a million of times better than I can love Mrs. Somers, to whom we owe so much. It is in vain, Emilie, to remind

me, that she is our benefactress — I have said that over and over to myself, till I am tired, and till I have absolutely lost all sense of the meaning of the word. Bitterly do I repent having accepted of such obligations from this strange woman — for as to the idea of regaining our estate, and paying my debt to her, I have given up all hopes of it — You see, that we have no letters from France — I am quite tired out — I am convinced, that we shall never have any good news from Paris — And I cannot, I will not, remain longer in this house. Would you have me submit to be treated with disrespect? Mrs. Somers has affronted me, before M. de Brisac, in a manner, that I cannot, that I ought not to endure — that you, Emilie, ought not to wish me to endure. I positively will not live upon the bounty of Mrs. Somers. There is but one way of extricating ourselves. M. de Brisac — Why do you turn pale, child? — M. de Brisac has this morning made me a proposal for you, and the best thing

we can possibly do is to accept of it."

"The best! — Pray don't say the best!" cried Emilie — "Ah! dear mamma, for me the worst! — Let me beseech you not to sacrifice my happiness for ever by such a marriage! —"

"And what other can you expect, Emilie, in your present circumstances?"

"None," said Emilie.

"And here is an establishment — at least an independance for you — and you call it sacrificing your happiness for ever, to accept of it?"

"Yes," said Emilie, "because it is offered to me by one, whom I can neither love nor esteem. — Dearest mamma! can you forget all his former meanness of conduct? —"

"His present behaviour makes amends for the past," said madame de Coulanges, "and entitles him to my esteem and to yours, and that is sufficient — As to love — well educated girls do not marry for love."

“ But they ought not to marry without feeling love, should they ? ” — said Emilie.

“ Emilie ! Emilie ! ” said her mother, “ these are strange ideas, that have come into the heads of young women, since the revolution — If you had remained safe in your convent, I should have heard none of this nonsense.”

“ Perhaps not, mamma,” said Emilie, with a deep sigh — “ But should I have been happier ? ”

“ A fine question, truly ! — How can I tell ? — But this I can ask you — How can any girl expect to be happy, who abandons the principles, in which she was bred up, and forgets her duty to the mother, by whom she has been educated — the mother, whose pride, whose delight, whose darling, she has ever been ? — Oh ! Emilie ! this is to me worse than all I have ever suffered ! ”

Madame de Coulanges burst into a passion of tears, and Emilie stood looking at her in silent despair —

“ Emilie, you cannot deceive me,” cried her mother; “ you cannot pretend, that it is simply your want of esteem for M. de Brisac, which renders you thus obstinately averse to the match——You are in love with another person.”

“ Not in love,” said Emilie, in a faltering voice.

“ You cannot deceive me, Emilie — Remember all you said to me about the stranger, who was our fellow prisoner at the Abbaye — You cannot deny this, Emilie ——”

“ Nor do I, dear mamma,” said Emilie — “ I *cannot* deceive you, indeed I *would* not; and the best proof, that I do not wish to deceive you — that I never attempted it — is, that I told you all I thought and felt about that stranger. I told you, that his honourable, brave, and generous conduct towards us, when we were in distress, made an impression upon my heart — that I preferred him to any person I had ever seen — and I told you, my dear mamma, that ——”

“You told me too much,” interrupted madame de Coulanges — “more than I wished to hear — more than I will have repeated, Emilie. This is romance and nonsense. The man, whoever he was — and Heaven knows who he was! — behaved very well, and was a very agreeable person — But what then? — Are you ever likely to see him again? — Do you even know his birth — his name — his country — or any thing about him, but that he was brave and generous? — So are fifty other men, five hundred, five thousand, five million, I hope — But is this any reason, that you should refuse to marry M. de Brisac? — Henry the Fourth was brave and generous, two hundred years ago — That is as much to the purpose — You have as much chance of establishing yourself, if you wait for Henry the Fourth to come to life again, as if you wait for this nameless nobody of a hero — who is perhaps married, after all — who knows? — Really, Emilie, this is too absurd!”

“But, dear mamma, I cannot marry one man, and love another.—love I did not quite mean to say — But whilst I prefer another, I cannot, in honour, marry M. de Brisac —”

“Honour!—Love!—But in France, in my time, who ever heard of a young lady’s being in love before she was married? — You astonish, you frighten, you shock me, child!” — Recollect yourself, Emilie!—Misfortune may have deprived you of the vast possessions, to which you are heiress; but do not, therefore, degrade yourself and me by forgetting your principles, and all that the representative of the house of Coulanges ought to remember — And as for myself — Have I no claim upon your affections, Emilie? — Have not I been a fond mother? —”

“Oh! yes!” said Emilie, melting into tears — “Of your kindness I think more than of any thing else! — more than of the whole house of Coulanges!”

“Do not let me see you in tears, child!” said madame de Coulanges,

moved by Emilie's grief — “ Your tears hurt my nerves more even than Mrs. Somers's *grossièreté*. You must blame Mrs. Somers, not me, for all this — Her temper drives me to it — I cannot live with her — We have no alternative. Emilie, my sweet child ! make me happy ! — I am miserable in this house. — Hitherto, you have ever been the best of daughters, and you shall find me the most indulgent of mothers — One whole month I will give you to change your mind, and recollect your duty. At the end of that time, I must see you madame de Brisac, and in a house of your own — In the house of Mrs. Somers I will not; I cannot longer remain.”

The feelings, with which poor Emilie heard this sentence pronounced, can more easily be imagined than described. But she was glad of the reprieve of one month. She retired from her mother's presence in silent anguish, and hastened to her own apartment, that she might

give way to her grief. There she found Mrs. Somers waiting for her, seated in an arm chair, with an open letter in her hand.

“Why do you start, Emilie?—You look as if you were sorry to find me here,” cried Mrs. Somers—“IF THAT be the case, mademoiselle de Coulanges ——”

“Oh! Mrs. Somers! do not begin to quarrel with me at this moment, for I shall not be able to bear it—I am sufficiently unhappy, already!” said Emilie.

“I am extremely sorry, that any thing should make you unhappy, Emilie,” said Mrs. Somers; “but I think, that you had never less reason, than at this moment, to suspect me of an intention of quarrelling with you—I came here with a very different design.—May I know the cause of your distress?——”

Emilie hesitated, for she did not know how to explain the cause without imputing blame either to Mrs. Somers or to her mother—she could only say—“*M. de Brisac*——”

“What!” cried Mrs. Somers, “your mother wants you to marry him?”

“Yes.”

“Immediately?”

“In one month.”

“And you have consented?”

“No — But ——”

“*But* — Good Heavens! Emilie, what weakness of mind there is in that *But* ——”

“Is it weakness of mind to fear to disobey my mother — to dread to offend her for ever — to render her unhappy — and to deprive her, perhaps, even of the means of subsistence?”

“*The means of subsistence!* my dear — This phrase, you know, can only be a figure of rhetoric,” — said Mrs. Somers — “Your refusing M. de Brisac cannot deprive your mother of the means of subsistence — In the first place, she expects to recover her property in France ——”

“No,” said Emilie; “she has given up those hopes — you have persuaded her, that they are vain.”

“Indeed, I think them so — But still

you must know, my dear, that your mother can never be in want of the means of subsistence, nor any of the conveniences, and, I may add, luxuries of life, whilst I am alive."

Emilie sighed; and, when Mrs. Somers urged her more closely, she said—

"Mamma has not, till lately, been accustomed to live on the bounty of others; the sense of dependance produces many painful feelings, and renders people more susceptible, than perhaps they would be, were they on terms of equality——"

"To what does all this tend, my dear?" interrupted Mrs. Somers. "Is madame de Coulanges offended with me?—Is she tired of living with me?—Does she wish to quit my house?—And where does she intend to go?—Oh! that is a question, that I need not ask!—Yes, yes—I have long foreseen it—you have arranged it admirably—You go to lady Littleton, I presume?——"

"Oh, no!"

“To M. de Brisac?—”

“Mamma wishes to go—”

“Then to M. de Brisac, in God’s name, let her go,” cried Mrs. Somers, bursting into a fit of laughter, which astonished Emilie beyond measure—“To M. de Brisac let her go—’tis the best thing she can possibly do, my dear; and seriously, to tell you the truth, I have always thought it would be an excellent match. Since she is so much prepossessed in his favour, can she do better than marry him; and, as he is so much attached to the house of Coulanges, when he cannot have the daughter, can he do better than marry the mother?—Your mother does not look too old for him, when she is well roused; and I am sure, if she heard me say so, she would forgive me all the rest—butterfly, frivolity, and all inclusive.—Permit me, Emilie, to laugh.”

“I cannot permit any body to laugh at mamma,” said Emilie; “and Mrs. Somers is the last person, who I should

have supposed would have been inclined to laugh, when I told her that I was really unhappy."

"My dear Emilie, I forgive you for being angry, because I never saw you angry before; and that is more than you can say for me. You do me justice, however, by supposing, that I should be the last person to laugh, when you are in wo, unless I thought — unless I was sure — that I could remove the cause, and make you completely happy."

"That, I fear, is impossible," said Emilie; "for mamma's pride and her feelings have been so much hurt, that I do not think any apology would now calm her mind."

"Apology! — I am not in the least inclined to make any — Can I tell madame de Coulanges, that I do not think her frivolous? — Impossible, indeed, my dear! — I will do any thing else to oblige you. But I have as much pride, and as much feeling, in my own way, as any of the house of Coulanges; and if, after all I

have done, madame can quarrel with me about a butterfly, I must say, not only that she is the most frivolous, but the most ungrateful woman upon Earth — and, as she desires to quit my house, far from attempting to detain her, I can only wish, that she may accomplish her purpose as soon as possible — as soon as it may suit her own convenience — As for you, Emilie, I do not suspect you of the ingratitude of wishing to leave me — I can make distinctions, even when I have most reason to be angry — I do not blame you, my dear — I do not even ask you to blame your mother — I respect your filial piety — I am sure you must think her to blame, but I do not desire you to say so. Could any thing be more barbarously selfish, than the plan of marrying *you* to this M. de Brisac, that *she* might have an establishment more to her taste, than my house has been able to afford?"

Emilie attempted, but in vain, to say

a few words for her mother — Mrs. Somers ran on with her own thoughts —

“ And at what a time, at what a cruel time for me, did madame de Coulanges choose to express her desire to leave my house — at the moment when my whole soul was intent upon a scheme for the happiness of her daughter! Yes, Emilie, for your happiness! — And, my dear, your mother’s conduct shall change nothing in my views. You, I have always found uniformly kind, gentle, grateful — I will say more — I have found in you, Emilie, real magnanimity. I have tried your temper much — sometimes too much — but I have always found you proof against these petty trials — Your character is suited to mine — I love you, as if you were my daughter, and I wish you to be my daughter — Now you know my whole mind, Emilie. My son — my *eldest* son, I should with emphasis say, if I were speaking to madame de Coulanges — will be here in a few days — Read this let-

ter — How happy I shall be, if you find him — or if you will make him — such as you can entirely approve and love. You will have power over him — your influence will do what his mother's never could accomplish. But, whatever reasons I may have to complain of him, this is not the time to state them — you will connect him with me. At all events, he is a man of honour and a gentleman; and, as he is not, thank Heaven! under the debasing necessity of considering fortune, in the choice of a wife, he is, at least, in this respect, worthy of my dear and high-minded Emilie.”

Mrs. Somers paused, and fixed her eyes eagerly upon Emilie, impatient for her answer, and already half provoked by not seeing the sudden transition of countenance, which she had pictured in her imagination. With a mixture of dignity and affectionate gratitude in her manner, Emilie was beginning to thank Mrs. Somers for the generous kindness

of her intention ; but this susceptible lady interrupted her, and exclaimed —

“ Spare me your thanks, mademoiselle de Coulanges, and tell me, at once, what is passing in your mind ; for something very extraordinary is certainly passing there, which I cannot comprehend. Surely, you cannot for a moment imagine, that your mother will insist upon your now accepting of M de Brisac ; or, if she does, surely you would not have the weakness to yield. I must have some proof of strength of mind from my friends — You must judge for yourself, Emilie, or you are not the person I take you for — You will have full opportunity of judging in a few days. Will you promise me, that you will decide entirely for yourself, and that you will keep your mind unbiassed ? — Will you promise me this ? — And will you speak, at all events, my dear, that I may understand you ? — ”

Emilie, who saw, that, even before she spoke, Mrs. Somers was on the brink of

anger, trembled at the idea of confessing the truth — that her heart was already biassed in favour of another: she had, however, the courage to explain to her all that passed, in her mind. Mrs. Somers heard her with inexpressible disappointment. — She was silent for some minutes. — At last, she said, in a voice of constrained passion —

“ Mademoiselle de Coulanges, I have only one question to ask of you — you will reflect before you answer it — because on your reply depends the continuance or utter dissolution of our friendship — Do you, or do you not, think proper to refuse my son before you have seen him ?”

“ Before I have seen Mr. Somers, it surely can be no affront to you or to him,” said Emilie, “ to decline an offer, that I cannot accept, especially when I give as my reason, that my mind is prepossessed in favour of another — with that prepossession, I cannot unite myself to your son; I can only express to you

my gratitude — my most sincere gratitude — for your kind and generous intentions, and my hopes, that he will find, amongst his own countrywomen, one more suited to him than I can be — His fortune is far above ——”

“ Say no more, I beg, Mademoiselle de Coulanges — I asked only for a simple answer to a plain question — You refuse my son — you refuse to be my daughter — I am satisfied — perfectly satisfied. I suppose you have arranged to go to lady Littleton’s — I heartily hope, that she may be able to make her house more agreeable to you, than I could render mine. Shake hands, mademoiselle de Coulanges — You have my best wishes for your health and happiness —— Here we part.”

“ Oh! do not let us part in anger!” said Emilie.

“ In anger! — Not in the least — I never was cooler in my life — You have completely cooled me — you have shown me the folly of that warmth of friend-

ship, which can meet with no return——”

“Would it be a suitable return for your warm friendship to deceive your son?” said Emilie.

“To deceive me, I think still less suitable!” cried Mrs. Somers.

“And how have I deceived you?”

“You know best—Why was I kept in ignorance till the last moment?—Why did you never confide your thoughts to me, Emilie?—Why did you never, till now, say one word to me of this strange attachment?——”

“There was no necessity for speaking till now,” said Emilie. “It is a subject I never named to any one, except to mamma—a subject, on which I did not think it right to speak to any one but to a parent.”

“Your notions of right and wrong, ma’am, differ widely from mine—we are not fit to live together—I have no idea of a friend’s concealing any thing from me—without entire confidence, there is

no friendship—at least no friendship with me—Pray no tears—I am not fond of *scenes*—Nobody ever is, that feels *much*.—Adieu!—Adieu!”

Mrs. Somers hurried out of the room, repeating—“ I’ll write directly—this instant—to lady Littleton——Madame de Coulanges shall not be kept prisoner in *my* house.” Emilie stood motionless.

In a few minutes, Mrs. Somers returned, with an unfolded letter, which she put into Emilie’s passive hand—

“ Read it, ma’am, I beg—read it. I do every thing openly—every thing handsomely, I hope—whatever may be my faults.”

The letter was written with a rapid hand, which was scarcely legible, especially to a foreigner. Emilie, with her eyes full of tears, had no chance of deciphering it—

“ Do not hurry yourself, ma’am,” said Mrs. Somers—“ I will leave you my letter to show to madame la comtesse, and then you will be so good as to dispatch

it——“Mademoiselle de Coulanges!—Mademoiselle de Coulanges!” cried Mrs. Somers——“You will be so obliging as to refrain from mentioning to the countess the foolish offer, that I made you, in my son’s name, this morning——There is no necessity for mortifying my pride any farther——a refusal from you is quite decisive——So pray let there be no consultations——As to the rest, the blame of our disagreement will of course be thrown upon me.”

As Emilie moved towards the door, Mrs. Somers said——“Mademoiselle de Coulanges, I beg pardon for calling you back——But, should you ever think of this business, or of me, hereafter, you will do me the justice to remember, that I made the proposal to you at a time when I was under the firm belief, that you would never recover an inch of your estates in France.”

“And you, dear Mrs. Somers, if you should ever think of me, hereafter,” said Emilie, “will, I hope, remember, that

my answer was given under the same belief."

With a look, that seemed to refuse assent, Mrs. Somers continued—

"I am as well aware, ma'am, as you, or madame de Coulanges, can be, that, if you should recover your hereditary property, the heiress of the house of Coulanges would be a person, to whom my son should not presume to aspire——"

"Oh! Mrs. Somers! Is not this cruel mockery—undeserved by me—unworthy of you?"

"Mockery!——Ma'am, it is not three days, since your mother was so positive, in her expectations of being in the Hotel de Coulanges before next winter, that she was almost in fits, because I ventured to differ, on this point, from her and lady Littleton—Lady Littleton's judgment is much better than mine; and has, of course, had it's weight—very justly——But I insist upon your understanding clearly, that it had no weight with me, in this affair—Whatever you may ima-

gine, I never thought of the Coulanges estate——”

“ Believe me, I never could have imagined, that you did. If *I* could suspect Mrs. Somers of interested motives,” said Emilie, with emotion so great, that she could scarcely articulate the words, “ I must be an unfeeling—an ungrateful idiot——”

“ No, not an idiot, mademoiselle de Coulanges—Nobody can mistake you for an idiot—But, as I was going to say, if you inquire, lady Littleton can tell you, that I was absolutely provoked, when I first heard you had a chance of recovering your property—You may smile, ma’am, but it is perfectly true—I own, I might have been more prudent—But prudence, in affairs of the heart, is not one of my virtues—I own, however, it would have been more prudent, to have refrained from making this proposal, till you had received a positive answer from France.”

“And why?” said Emilie. “Whatever that answer might have been, surely you must be certain, that it would not have made any alteration in my conduct.—You are silent, Mrs. Somers!—You wound me to the heart!—Oh! do me justice!—Justice is all I ask.”

“I think, that I do you justice—full justice—mademoiselle de Coulanges; and, if it wounds you to the heart, I am sorry for it—but that is not my fault.”

Emilie’s countenance suddenly changed, from the expression of supplicating tenderness, to haughty indignation—“You doubt my integrity!” she exclaimed—“Then, indeed, Mrs. Somers, it is best, that we should part!—”

Mademoiselle de Coulanges disappeared, and Mrs. Somers shut herself up in her room, where she walked backwards and forwards for above an hour, then threw herself upon a sofa, and remained nearly another hour, till Mrs. Masham came to say, that it was time to

dress for dinner: she then started up, saying aloud—"I will think no more of these ungrateful people——"

"They are gone, ma'am," said Mrs. Masham—"Gone, and gave no vails!—which I don't think *on*, upon my own account, God knows! for if millions were offered me, in pocketpieces, I would not touch one, from any soul that comes to the house, having enough, and more than enough, from my own generous lady, who is the only person I stoop to receive from with pleasure.—But there are others in the house, who are accustomed to vails, and, after staying so long, it was a little ungenteel to go without so much as offering any one any thing—and to go in such a hurry and huff—taking only a French leave, after all!—I must acknowledge, with you, ma'am, that they are the ungratefulest people, that ever were seen in England—Why, ma'am, I went backwards and forwards often enough into their apartments, to try to make out the

cause of the packings and messages to the washerwoman, that I might inform you, but nothing transpired; yet I am certain, in their hearts, they are more black and ungrateful, than any that ever were born—for there!—at the last moment, when even, for old acquaintance sake, the tears stood in my eyes, there was miss Emilie, sitting as composedly as a judge, painting a butterfly's wing on some of her Frenchifications!—Her eyes were red, to do her justice; but, whether with painting or crying, I can't pretend to be certain—But as to madame de Coulanges, I can answer for her, that the sole thing in nature she thought of, in leaving this house, was the bad step of the hackney coach.”

“ Hackney coach!” cried Mrs. Somers, with surprise—“ Did they go away in a hackney coach?”

“ Yes, ma'am, much against the countess's stomach, I am sure—I only wish you had seen the face she made, when the glass would not come up.”

“But why did not they take my carriage, or wait for lady Littleton’s?—They were, it seems, in a violent hurry to be gone,” said Mrs. Somers—

“So it seems, indeed, ma’am—No better proof of their being the most ungratefullest people in the universe—But so it is, by all accounts, with all of their nation—The French having no constant hearts for any thing but singing, and dancing, and dressing, and making merry-andrews of themselves—Indeed, I own, till to day, I thought miss Emilie had less of the merry-andrew nature, than any of her country; but the butterfly has satisfied me, that there is no striving against climate and natural character, which conquer gratitude and every thing else.”

Mrs. Somers sighed, and told Masham, that she had said enough upon this disagreeable subject. At dinner, the subject was renewed by many visitors, who, as soon as they found, that madame and mademoiselle de Coulanges had left Mrs. Somers, began to find innumerable faults

with the French in general, and with the countess and her daughter in particular. On the chapter of gratitude, they were most severe; and Mrs. Somers was universally pitied, for having so much generosity, and blamed for having had so much patience. Every body declared, that they foresaw how she would be treated, and the exclamations of wonder at lady Littleton's inviting to her house those, who had behaved so ill to her friend, were unceasing. Mrs. Somers, all the time, denied, that she had any cause of complaint against either madame de Coulanges or her daughter; but the company judiciously trusted more to her looks than her words. Every thing was said or hinted, that could exasperate her against her former favourites: for madame de Coulanges had made many enemies by engrossing an unreasonable share in the conversation; and Emilie, by attracting too great a portion of attention, by her beauty and engaging manners.—Malice often overshoots the mark.—Mrs.

Somers was at first glad to hear the objects of her indignation abused; but, at last, she began to think the profusion of blame greater than was merited; and, when she retired to rest at night, and when Masham began with—

“ Oh! ma'am! do you know that mademoiselle de Coulanges ———”

Mrs. Somers interrupted her, and said — “ Masham, I desire to hear nothing more about mademoiselle de Coulanges — I have heard her and her mother abused, without ceasing, these two hours, and that is enough.”

“ Lord! ma'am! I was not going to abuse them — God forbid! — I was just going to tell you,” cried Masham, “ that never was any thing so mistaken, as all I said before dinner. Just now, ma'am, when I went into the little dressing-room, within madame de Coulanges's room, and happened to open the wardrobe, I was quite struck back with shame at my own injustice — There, ma'am, poor miss Emilie left something — and

out of her best things!—to every maid-servant in the house; all directed in her own hand, and with a good word for each; and this ring for me, which, she is kind enough to say, is of no value, but to put me in mind of all the attentions I have shown her and her mother, which, I am sure, were scarcely worth noticing, especially at such a time, when she had enough to do, and her heart full, no doubt, poor soul!—There are her little paintings and embroideries, and pretty things, that she did when she was confined with her sprain, all laid out in order—'tis my astonishment, how she found time!—and directed to her friends in London, as keepsakes!—and the very butterfly, that I was so angry with her for staying to finish, is on something for you, ma'am; and here's a packet, that was with it, and that nobody saw, till this minute."

"Give it me!" cried Mrs. Somers. She tore it open, and found, in the first place, the pocketbook, full of bank notes,

which she had given madame de Coulanges, with a few polite, but haughty lines, from the countess, saying, that only twenty guineas had been used, which she hoped, at some future period, to be able to repay. Then came a note from Emilie, in which Mrs. Somers found her own letter to lady Littleton. — Emilie expressed herself as follows.

“ Many thanks for the enclosed, but
“ we have determined not to go to lady
“ Littleton’s — At least we will take care
“ not to be the cause of quarrel between
“ friends, to whom we are so much ob-
“ liged. — No, dear Mrs. Somers! we
“ do not part in anger — Excuse me, if
“ the last words I said to you were hasty
“ — they were forced from me by a mo-
“ ment of passion — but it is past — All
“ your generosity, all your kindness, the
“ recollection of all, that you have done,
“ all that you have wished for my happi-
“ ness, rushes upon my mind, and every
“ other thought, and every other feeling,

“ is forgotten. Would to Heaven ! that
“ I could express to you my gratitude by
“ actions !—but words, alas ! are all,
“ that I have in my power — and where
“ shall I find words, that can reach your
“ heart !—I had better be silent, and
“ trust to time, and to you — You will
“ hereafter think justly, perhaps partially,
“ of me. — I know your generous temper
“ — You will soon blame yourself, for hav-
“ ing judged too severely of Emilie.—But
“ do not reproach yourself—do not let this
“ give you a moment’s uneasiness. The
“ clouds pass away, and the blue sky re-
“ mains. Think only—as I ever shall —
“ of your goodness to mamma and to me.
“ —Adieu !

“ EMILIE DE COULANGES.”

Mrs. Somers was much affected by this letter, and by the information, that Emilie and her mother had declined taking refuge with lady Littleton, lest they should occasion jealousies between her and her friend—Generous people are, of all others,

the most touched by generosity of sentiment or of action. Mrs. Somers went to bed, enraged against herself — But it was now too late.

In the mean time, Emilie and her mother were in an obscure lodging, at a haberdasher's, near Golden Square. The pride of madame de Coulanges, at first, supported her even beyond her daughter's expectations ; she uttered no complaints, but frequently repeated ——

“ Mais nous sommes bien ici, très bien — We cannot expect to have things as well as at the Hotel de Coulanges ” — In a short time, she was threatened with fits of her *vapeurs noirs* ; but Emilie, with the assistance of her whole store of French songs, a bird-organ, a lapdog, and a squirrel, belonging to the girl of the house, contrived to avert the danger for the present. — As to the future, she trembled to think of it ; M. de Brisac seemed to be continually in her mother's thoughts ; and, whatever occurred, or whatever was the subject of conversation, madame de Cou-

langes always found means to end with — “*apropos to M. de Brisac.*” Faithful to her promise, however, which Emilie, with the utmost delicacy, recalled to her mind, she declared, that she would not give M. de Brisac an answer, till the end of the month, which she had allowed her daughter for reflection, and that, till that period, she would not even let him know where they were to be found. Emilie thought, that the time went very fast, and her mother evidently rejoiced at the idea, that the month would soon be at an end. Emilie endeavoured, with all her skill, to demonstrate to her mother, that it would be possible to support themselves, by her industry and ingenuity, without this marriage; and to this, madame de Coulanges at first replied—“Try, and you will soon be tired, child.” Emilie’s spirits rose on receiving this permission — She began by copying music for a music-shop in the neighbourhood; and her mother saw, with astonishment, that she persevered in her design, and that no fatigue or dis-

couraging circumstances could vanquish her resolution.

“ Good Heavens! my child,” said she, “ you will wear yourself to a skeleton, with copying music, and with painting, and embroidery, beside stooping so many hours over that tambour frame — My dear, how can you bear all this !”

“ How! — Oh! dear mamma!” said Emilie, “ there is no great difficulty in all this, to me — the difficulty, the impossibility would be, to live happily with a man I despise ——”

“ I wish,” cried madame de Coulanges, “ I wish to all the saints, that that hero of yours, that fellow prisoner of ours, at the Abbaye, with his humanity, and his generosity, and his courage, and all his fine qualities, had kept out of your way, Emilie —— I wish he were fairly at the bottom of the Black Sea ——”

“ But you forget, that he was the means of obtaining your liberty, mamma.”

“ I wish I could forget it — I am al-

ways doomed to be obliged to those, whom I cannot love. But, after all, you might as well think of the khan of Tartary as of this man, whom we shall never hear of more — marry M. de Brisac, like a reasonable creature, and do not let me see you bending, as you do, for ever, over a tambour frame, wasting your fine eyes, and spoiling your charming shape.”

“But, mamma,” said Emilie, “would it not be much worse to marry one man, and like another?”

“For mercy’s sake! say something new to me, Emilie; at all events, I have heard this a hundred times.”

“The simple truth, alas!” said Emilie, “must always be the same — I wish I could put it in any new light, that would please you, dear mamma.”

“It never can please me, child,” cried madame de Coulanges, angrily; “nor can you please me, neither, as you are going on — Fine heroism, truly! — you will sacrifice your duty and your mother to your obstinacy in an idle fancy. But,

remember, the last days of the month are at hand — longer I will not listen to such provoking nonsense — it has half killed me, already.”

Neither lapdog, squirrel, bird-organ, nor Emilie's whole stock of French songs, could longer support the vivacity of madame de Coulanges; for some days she had passed the time in watching and listening to the London cries, as she sat at her window: the figures and sounds in this busy part of the town were quite new to her; and, whilst the novelty lasted, she was, like a child, good humoured, and full of exclamations. The want of some one to listen to these exclamations was an insupportable evil; she complained terribly of her daughter's silence, whilst she was attending to her different employments. This want of conversation, and of all the luxuries she enjoyed at the house of Mrs. Somers, her anger against that lady, her loss of all hope of hearing from France, and her fear, that Emilie would at last abso-

lutely refuse to obey and marry M. de Brisac, all together, operated so powerfully upon madame de Coulanges, that she really fell sick, and kept her bed. Emilie now confined herself to her mother's room, and attended her with the most affectionate care, and with a degree of anxiety, which those only can comprehend, who have believed themselves to be the cause of the illness of a friend — of a parent. — Madame de Coulanges would sometimes reply, when her daughter asked her, if such or such a thing had done her good —

“ No, my child, nothing will do me good, but your obedience, which you refuse me — perhaps on my deathbed — ”

Though Emilie did not apprehend, that her mother was in any immediate danger, yet these continual fits of low spirits and nervous attacks excited much alarm — Emilie's reflections on her own helpless situation contributed to magnify her fears: she considered, that she was a stranger, a foreigner, without friends,

without credit, almost without money, and deprived, by the necessary attendance on her sick mother, of all power to earn any by her own exertions. The bodily fatigue, that she endured, even without any mental anxiety, would have been sufficient to wear out the spirits of a more robust person than Emilie — She had no human being to assist her but a young girl, a servant-maid belonging to the house, who, fortunately, was active and good natured ; but her mistress was excessively cross, vulgar, and avaricious ; avarice, indeed, often seemed to conquer in her the common feelings of humanity. Once, whilst madame de Coulanges was extremely ill, she forced her way into her bedchamber, to insist upon changing “ the counterpane ” upon the bed, which, she said, was too good to be stained with coffee : another day, when she was angry with mademoiselle de Coulanges, for having cracked a basin by heating some soup for her mother, she declared, in the least ceremonious terms

possible, that she hated to have any of the French *refugees* and emigrants in the house, for that she was not accustomed to let her lodgings to folk, that nobody ever came near to visit, and that lived only upon soups and sallads, and such low stuff; "and who, when they were ill, never so much as called in a physician, or even a nurse, but must take up the time of people, that were not bound to wait upon them."

Mademoiselle de Coulanges bore all this patiently, rather than run the hazard of removing to other lodgings, whilst her mother was so ill. The countess had a prejudice against English physicians, as she affirmed, that it was impossible, that they could understand French constitutions, especially hers, which was different from that of any other human being, and which, as she said, only one medical man in France rightly understood. At last, however, she yielded to the persuasions of her daughter, and permitted Emilie to send for a physician. When she in-

quired what he thought of her mother, he said, that she was in a nervous fever, and that, unless her mind was kept free from anxiety, he could not answer for her recovery. Madame de Coulanges looked full at her daughter, who was standing at the foot of her bed; a mist came before Emilie's eyes, a cold dew covered her forehead, and she was forced to hold by the bedpost to support herself——

At this instant, the door opened, and lady Littleton appeared——Emilie sprang forward, and threw herself into her arms——Madame de Coulanges started up in her bed, exclaiming——“ Ah Ciel!”——and then all were silent——except the mistress of the house, who went on making apologies about——“ the dirt of her stairs, and it's being Friday night.” But as she at length perceived, that not a soul in the room knew a word she was saying, she retreated——The physician took leave——And, when they were thus left at liberty, lady Littleton seated herself in the broken arm chair, beside the bed, and

told madame de Coulanges, that Mrs. Somers had been very unhappy, in consequence of their quarrel; and that she had been indefatigable in her inquiries and endeavours to find out the place of their retreat; that she had at last given up the search in despair—"But," continued lady Littleton, "it has been my good fortune to discover you by means of this flower of Emilie's painting—(she produced a little hand skreen, which Emilie had lately made, and which she had sent to be disposed of at the 'Repository for ingenious Works.')

"I knew it to be yours, my dear," said lady Littleton, "because it is an exact resemblance of one upon your watch of Flora, which was drawn from the flower I brought you from Kew Gardens—Now you must not be angry with me for finding you out, nor for begging of you to be reconciled to poor Mrs. Somers, who has suffered much in your absence—much from the idea of what you would endure—and more, from her self-reproaches. She

has, indeed, an unfortunate susceptibility of temper, which makes her sometimes forget both politeness and justice; but, as you well know, her heart is excellent. Come, you must promise me to meet her at my house, as soon as you are able to go out, my dear madame de Coulanges."

"I do not know when that will be," replied madame de Coulanges, in a sick voice—"I was never so ill in my life—and so the physician says. But I am revived by seeing lady Littleton—she is, and ever has been, all goodness and politeness to us. I am ashamed, that she should see us in such a miserable place. Emilie, give me my other night riband, and the wretched little looking-glass——"

Madame de Coulanges sat up, and arranged her head-dress. At this moment, lady Littleton took Emilie aside, and put into her hand a letter from France!—"I would not speak of it suddenly to your mother, my dear," said she; "but you will find the proper time—I hope it contains good news—at present, I will have

patience.— You shall see me again soon; and you must, at all events, let me take you from this miserable place— Mrs. Somers has been punished enough.— Adieu!— I long to know the news from France——”

The news from France was such as made the looking-glass drop from the hand of madame de Coulanges— It was a letter from the son of her old steward, to tell her, that his father was dead— that he was now in possession of all the family fortune, which he was impatient to restore to the wife and daughter of his former master and friend.

“ Heaven be praised!” exclaimed madame de Coulanges, in an ecstasy of joy —“ Heaven be praised! we shall once more see dear Paris, and the Hotel de Coulanges!”

“ Heaven be praised!” cried Emilie, “ I shall never more see M. de Brisac— My mother, I am sure, will no longer wish me to marry him——!”

“ No, in truth,” said the countess, “ it

would now be a most unequal match, and one to which he is by no means entitled! —How fortunate it is, that I had not given him my promise! —After all, your aversion to him, child, was quite providential. —Now you may form the most splendid alliance, that your heart can desire.”

“ My heart,” said Emilie, sighing, “ desires no splendid alliance. But had you not better lie down, dear mamma? — You will certainly catch cold — and, remember, your mind must be kept quiet.”

It was impossible to keep her mind quiet; she ran on, from one subject to another, with extravagant volubility; and Emilie was afraid, that she would, the next day, be quite exhausted; but, on the contrary, after talking above half the night, she fell into a sound sleep; and, when she wakened, after having slept fourteen hours, she declared, that she would no longer be kept a prisoner in bed. The renovating effects of joy, and the influence of the imagination, were

never more strongly displayed.—“ Le malheur passé n'est bon qu'à être oublié,” was la comtesse's favourite maxim— And, to do her justice; she was as ready to forget past quarrels, as past misfortunes— She readily complied with Emilie's request, that she would, as soon as she was able to go out, accompany her to lady Littleton's, that they might meet, and be reconciled to Mrs. Somers—

“ She has the most tormenting temper imaginable,” said the countess; “ and I would not live with her for the universe— Mais d'ailleurs c'est la meilleure femme du monde——”

If, instead of being the best woman in the world, Mrs. Somers had been the worst, and if, instead of being a benefactress, she had been an enemy, it would have been all the same thing to the countess; for, in this moment, she was, as usual, like a child, a *friend* to every creature of every kind.

Her volubility was interrupted by the arrival of lady Littleton, who came to

carry madame de Coulanges and Emilie to her house, where, as her ladyship said, Mrs. Somers was impatiently waiting for them. Lady Littleton had prevented her from coming to this poor lodging-house; because she knew, that the being seen there would mortify the pride of some of the house of Coulanges.

Mrs. Somers was indeed waiting for them, with inexpressible impatience. The moment she heard their voices in the hall, at lady Littleton's, she ran down stairs to meet them; and, as she embraced Emilie, she could not refrain from bursting into tears——

“Tears of joy, these must be,” cried madame de Coulanges——“We are all happy now——perfectly happy——Are not we?——Embrace me, Mrs. Somers——Emilie shall not have all your heart——I have some gratitude, as well as my daughter; and I should have none, if I did not love you——especially at this moment——”

Madame de Coulanges was, by this time, at the head of the stairs; a servant

opened the dining room door; but something was amiss with the strings of her sandals—she would stay to adjust them—and said to Emilie—

“ Allez, allez—Entrez——”

Emilie obeyed.—An instant afterwards, madame de Coulanges thought she heard a sudden cry, either of joy or grief, from Emilie—She hurried into the dining room.

“ Bon Dieu! c'est notre homme de l'Abbaye!—”cried she, starting back at the sight of a gentleman, who had been kneeling at Emilie's feet, and who arose, as she entered.

“ My son!” said Mrs. Somers, eagerly presenting him to madame de Coulanges —“ my son! whom it is in your power to make the happiest or the most miserable of men!”

“ In my power!—in Emilie's, you mean, I suppose,” said the countess, smiling—“ She is so good a girl, that I cannot make her miserable; and as for you, Mrs. Somers, the honour of your

alliance—and our obligations——But then I shall be miserable myself, if she does not go back with me to the Hotel de Coulanges—Ah! Ciel!—And then poor M. de Brisac, he will be miserable, unless, to comfort him, I marry him myself.”——Half laughing, half crying, madame de Coulanges scarcely knew what she said or did.

It was some time before she was sufficiently composed to understand clearly what was said to her by any person in the room, though she asked half a dozen times, at least, from every one present, an explanation of all that had happened.

Lady Littleton was the only person, who could give an explanation—She had contrived this meeting, and even Mrs. Somers had not foreseen the event—She never suspected, that her own son was the very person, to whom Emilie was attached, and that it was for Emilie's sake her son had hitherto refused to comply with her earnest desire—that he should marry and settle in the world. He had

no hopes, that she would consent to his marrying a French girl without fortune; because she formerly quarrelled with him for refusing to marry a rich lady of quality, who happened to be, at that time, high in her favour—Upon the summons home, that he received from her, he was alarmed by the apprehension, that she had some new alliance in view for him, and he resolved, before he saw his mother, to trust his secret to lady Littleton, who had always been a mediatrix and peace-maker. He declined telling the name of the object of his affections; but, from his description, and from many concomitant dates and circumstances, lady Littleton was led to suspect, that it might be Emilie de Coulanges—She consequently contrived an interview, which she knew must be decisive.

Madame de Coulanges, whose imagination was now at Paris, felt rather disappointed at the idea of her daughter's marrying an Englishman, who was neither a count, a marquis, nor even a

baron; but lady Littleton at length obtained that consent, which she knew would be necessary to render Emilie happy, even in following the dictates of her heart, or her reason.

Some conversation passed between lady Littleton and Mrs. Somers, about a dormant title, in the Somers' family, which might be revived. This made a wonderful impression on the countess.—She yielded, as she did every thing else, with a good grace.

History does not say, whether she did or did not console M. de Brisac; we are only informed, that, immediately after her daughter's marriage, she returned to Paris, and gave a splendid ball at her Hotel de Coulanges.—We are farther assured, that Mrs. Somers never quarrelled with Emilie, from the day of her marriage, till the day of her death—But this is incredible.

THE ABSENTEE.

CHAPTER I.

“ARE you to be at lady Clonbrony’s gala next week?” said lady Langdale to Mrs. Dareville, whilst they were waiting for their carriages in the crush-room of the opera house——

“O yes! every body’s to be there, I hear,” replied Mrs. Dareville——“Your ladyship, of course?——”

“Why I don’t know—if I possibly can——Lady Clonbrony makes it such a point with me—that I believe I must look in upon her, for a few minutes. They are going to a prodigious expense, on this occasion—Soho tells me the reception rooms are all to be new furnished, and in the most magnificent style.”

“At what a famous rate those Clonbronies are dashing on”—said colonel Heathcock—“Up to any thing——”

“Who are they?—these Clonbronies, that one hears of so much of late?”—said her grace of Torcaster—“Irish absentees, I know—But how do they support all this enormous expense?”

“The son *will* have a prodigiously fine estate when some Mr. Quin dies,” said Mrs. Dareville.

“Yes, every body, who comes from Ireland, *will* have a fine estate, when somebody dies,” said her grace—“But what have they at present?”

“Twenty thousand a year, they say”—replied Mrs. Dareville.

“Ten thousand, I believe,” cried lady Langdale—“Make it a rule, you know, to believe only half the world says.”

“Ten thousand, have they?—possibly,” said her grace—“I know nothing about them—have no acquaintance among the Irish—Torcaster knows something of lady Clonbrony; she has fastened

herself, by some means, upon him: but I charge him not to *commit* me—Positively, I could not for any body—and much less for that sort of person—extend the circle of my acquaintance.”

“Now that is so cruel of your grace,”—said Mrs. Dareville, laughing—“when poor lady Clonbrony works so hard, and pays so high, to get into certain circles.”

“If you knew all she endures, to look, speak, move, breathe, like an Englishwoman, you would pity her”—said lady Langdale.

“Yes, and you *caunt* conceive the *peens* she *teekes* to talk of the *teebles* and *cheers*, and to thank *Q*, and, with so much *teeste*, to speak pure English,” said Mrs. Dareville.

“Pure cockney, you mean,” said lady Langdale.

“But why does lady Clonbrony want to pass for English?” said the duchess.

“O! because she is not quite Irish *bred and born*—only bred, not born”—

said Mrs. Dareville—"And she could not be five minutes in your grace's company before she would tell you, that she was *Henglish*, born in *Hoxfordshire*."

"She must be a vastly amusing personage—I should like to meet her, if one could see and hear her incog," said the duchess. "And lord Clonbrony, what is he?"

"Nothing, nobody," said Mrs. Dareville, "one never even hears of him."

"A tribe of daughters, too, I suppose?"

"No, no," said lady Langdale, "daughters would be past all endurance——"

"There's a cousin, though, a Grace Nugent," said Mrs. Dareville, "that lady Clonbrony has with her."

"Best part of her, too"—said colonel Heathcock—"d——d fine girl!—never saw her look better, than at the opera to night!"

"Fine *complexion*! as lady Clonbrony says, when she means a high colour"—said lady Langdale.

“ Grace Nugent is not a lady’s beauty,” said Mrs. Dareville—“ Has she any fortune, colonel?”

“ ’Pon honour, don’t know”—said the colonel.

“ There’s a son, somewhere, is not there?” said lady Langdale.

“ Don’t know, ’pon honour”—replied the colonel.

“ Yes—at Cambridge—not of age, yet,” said Mrs. Dareville—“ Bless me! here is lady Clonbrony come back—I thought she was gone half an hour ago!——”

“ Mamma”—whispered one of lady Langdale’s daughters, leaning between her mother and Mrs. Dareville—“ who is that gentleman, that passed us, just now?——”

“ Which way?——”

“ Towards the door—There now, mamma, you can see him—He is speaking to lady Clonbrony—to miss Nugent——Now lady Clonbrony is introducing him to miss Broadhurst.”

“ I see him now,” said lady Langdale, examining him through her glass — “ a very gentlemanlike looking young man, indeed — ”

“ Not an Irishman, I am sure, by his manner” — said her grace.

“ Heathcock !” said lady Langdale, “ who is miss Broadhurst talking to ? ”

“ Eh ! now really — ’pon honour — don’t know,” replied Heathcock.

“ And yet he certainly looks like somebody one certainly should know,” pursued lady Langdale — “ though I don’t recollect seeing him any where before — ”

“ Really now ! ” — was all the satisfaction she could gain from the insensible immovable colonel. However, her ladyship, after sending a whisper along the line, gained the desired information, that the young gentleman was lord Colambre, son, only son, of lord and lady Clonbrony — that he was just come from Cambridge — that he was not yet of age — that he would be of age

within a year; that he would then, after the death of somebody, come into possession of a fine estate, by the mother's side —— “and therefore, Cat'rine, my dear,” said she, turning round to the daughter, who had first pointed him out; —— “you understand, we should never talk about other people's affairs ——”

“No, mamma, never. I hope to goodness, mamma, lord Colambre did not hear what you and Mrs. Dareville were saying!”

“How could he, child? —— He was quite at the other end of the world.”

“I beg your pardon, ma'am —— he was at my elbow, close behind us —— but I never thought about him till I heard somebody say —— ‘My lord ——’”

“Good Heavens! —— I hope he didn't hear.”

“But, for my part, I said nothing,” cried lady Langdale.

“And for my part, I said nothing, but what every body knows!” cried Mrs. Dareville.

“And for my part, I am guilty only of hearing,” said the duchess. “Do, pray, colonel Heathcock, have the goodness to see what my people are about, and what chance we have of getting away to night.”

“The duchess of Torcaster’s carriage stops the way!”—a joyful sound to colonel Heathcock and to her grace, and not less agreeable, at this instant, to lady Langdale, who, the moment she was dis-embarrassed of the duchess, pressed through the crowd to lady Clonbrony, and, addressing her with smiles and complacency, was “charmed to have a little moment to speak to her—could *not* sooner get through the crowd—would certainly do herself the honour to be at her ladyship’s gala on Wednesday.”—While lady Langdale spoke, she never seemed to see or think of any body but lady Clonbrony, though, all the time, she was intent upon every motion of lord Colambre, and, whilst she was obliged to listen with a face of sympathy to a long

complaint of lady Clonbrony's, about Mr. Soho's want of taste in ottomans, she was vexed to perceive, that his lordship showed no desire to be introduced to her, or to her daughters; but, on the contrary, was standing talking to miss Nugent. His mother, at the end of her speech, looked round for Colambre — called him twice, before he heard — introduced him to lady Langdale, and to lady Cat'rine, and lady Anne * * * * *, and to Mrs. Dareville; to all of whom he bowed with an air of proud coldness, which gave them reason to regret, that their remarks, upon his mother and his family, had not been made *sotto voce*.

“Lady Langdale's carriage stops the way!” — Lord Colambre made no offer of his services, notwithstanding a look from his mother. — Incapable of the meanness of voluntarily listening to a conversation not intended for him to hear, he had, however, been compelled, by the pressure of the crowd, to remain a

few minutes stationary, where he could not avoid hearing the remarks of the fashionable friends — Disdaining dissimulation, he made no attempt to conceal his displeasure. Perhaps his vexation was increased by his consciousness, that there was some mixture of truth in their sarcasms. He was sensible, that his mother, in some points—her manners, for instance—was obvious to ridicule and satire. In lady Clonbrony's address there was a mixture of constraint, affectation, and indecision, unusual in a person of her birth, rank, and knowledge of the world. A natural and unnatural manner seemed struggling in all her gestures, and in every syllable, that she articulated — a naturally free, familiar, good natured, precipitate, Irish manner, had been schooled, and schooled late in life, into a sober, cold, still, stiff deportment, which she mistook for English — A strong, Hibernian accent, she had, with infinite difficulty, changed into an English tone — Mistaking reverse of wrong

for right, she caricatured the English pronunciation; and the extraordinary precision of her London phraseology betrayed her not to be a Londoner, as the man, who strove to pass for an Athenian, was detected by his Attic dialect. Not aware of her real danger, lady Clonbrony was, on the opposite side, in continual apprehension, every time she opened her lips, lest some treacherous *a* or *e*, some strong *r*, some puzzling aspirate, or non aspirate, some unguarded note, interrogative or expostulatory, should betray her to be an Irishwoman. Mrs. Dareville had, in her mimicry, perhaps, a little exaggerated, as to the *teebles* and *cheers*, but still the general likeness of the representation of lady Clonbrony was strong enough to strike and vex her son. He had now, for the first time, an opportunity of judging of the estimation, in which his mother and his family were held by certain leaders of the ton, of whom, in her letters, she had spoken so much, and into

whose society, or rather into whose parties, she had been admitted. He saw, that the renegado cowardice, with which she denied, abjured, and reviled her own country, gained nothing but ridicule and contempt — He loved his mother ; and, whilst he endeavoured to conceal her faults and foibles as much as possible from his own heart, he could not endure those, who dragged them to light and ridicule. The next morning, the first thing, that occurred to lord Colambre's remembrance, when he awoke, was the sound of the contemptuous emphasis, which had been laid on the words IRISH ABSENTEES! — This led to recollections of his native country, to comparisons of past and present scenes, to future plans of life. Young and careless as he seemed, lord Colambre was capable of serious reflection. Of naturally quick and strong capacity, ardent affections, impetuous temper, the early years of his childhood passed at his father's castle in Ireland, where, from the lowest

servant to the well-dressed dependant of the family, every body had conspired to wait upon, to fondle, to flatter, to worship, this darling of their lord. Yet he was not spoiled — not rendered selfish. For, in the midst of this flattery and servility, some strokes of genuine generous affection had gone home to his little heart; and, though unqualified submission had increased the natural impetuosity of his temper, and though visions of his future grandeur had touched his infant thought, yet, fortunately, before he acquired any fixed habits of insolence or tyranny, he was carried far away from all, that were bound or willing to submit to his commands, far away from all signs of hereditary grandeur — plunged into one of our great public schools — into a new world. Forced to struggle, mind and body, with his equals, his rivals, the little lord became a spirited schoolboy, and, in time, a man. Fortunately for him, science and literature happened to be the fashion among a set

of clever young men, with whom he was at Cambridge. His ambition for intellectual superiority was raised, his views were enlarged, his tastes and his manners formed. The sobriety of English good sense mixed most advantageously with Irish vivacity—English prudence governed, but did not extinguish his Irish enthusiasm. But, in fact, English and Irish had not been invidiously contrasted in his mind: he had been so long resident in England, and so intimately connected with Englishmen, that he was not obvious to any of the commonplace ridicule thrown upon Hibernians; and he had lived with men, who were too well informed and liberal to misjudge or depreciate a sister country—He had found, from experience, that, however reserved the English may be in manner, they are warm at heart; that, however averse they may be from forming new acquaintance, their esteem and confidence once gained, they make the most solid friends. He had formed

friendships in England; he was fully sensible of the superior comforts, refinement, and information, of English society; but his own country was endeared to him by early association, and a sense of duty and patriotism attached him to Ireland — And shall I too be an absentee? was a question, which resulted from these reflections—a question, which he was not yet prepared to answer decidedly. In the mean time, the first business of the morning was to execute a commission for a Cambridge friend. Mr. Berryl had bought from Mr. Mordicai, a famous London coachmaker, a curricule, *warranted sound*, for which he had paid a sound price, upon express condition, that Mr. Mordicai, *barring accidents*, should be answerable for all repairs of the curricule for six months. In three, both the carriage and body were found to be good for nothing—the curricule had been returned to Mr. Mordicai—nothing had since been heard of it, or from him.—and lord Colambre had undertaken to

pay him and it a visit, and to make all proper inquiries. ——— Accordingly, he went to the coachmaker's ; and, obtaining no satisfaction from the underlings, desired to see the head of the house. He was answered, that Mr. Mordicai was not at home. His lordship had never seen Mr. Mordicai ; but, just then, he saw, walking across the yard, a man, who looked something like a Bond Street coxcomb, but not the least like a gentleman, who called, in the tone of a master, for " Mr. Mordicai's barouche ! " ——— It appeared ; and he was stepping into it, when lord Colambre took the liberty of stopping him ; and, pointing to the wreck of Mr. Berryl's curricule, now standing in the yard, began a statement of his friend's grievances, and an appeal to common justice and conscience, which he, unknowing the nature of the man, with whom he had to deal, imagined must be irresistible. Mr. Mordicai stood without moving a muscle of his dark wooden face — Indeed, in his face there appeared to

be no muscles, or none which could move; so that, though he had what are generally called handsome features, there was, all together, something unnatural and shocking in his countenance. When, at last, his eyes turned, and his lips opened, this seemed to be done by machinery, and not by the will of a living creature, or from the impulse of a rational soul. Lord Colambre was so much struck with this strange physiognomy, that he actually forgot much he had to say of springs and wheels — But it was no matter — Whatever he had said, it would have come to the same thing; and Mordicai would have answered as he now did —

“ Sir — It was my partner made that bargain, not myself; and I don't hold myself bound by it, for he is the sleeping partner only, and not empowered to act in the way of business — Had Mr. Berryl bargained with me, I should have told him, that he should have looked to these things before his carriage went out of our yard.”

The indignation of lord Colambre kin-

dled at these words — but in vain — To all that indignation could by word or look urge against Mordicai, he replied—

“ May be so, sir — the law is open to your friend — the law is open to all men, who can pay for it.”

Lord Colambre turned in despair from the callous coachmaker, and listened to one of his more compassionate looking workmen, who was reviewing the disabled curricle; and, whilst he was waiting to know the sum of his friend's misfortune, a fat, jolly, Falstaff looking personage came into the yard, accosted Mordicai with a degree of familiarity, which, from a gentleman, appeared to lord Colambre to be almost impossible.

“ How are you, Mordicai, my good fellow?” cried he, speaking with a strong Irish accent.

“ Who is this?” whispered lord Colambre to the foreman, who was examining the curricle.

“ Sir Terence O'Fay, sir ——— There must be entire new wheels.”

“ Now tell me, my tight fellow,”— continued sir Terence, holding Mordicai fast— “ when, in the name of all the saints, good or bad, in the calendar, do you reckon to let us sport the *suicide* ? ”

Mordicai forcibly drew his mouth into what he meant for a smile, and answered— “ as soon as possible, sir Terence.”

Sir Terence, in a tone of jocose, wheedling expostulation, entreated him to have the carriage finished *out of hand*— “ Ah, now! Mordy, my precious! let us have it by the birthday, and come and dine with us o'Monday, at the Hibernian Hotel— there's a rare one— will you ? ”

Mordicai accepted the invitation, and promised faithfully, that the *suicide* should be finished by the birthday. Sir Terence shook hands upon this promise, and, after telling a good story, which made one of the workmen in the yard— an Irishman— grin with delight, walked off. Mordicai, first waiting till the

knight was out of hearing, called aloud —

“ You grinning rascal ! mind, at your peril, and don't let that there carriage be touched, d'ye see, till farther orders.”

One of Mr. Mordicai's clerks, with a huge long feathered pen behind his ear, observed, that Mr. Mordicai was right in that caution, for that, to the best of his comprehension, sir Terence O'Fay and his principal, too, were over head and ears in debt.

Mordicai coolly answered, that he was well aware of that ; but that the estate could afford to dip farther ; that, for his part, he was under no apprehension ; he knew how to look sharp, and to bite before he was bit. That he knew sir Terence and his principal were leagued together to give the creditors *the go by*, but that, clever as they both were at that work, he trusted he was their match.

“ Will you be so good, sir, to finish

making out this estimate for me?" interrupted lord Colambre.

"Immediately, sir—Sixty-nine pound four, and the perch—— Let us see—— Mr. Mordicai, ask him, ask Paddy, about sir Terence"—— said the foreman, pointing back over his shoulder to the Irish workman, who was at this moment pretending to be wondrous hard at work. However, when Mr. Mordicai defied him to tell him any thing he did not know, Paddy, parting with an untasted bit of tobacco, began, and recounted some of sir Terence O'Fay's exploits in evading duns, replevying cattle, fighting sheriffs, bribing *subs*, managing cants, tricking *custodees*, in language so strange, and with a countenance and gestures so full of enjoyment of the jest, that, whilst Mordicai stood for a moment aghast with astonishment, lord Colambre could not help laughing, partly at, and partly with, his countryman. All the yard were in a roar of laughter, though they did not understand half of what they heard; but

their risible muscles were acted upon mechanically, or maliciously, merely by the sound of the Irish brogue.

Mordicai, waiting till the laugh was over, dryly observed, that "the law is executed in another guess sort of way in England, from what it is in Ireland" — therefore, for his part, he desired nothing better, than to set his wits fairly against such *sharks* — That there was a pleasure in doing up a debtor, which none but a creditor could know.

"In a moment, sir; if you'll have a moment's patience, sir, if you please," said the slow foreman to lord Colambre; "I must go down the pounds once more, and then I'll let you have it."

"I'll tell you what, Smithfield" — continued Mr. Mordicai, coming close beside his foreman, and speaking very low, but with a voice trembling with anger, for he was piqued by his foreman's doubts of his capacity to cope with sir Terence O'Fay — "I'll tell you what, Smithfield, I'll be cursed, if I don't get every inch

of them into my power — You know how ——”

“ You are the best judge, sir,” replied the foreman; “ but I would not undertake sir Terence; and the question is, whether the estate will answer the *lot* of the debts, and whether you know them all for certain? ——”

“ I do, sir, I tell you — There’s Green — there’s Blancham — there’s Gray — there’s Soho — naming several more — and, to my knowledge, lord Clonbrony ——”

“ Stop, sir,” cried lord Colambre, in a voice, which made Mordicai, and every body present, start — “ I am his son ——”

“ The devil!” — said Mordicai.

“ God bless every bone in his body, then! — he’s an Irishman,” cried Paddy — “ and there was the *raison* my heart warmed to him from the first minute he come into the yard, though I did not know it till now.”

“ What, sir! are you my lord Colambre?” said Mr. Mordicai, recovering, but

not clearly recovering, his intellects — “I beg pardon, but I did not know you *was* lord Colambre — I thought you told me you was the friend of Mr. Berryl.”

“I do not see the incompatibility of the assertion, sir,” replied lord Colambre, taking from the bewildered foreman’s unresisting hand the account, which he had been so long *furnishing*.

“Give me leave, my lord,” said Mordicai — “I beg your pardon, my lord, perhaps we can *compromise* that business for your friend Mr. Berryl; since he is your lordship’s friend, perhaps we can contrive to *compromise* and *split the difference*.”

To *compromise*, and *split the difference*, Mordicai thought were favourite phrases, and approved Hibernian modes of doing business, which would conciliate this young Irish nobleman, and dissipate the proud tempest, which had gathered, and now swelled in his breast.

“No, sir, no!” cried lord Colambre, holding firm the paper — “I want no fa-

vour from you—I will accept of none for my friend or for myself.”

“Favour! No, my lord, I should not presume to offer —— But I should wish, if you’ll allow me, to do your friend justice.”

Lord Colambre, recollecting, that he had no right, in his pride, to fling away his friend’s money, let Mr. Mordicai look at the account; and, his impetuous temper in a few moments recovered by good sense, he considered, that, as his person was utterly unknown to Mr. Mordicai, no offence could have been intended to him, and that, perhaps, in what had been said, of his father’s debts and distress, there might be more truth, than he was aware of — Prudently, therefore, controlling his feelings, and commanding himself, he suffered Mr. Mordicai to show him into a parlour, to *settle* his friend’s business.—In a few minutes, the account was reduced to a reasonable form, and, in consideration of the partner’s having made the bargain, by which Mr. Mor-

dikai felt himself influenced in honour, though not bound in law, he undertook to have the curricule made better than new again, for Mr. Berryl, for twenty guineas. — Then came awkward apologies to lord Colambre, which he ill endured. — “Between ourselves, my lord,” continued Mordicai —

But the familiarity of the phrase, “Between ourselves” — this implication of equality — lord Colambre could not admit ; he moved hastily towards the door, and departed.

CHAPTER II.

FULL of what he had heard, and impatient to obtain farther information respecting the state of his father's affairs, lord Colambre hastened home; but his father was out, and his mother was engaged with Mr. Soho, directing, or rather being directed, how her apartments should be fitted up for her gala. As lord Colambre entered the room, he saw his mother, miss Nugent, and Mr. Soho, standing at a large table, which was covered with rolls of paper, patterns, and drawings of furniture: Mr. Soho was speaking in a conceited, dictatorial tone, asserting, that there was no "colour in nature for that room equal to *the belly-o'-the fawn*;" which *belly-o'-the fawn* he so pronounced, that lady Clonbrony understood it to be *la belle uniforme*, and,

under this mistake, repeated and assented to the assertion, till it was set to rights, with condescending superiority, by the upholsterer. — This first architectural upholsterer of the age, as he styled himself, and was universally admitted to be by all the world of fashion, then, with full powers given to him, spoke *en maître*. — The whole face of things must be changed — There must be new hangings, new draperies, new cornices, new candelabras, new every thing! —

“ The upholsterer’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from ceiling to floor, from floor to ceiling;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The form of things unknown, th’ upholsterer’s
pencil
Turns to shape and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a NAME.”

Of the value of a NAME no one could be more sensible than Mr. Soho.

“ Your la’ship sees — this is merely a scratch of my pencil — Your la’ship’s sensible — just to give you an idea of the

shape, the form of the thing—You fill up your angles here with *encoimières*—round your walls with the *Turkish tent drapery*—a fancy of my own—in apricot cloth, or crimson velvet, suppose, or, *en flute*, in crimson satin draperies, fanned and riched with gold fringes, *en suite*—intermediate spaces, Apollo's heads with gold rays—and here, ma'am, you place four *chancelières*, with chimeras at the corners, covered with blue silk and silver fringe, elegantly fanciful— with my *STATIRA CANOPY* here—light blue silk draperies—aerial tint, with silver balls—and for seats here, the *SERAGLIO OTTOMANS*, superfine scarlet—your paws—griffin—golden—and golden tripods, here, with antique cranes—and oriental alabaster tables here and there—quite appropriate, your la'ship feels—

“ And, let me reflect—For the next apartment, it strikes me—as your la'ship don't value expense—the *Alhambra hangings*—my own thought entirely—

Now, before I unrol them, lady Clonbrony, I must beg you'll not mention I've shown them—I give you my sacred honour, not a soul has set eye upon the Alhambra hangings, except Mrs. Dareville, who stole a peep—I refused, absolutely refused, the duchess of Torcaster—But I can't refuse your la'ship—So see, ma'am—(unrolling them)—scagliola porphyry columns supporting the grand dome—entablature, silvered and decorated with imitative bronze ornaments—under the entablature, a *valance in pelmets*, of puffed scarlet silk, would have an unparalleled grand effect, seen through the arches—with the TREBISOND TRELICE PAPER, would make a *tout ensemble*, novel beyond example—On that Trebisond trelice paper, I confess, ladies, I do pique myself—

“Then, for the little room, I recommend turning it temporarily into a Chinese pagoda, with this *Chinese pagoda paper*, with the *porcelain border*, and josses, and jars, and beakers, to match;

and I can venture to promise one vase of preeminent size and beauty.—O, indubitably! if your la'ship prefers it, you can have the *Egyptian hieroglyphic paper*, with the *ibis border*, to match!—The only objection is, one sees it everywhere—quite antediluvian—gone to the hotels even—But, to be sure, if your la'ship has a fancy—At all events, I humbly recommend, what her grace of Torcaster longs to patronise, my MOON CURTAINS, with candlelight draperies—A demisaison elegance this—I hit off yesterday—and—True, your la'ship's quite correct—out of the common, completely—And, of course, you'd have the *sphynx candelabras*, and the Phoenix argands—O! nothing else lights now, ma'am!—Expense!—Expense of the whole!—Impossible to calculate here on the spot!—But nothing at all worth your ladyship's consideration!—”

At another moment, lord Colambre might have been amused with all this rhodomontade, and with the airs and vo-

luble conceit of the orator; but, after what he had heard at Mr. Mordicai's, this whole scene struck him more with melancholy than with mirth. He was alarmed, by the prospect of new and unbounded expense; provoked, almost past enduring, by the jargon and impertinence of this upholsterer; mortified and vexed to the heart, to see his mother the dupe, the sport of such a coxcomb——

“Prince of puppies!—Insufferable!—My own mother!” lord Colambre repeated to himself, as he walked hastily up and down the room——

“Colambre, won't you let us have your judgment—your *teeste*?” said his mother——

“Excuse me, ma'am—I have no taste, no judgment, in these things.”

He sometimes paused, and looked at Mr. Soho with a strong inclination to——. But knowing, that he should say too much, if he said any thing, he was silent——never dared to approach the

council table — but continued walking up and down the room, till he heard a voice, which at once arrested his attention, and soothed his ire — He approached the table instantly, and listened, whilst Grace Nugent said every thing he wished to have said, and with all the propriety and delicacy, with which he thought he could not have spoken. He leaned on the table, and fixed his eyes upon her — years ago, he had seen his cousin — last night, he had thought her handsome, pleasing, graceful — but now, he saw a new person, or he saw her in a new light — He marked the superior intelligence, the animation, the eloquence of her countenance, it's variety, whilst alternately, with arch raillery or grave humour, she played off Mr. Soho, and made him magnify the ridicule, till it was apparent even to lady Clonbrony. He observed the anxiety, lest his mother should expose her own foibles — he was touched by the respectful, earnest kindness — the soft tones of persuasion, with

which she addressd his mother — the care not to presume upon her own influence — the good sense, the taste, she showed, yet not displaying her superiority — the address, temper, and patience, with which she at last accomplished her purpose, and prevented lady Clonbrony from doing any thing preposterously absurd, or exorbitantly extravagant.

Lord Colambre was actually sorry when the business was ended — when Mr. Soho departed — for Grace Nugent was then silent; and it was necessary to remove his eyes from that countenance, on which he had gazed unobserved. Beautiful and graceful, yet so unconscious was she of her charms, that the eye of admiration could rest upon her without her perceiving it — she seemed so intent upon others as totally to forget herself. The whole train of lord Colambre's thoughts was so completely deranged, that, although he was sensible there was something of importance he had to say to his mother, yet, when Mr. Soho's de-

parture left him opportunity to speak, he stood silent, unable to recollect any thing but —— Grace Nugent ——.

When Grace Nugent left the room, after some minutes' silence, and some effort, lord Colambre said to his mother—
“ Pray, madam, do you know any thing of sir Terence O'Fay ? ”

“ I ! ” said lady Clonbrony, drawing up her head proudly—“ I know he is a person I cannot endure—He is no friend of mine, I can assure you—nor any such sort of person.”

“ I thought it was impossible ! ” cried lord Colambre, with exultation.

“ I only wish your father, Colambre, could say as much,” added lady Clonbrony.

Lord Colambre's countenance fell again—and again he was silent, for some time.

“ Does my father dine at home, ma'am ? ”

“ I suppose not—he seldom dines at home.”

“ Perhaps, ma’am, my father may have some cause to be uneasy about? ——”

“ About?”—said lady Clonbrony, in a tone, and with a look of curiosity, which convinced her son, that she knew nothing of his debts or distresses, if he had any——“ About what?” repeated her ladyship.

Here was no receding, and lord Colambre never had recourse to artifice.

“ About his affairs, I was going to say, madam—But, since you know nothing of any difficulties or embarrassments, I am persuaded that none exist.”

“ Nay—I *caunt* tell you that, Colambre—There are difficulties for ready money, I confess, when I ask for it, which surprise me often. I know nothing of affairs—Ladies of a certain rank seldom do, you know—But, considering your father’s estate, and the fortune I brought him,” added her ladyship, proudly, “ I *caunt* conceive it at all.—Grace Nugent, indeed, often talks to me of embarrassments and economy; but that, poor

thing, is very natural for her, because her fortune is not particularly large, and she has left it all, or almost all, in her uncle and guardian's hands—I know she's often distressed for odd money to lend me, and that makes her anxious."

"Is not miss Nugent very much admired, ma'am, in London?"

"Of course—in the company she is in, you know, she has every advantage—And she has a natural family air of fashion—Not but what she would have *got on* much better, if, when she first appeared in Lon'on, she had taken my advice, and wrote herself on her cards *miss de Nogent*, which would have taken off the prejudice against the *Iricism* of Nugent, you know; and there is a *count de Nogent*."

"I did not know there was any such prejudice, ma'am—There may be among a certain set; but, I should think, not among well informed, well bred people."

"I *big* your *pawdon*, Colambre; surely

I, that was born in England, an Henglish-woman *bawn!* must be well *infawmed* on this *pint*, any way."

Lord Colambre was respectfully silent.

"Mother," resumed he, "I wonder, that miss Nugent is not married!"

"That is her own *fau't*, entirely; she has refused very good offers—establishments, that, I own, I think, as lady Langdale says, I was to blame to allow her to let pass; but young *ledies*, till they are twenty, always think they can do better. Mr. Martingale, of Martingale, proposed for her, but she objected to him, on account of he'es being on the turf; and Mr. St. Albans' 7000*l.* a year—because—I *reelly* forget what—I believe only because she did not like him—and something about principles. Now there is colonel Heathcock, one of the most fashionable young men you see, always with the duchess of Torcaster and that set—Heathcock takes a vast deal of notice of her, for him; and yet, I'm per-

suaded, she would not have him to morrow, if he came to the *pint*, and for no reason, *reelly* now, that she can give me, but because she says he's a coxcomb. Grace has a tincture of Irish pride. But, for my part, I rejoice, that she is so difficult; for I don't know what I should do without her ——”

“ Miss Nugent is indeed——very much attached to you, mother, I am convinced”——said lord Colambre, beginning his sentence with great enthusiasm, and ending it with great sobriety.

“ Indeed then, she's a sweet girl, and I am very partial to her, there's the truth”——cried lady Clonbrony, in an undisguised, Irish accent, and with her natural warm manner. But a moment afterwards, her features and whole form resumed their constrained stillness and stiffness, and, in her English accent, she continued——

“ Before you put my *ideas* out of my head, Colambre, I had something to say to you——O! I know what it was——we

were talking of embarrassments—and I wished to do your father the justice to mention to you, that he has been *uncommon liberal* to me about this gala, and has *reelly* given me carte blanche; and I've a notion—indeed I know—that it is you, Colambre, I am to thank for this.”

“ Me!—ma'am!——”

“ Yes!——Did not your father give you any hint?——”

“ No, ma'am; I have seen my father but for half an hour since I came to town, and in that time he said nothing to me——of his affairs.”

“ But what I allude to is more your affair.”

“ He did not speak to me of any affairs, ma'am—he spoke only of my horses.”

“ Then I suppose my lord leaves it to me to open the matter to you. I have the pleasure to tell you, that we have in view for you—and I think I may say with more than the approbation of all her family—an alliance——”

“O! my dear mother! you cannot be serious,” cried lord Colambre — “You know I am not of years of discretion yet — I shall not think of marrying these ten years, at least.”

“Why not? — Nay, my dear Colambre, don't go, I beg — I am serious, I assure you — and, to convince you of it, I shall tell you candidly, at once, all your father told me — That now you've done with Cambridge, and are come to Lon'on, he agrees with me, in wishing, that you should make the figure you ought to make, Colambre, as sole heir apparent to the Clonbrony estate, and all that sort of thing — But, on the other hand, living in Lon'on, and making you the handsome allowance you ought to have, are, both together, more than your father can afford, without inconvenience, he tells me.”

“I assure you, mother, I shall be content —”

“No, no; you must not be content, child, and you must hear me — You must live in a becoming style, and make a pro-

per appearance — I could not present you to my friends here, nor be happy, if you did not, Colambre. Now the way is clear before you — You have birth and title, here is fortune ready made — you will have a noble estate of your own when old Quin dies, and you will not be any incumbrance or inconvenience to your father or any body. Marrying an heiress accomplishes all this at once — And the young lady is every thing we could wish, besides — You will meet again at the gala — Indeed, between ourselves, she is the grand object of the gala — All her friends will come en masse, and one should wish, that they should see things in proper style. You have seen the young lady in question, Colambre — Miss Broadhurst — Don't you recollect the young lady I introduced you to last night, after the opera ?”

“ The little, plain girl, covered with diamonds, who was standing beside miss Nugent ?”

“ In di'monds, yes — But you won't

think her plain, when you see more of her — that wears off — I thought her plain, at first — I hope —”

“ I hope,” said lord Colambre, “ that you will not take it unkindly of me, my dear mother, if I tell you, at once, that I have no thoughts of marrying at present — and that I never will marry for money — Marrying an heiress is not even a new way of paying old debts — at all events, it is one, to which no distress could persuade me to have recourse ; and as I must, if I outlive old Mr. Quin, have an independent fortune, *there is no occasion to purchase one by marriage.*”

“ There is no distress, that I know of, in the case,” cried lady Clonbrony — “ Where is your imagination running, Colambre? — But merely for your establishment, your independance.”

“ Establishment, I want none — independance I do desire, and will preserve — Assure my father, my *dear mother*, that I will not be an expense to him — I will live within the allowance he made

me at Cambridge—I will give up half of it—I will do any thing for his convenience—but marry for money, that I cannot do——”

“Then, Colambre, you are very disobliging”—said lady Clonbrony, with an expression of disappointment and displeasure; “for your father says, if you don’t marry miss Broadhurst, we can’t live in Lon’on another winter.”

This said—which, had she been at the moment mistress of herself, she would not have let out—lady Clonbrony abruptly quitted the room. Her son stood motionless, saying to himself—

“Is this my mother?—How altered!——”

The next morning, he seized an opportunity of speaking to his father, whom he caught, with difficulty, just when he was going out, as usual, for the day. Lord Colambre, with all the respect due to his father, and with that affectionate manner, by which he always knew how to soften the strength of his expressions,

made nearly the same declarations of his resolution, by which his mother had been so much surprised and offended. Lord Clonbrony seemed more embarrassed, but not so much displeased. — When lord Colambre adverted, as delicately as he could, to the selfishness of desiring from him the sacrifice of liberty for life, to say nothing of his affections, merely to enable his family to make a splendid figure in London; lord Clonbrony exclaimed — “That’s all nonsense! — cursed nonsense! — that’s the way we are obliged to state the thing to your mother, my dear boy, because I might talk her deaf, before she would understand or listen to any thing else — But, for my own share, I don’t care a rush, if London was sunk in the salt sea — Little Dublin, for my money, as sir Terence O’Fay says.”

“ Who is sir Terence O’Fay? — May I ask, sir? ”

“ Why, don’t you know Terry? — Ay,

you've been so long at Cambridge—I forgot. And did you never see Terry?"

"I have seen him, sir—I met him yesterday, at Mr. Mordicai's, the coach-maker's."

"Mordicai's!"—exclaimed lord Clonbrony, with a sudden blush, which he endeavoured to hide, by taking snuff. "He is a damned rascal, that Mordicai!—I hope you didn't believe a word he said—Nobody does, that knows him."

"I am glad, sir, that you seem to know him so well, and to be upon your guard against him," replied lord Colambre; "for, from what I heard of his conversation, when he was not aware who I was, I am convinced he would do you any injury in his power——"

"He shall never have me in his power, I promise him—We shall take care of that——But what did he say?——"

Lord Colambre repeated the substance of what Mordicai had said, and lord Clonbrony reiterated—"Dammed rascal!

—damned rascal! — I'll get out of his hands — I'll have no more to do with him." But, as he spoke, he exhibited evident symptoms of uneasiness, moving continually, and shifting from leg to leg, like a foundered horse.

He could not bring himself positively to deny, that he had debts and difficulties; but he would by no means open the state of his affairs to his son — "No father is called upon to do that," said he to himself — "None but a fool would do it."

Lord Colambre, perceiving his father's embarrassment, withdrew his eyes, respectfully refrained from all farther inquiries, and simply repeated the assurance he had made to his mother, that he would put his family to no additional expense; and that, if it was necessary, he would willingly give up half his allowance.

"Not at all, not at all, my dear boy," said his father — "I would rather cramp myself, than that you should be cramped, a thousand times over — But it is all my lady Clonbrony's nonsense. — If people

would but, as they ought, stay in their own country, live on their own estates, and kill their own mutton, money need never be wanting ——”

For killing their own mutton, lord Colambre did not see the indispensable necessity; but he rejoiced to hear his father assert, that people should reside in their own country.

“ Ay,” cried lord Clonbrony, to strengthen his assertion, as he always thought it necessary to do, by quoting some other person’s opinion. “ So sir Terence O’Fay always says, and that’s the reason your mother can’t endure poor Terry — You don’t know Terry? — No, you have only seen him; but, indeed, to see him is to know him; for he is the most off-hand, good fellow, in Europe.”

“ I don’t pretend to know him, yet,” said lord Colambre — “ I am not so presumptuous, as to form my opinion at first sight.”

“ O, curse your modesty!” interrupted

lord Clonbrony, "you mean, you don't pretend to like him yet — but Terry will make you like him — I defy you not — I'll introduce you to him — him to you I mean — most warm hearted, generous dog upon Earth — convivial — jovial — with wit and humour enough, in his own way, to split you — split me if he has not — You need not cast down your eyes, Colambre — What's your objection?"

"I have made none, sir — but, if you urge me, I can only say, that, if he has all these good qualities, it is to be regretted, that he does not look and speak a little more like a gentleman."

"A gentleman! — he is as much a gentleman as any of your formal prigs — Not the exact Cambridge cut, may-be — Curse your English education! — 'Twas none of my advice — I suppose you mean to take after your mother in the notion, that nothing can be good, or genteel, but what's English —"

"Far from it, sir; I assure you, I am as warm a friend to Ireland as your heart

could wish — You will have no reason, in that respect at least, nor, I hope, in any other, to curse my English education — and, if my gratitude and affection can avail, you shall never regret the kindness and liberality, with which you have, I fear, distressed yourself to afford me the means of becoming all, that a British nobleman ought to be.”

“Gad! you distress me now!” said lord Clonbrony — “and I didn’t expect it, or I wouldn’t make a fool of myself this way,” added he, ashamed of his emotion, and whiffing it off — “You have an Irish heart, that I see, which no education can spoil — But you must like Terry — I’ll give you time, as he said to me, when first he taught me to like usquebaugh — Good morning to you!”

Whilst lady Clonbrony, in consequence of her residence in London, had become more of a fine lady, lord Clonbrony, since he left Ireland, had become less of a gentleman. Lady Clonbrony, born an Englishwoman, disclaiming and

disincumbering herself of all the Irish in town, had, by giving splendid entertainments, at an enormous expense, made her way into a certain set of fashionable company. But lord Clonbrony, who was somebody in Ireland, who was a great person in Dublin, found himself nobody in England, a mere cipher in London. Looked down upon by the fine people, with whom his lady associated, and heartily weary of them, he retreated from them altogether, and sought entertainment and self complacency in society, beneath him, indeed, both in rank and education, but in which he had the satisfaction of feeling himself the first person in company. Of these associates, the first in talents, and in jowial profligacy, was sir Terence O'Fay — a man of low extraction, who had been knighted, by an Irish lord lieutenant, in some convivial frolic. No one could tell a good story, or sing a good song, better than sir Terence; he exaggerated his native brogue, and his natural propensity to blunder,

caring little whether the company laughed at him or with him, provided they laughed — “Live and laugh—laugh and live,” was his motto; and certainly he lived on laughing, as well as many better men can contrive to live on a thousand a year.

Lord Clonbrony brought sir Terence home with him next day, to introduce him to lord Colambre; and it happened, that, on this occasion, Terence appeared to peculiar disadvantage, because, like many other people, “Il gâtoit l’esprit qu’il avoit en voulant avoir celui qu’il n’avoit pas.”

Having been apprised, that lord Colambre was a fine scholar, fresh from Cambridge; and being conscious of his own deficiencies of literature, instead of trusting to his natural talents, he summoned to his aid, with no small effort, all the scraps of learning he had acquired in early days, and even brought before the company all the gods and goddesses, with whom he had formed an acquaint-

ance at school. Though embarrassed by this unusual incumbrance of learning, he endeavoured to make all subservient to his immediate design, of paying his court to lady Clonbrony, by forwarding the object she had most anxiously in view — the match between her son and miss Broadhurst.

“And so, miss Nugent,” said he — not daring, with all his assurance, to address himself directly to lady Clonbrony —

“And so, miss Nugent, you are going to have great doings, I’m told, and a wonderful grand gala — There’s nothing in the wide world, equal to being in a good, handsome crowd — No later now than the last ball at the Castle, that was before I left Dublin, miss Nugent, the apartments, owing to the popularity of my lady lieutenant, was so throng — so throng — that I remember very well, in the door way, a lady — and a very genteel woman she was too — though a stranger to me, saying to me, ‘Sir, your finger’s in my ear’ — ‘I know it, madam,’ says I,

‘but I can’t take it out, till the crowd give me elbow room.’

“But it’s gala I’m thinking of now— I hear you are to have the golden Venus, my lady Clonbrony, won’t you? —”

“Sir! —”

This freezing monosyllable notwithstanding, sir Terence pursued his course fluently. “The golden Venus!—sure, miss Nugent, you, that are so quick, can’t but know I would apostrophise miss Broadhurst that is—but that won’t be long so I hope. My lord Colambre, have you seen much yet of that young lady? —”

“No, sir —”

“Then I hope you won’t be long so — I hear great talk now of the Venus of Medicis, and the Venus of this and that, with the Florence Venus, and the sable Venus, and that other Venus, that’s washing of her hair, and a hundred other Venuses, some good, some bad — But, be that as it will, my lord, trust a fool — ye may, when he tells you truth — the

golden Venus is the only one on Earth, that can stand, or that will stand, through all ages and temperatures; — for gold rules the court, gold rules the camp, and men below, and Heaven above——”

“Heaven above! — Take care, Terry! — Do you know what you’re saying?” interrupted lord Clonbrony.

“Do I? — Dont I?” — replied Terry. “Deny, if you please, my lord, that it was for a golden pippin that the three goddesses *fit* — and that the *Hippomenes* was about golden apples — and did not Hercules rob a garden for golden apples? — and did not the pious Eneas himself take a golden branch with him, to make himself welcome to his father in Hell?” said sir Terence, winking at lord Colambre.

“Why Terry, you know more about books, than I should have suspected,” said lord Clonbrony.

“Nor you would not have suspected me to have such a great acquaintance

among the goddesses neither, would you, my lord? But, apropos, before we quit, of what material, think ye, was that same Venus's famous girdle, now, that made roses and lilies so quickly appear?— Why, what was it, but a girdle of sterling gold, I'll engage?— for gold is the only true thing for a young man to look after, in a wife——”

Sir Terence paused, but no applause ensued.

“ Let them talk of Cupids and darts, and the mother of the Loves and Graces — Minerva may sing odes and *dythambrics*, or whatsoever her wisdomship pleases — Let her sing, or let her say, she'll never get a husband, in this world or the other, without she had a good thumping *fortin*, and then she'd go off like wildfire——”

“ No, no, Terry, there you're out; Minerva has too bad a character for learning, to be a favourite with gentlemen,” said lord Clonbrony.

“ Tut — Don't tell me! — I'd get her

off, before you could say, Jack Robinson, and thank you too, if she had fifty thousand down, or a thousand a year in land. Would you have a man so d—d nice, as to balk, when house and land is a going — a going — a going! — because of the incumbrance of a little learning — I never heard, that miss Broadhurst was any thing of a learned lady.”

“ Miss Broadhurst!” said Grace Nugent — “ How did you get round to miss Broadhurst?”

“ O! by the way of Tipperary,” said lord Colambre.

“ I beg your pardon, my lord, it was apropos to a good fortune, which, I hope, will not be out of your way, even if you went by Tipperary — She has, besides 100,000*l.* in the funds, a clear landed property of 10,000*l.* per annum — *Well! some people talk of morality, and some of religion, but give me a little snug PROPERTY* — But, my lord, I’ve a little business to transact this morning, and

must not be idling and indulging myself here" — So, bowing to the ladies, he departed —

" Really, I am glad that man is gone," said lady Clonbrony — " What a relief to one's ears! I am sure I wonder, my lord, how you can bear to carry that strange creature always about with you — so vulgar as he is ——"

" He diverts me," said lord Clonbrony, " while many of your correct-mannered fine ladies or gentlemen put me to sleep. What signifies what accent people speak in, that have nothing to say? — Hey! Colambre?"

Lord Colambre, from respect to his father, did not express his opinion, but his aversion to sir Terence O'Fay was stronger even than his mother's; though lady Clonbrony's detestation of him was much increased, by perceiving, that his coarse hints, about miss Broadhurst, had operated against her favourite scheme.

The next morning, at breakfast, lord

Clonbrony talked of bringing sir Terence with him, that night, to her gala — She absolutely grew pale with horror.

“ Good Heavens! — Lady Langdale, Mrs. Derville, lady Pococke, lady Chatterton, lady D——, lady G——; his grace of V——; what would they think of him! — And miss Broadhurst, to see him going about with my lord Clonbrony!” — It could not be. No — her ladyship made the most solemn and desperate protestation, that she would sooner give up her gala altogether — tie up the knocker — say she was sick — rather be sick, or be dead, than be obliged to have such a creature, as sir Terence O’Fay, at her gala —

“ Have it your own way, my dear, as you have every thing else,” cried lord Clonbrony, taking up his hat, and preparing to decamp; “ but, take notice, if you won’t receive him, you need not expect me — So a good morning to you, my lady Clonbrony — You may find a

worse friend in need, yet, than that same sir Terence O'Fay."

"I trust I shall never be in need, my lord," replied her ladyship — "It would be strange, indeed, if I were, with the fortune I brought ——"

"O! that fortune of hers!" — cried lord Clonbrony, stopping both his ears, as he ran out of the room — "Shall I never hear the end of that fortune, when I've seen the end of it long ago? ——"

During this matrimonial dialogue, Grace Nugent and lord Colambre never once looked at each other. Grace was very diligently trying the changes, that could be made in the positions of a china mouse, a cat, a dog, a cup, and a brahmin, on the mantle-piece; lord Colambre as diligently reading the newspaper.

"Now, my dear Colambre," said lady Clonbrony, "put down the paper, and listen to me. Let me entreat you not to neglect miss Broadhurst to night, as I

know that the family come here chiefly on your account."

"My dear mother, I never can neglect any deserving young lady, and particularly one of your guests; but I shall be careful not to do more, than not to neglect; for I never will pretend what I do not feel——"

"But, my dear Colambre, miss Broadhurst is every thing you could wish, except being a beauty."

"Perhaps, madam," said lord Colambre, fixing his eyes on Grace Nugent, "you think, that I can see no farther than a handsome face?"

The unconscious Grace Nugent now made a warm eulogium of miss Broadhurst's sense, and wit, and independance of character.

"I did not know, that miss Broadhurst was a friend of yours, miss Nugent?"

"She is, I assure you, a friend of mine; and, as a proof, I will not praise

her at this moment — I will go farther still, I will promise, that I never will praise her to you, till you begin to praise her to me.”

Lord Colambre smiled, and now listened, as if he wished that Grace should go on speaking, even of miss Broadhurst.

“ That’s my sweet Grace !” — cried lady Clonbrony — “ O ! she knows how to manage these men — not one of them can resist her !”

Lord Colambre, for his part, did not deny the truth of this assertion.

“ Grace,” added lady Clonbrony, “ make him promise to do as we would have him.”

“ No — Promises are dangerous things to ask or to give,” said Grace — “ Men and naughty children never make promises, especially promises to be good, without longing to break them the next minute.”

“ Well, at least, child, persuade him,

I charge you, to make my gala go off well — That's the first thing we ought to think of now — Ring the bell! — And all heads and hands I put in requisition for the gala ——”

CHAPTER III.

THE opening of her gala, the display of her splendid reception rooms, the Turkish tent, the Alhambra, the pagoda, formed a proud moment to lady Clonbrony. Much did she enjoy, and much too naturally, notwithstanding all her efforts to be stiff and stately, much too naturally, did she show her enjoyment of the surprise excited in some, and affected by others, on their first entrance.

One young, very young lady, expressed her astonishment so audibly, as to attract the notice of all the bystanders — Lady Clonbrony, delighted, seized both her hands, shook them, and laughed heartily; then, as the young lady, with her party, passed on, her ladyship recovered herself, drew up her head, and said, to the company near her —

“ Poor thing! — I hope I covered her little *naiveté* properly? — How NEW she must be! ———”

Then, with well practised dignity, and half-subdued self complacency of aspect, her ladyship went gliding about — most importantly busy, introducing my lady *this* to the sphynx candelabra, and my lady *that* to the Trebisond trellice; placing some delightfully for the perspective of the Alhambra; establishing others quite to her satisfaction on seraglio ottomans; and honouring others with a seat under the statira canopy — Receiving and answering compliments, from successive crowds of select friends, imagining herself the mirror of fashion, and the admiration of the whole world, lady Clonbrony was, for her hour, as happy certainly, as ever woman was in similar circumstances.

Her son looked at her, and wished, that this happiness could last. — Naturally inclined to sympathy, lord Colambre reproached himself for not feeling as gay,

at this instant, as the occasion required. But the festive scene, the blazing lights, the "universal hubbub," failed to raise his spirits. As a dead weight upon them hung the remembrance of Mordicai's denunciations; and, through the midst of this eastern magnificence, this unbounded profusion, he thought he saw future domestic misery and ruin to those he loved best in the world.

The only object present, on which his eye rested with pleasure, was Grace Nugent — Beautiful! in elegant and dignified simplicity — thoughtless of herself — yet, with a look of thought, and with an air of melancholy, which accorded exactly with his own feelings, and which he believed to arise from the same reflections, that had passed in his own mind.

"Miss Broadhurst! Colambre — all the Broadhursts!" said his mother, waking him, as she passed by, to receive them, as they entered. — Miss Broadhurst appeared, plainly dressed — plainly, even

to singularity — without any diamonds or ornament.

“ Brought Philippa to you, my dear lady Clonbrony, this figure, rather than not bring her at all,” said puffing Mrs. Broadhurst — “ and had all the difficulty in the world to get her out at all, and now I’ve promised she shall stay but half an hour — Sore throat — terrible cold she took in the morning — I’ll swear for her, she’d not have come for any one but you — ”

The young lady did not seem inclined to swear, or even to say this for herself; she stood wonderfully unconcerned and passive, with an expression of humour lurking in her eyes, and about the corners of her mouth; whilst lady Clonbrony was “ shocked,” and “ gratified,” and “ concerned,” and “ flattered;” and whilst every body was hoping, and fearing, and busying themselves about her — “ Miss Broadhurst, you’d better sit here!” — “ O! for Heaven’s sake! miss Broadhurst, not there!” — “ Miss Broadhurst,

if you'll take my opinion"—and, "Miss Broadhurst, if I may advise——"

"Grace Nugent!" cried lady Clonbrony—"Miss Broadhurst always listens to you—Do, my dear, persuade miss Broadhurst to take care of herself, and let us take her to the inner little pagoda, where she can be so warm and so retired—the very thing for an invalide——Colambre! pioneer the way for us, for the crowd's immense."

Lady Anne and lady Catharine H——, lady Langdale's daughters, were at this time leaning on miss Nugent's arm, and moved along with this party to the inner pagoda.—There was to be cards in one room, music in another, dancing in a third, and, in this little room, there were prints and chess boards, &c.

"Here you will be quite to yourselves," said lady Clonbrony; "let me establish you comfortably in this, which I call my sanctuary—my *smuggery*—Colambre. That little table!—Miss Broadhurst, you play chess?—Colam-

bre, you'll play with Miss Broadhurst——”

“ I thank your ladyship,” said miss Broadhurst — “ but I know nothing of chess, but the moves — Lady Catharine, you will play, and I will look on.”

Miss Broadhurst drew her seat to the fire — lady Catharine sat down to play with lord Colambre — lady Clonbrony withdrew, again recommending miss Broadhurst to Grace Nugent's care. — After some commonplace conversation, lady Anne H ——, looking at the company in the adjoining apartment, asked her sister how old miss somebody was, who passed by. This led to reflections upon the comparative age and youthful appearance of several of their acquaintance, and upon the care, with which mothers concealed the age of their daughters. Glances passed between lady Catharine and lady Anne.

“ For my part,” said miss Broadhurst, “ my mother would labour that point of secrecy in vain for me ; for I am will-

ing to tell my age — even if my face did not tell it for me — to all, whom it may concern — I am past three and twenty — shall be four and twenty the 5th of next July.”

“ Three and twenty! — Bless me! — I thought you were not twenty!” cried lady Anne —

“ Four and twenty, next July! — impossible!” cried lady Catharine.

“ Very possible” — said miss Broadhurst, quite unconcerned.

“ Now, lord Colambre, would you believe it? — Can you believe it?” — asked lady Catharine.

“ Yes, he can,” said miss Broadhurst. “ Don’t you see, that he believes it, as firmly as you and I do? — Why should you force his lordship to pay a compliment contrary to his better judgment, or to extort a smile from him under false pretences? — I am sure he sees that you, ladies, and I trust he perceives that I do not think the worse of him, for this.”

Lord Colambre smiled now without

any false pretence; and, relieved at once from all apprehension of her joining in his mother's views, or of her expecting particular attention from him, he became at ease with miss Broadhurst, showed a desire to converse with her, and listened eagerly to what she said. He recollected, that Grace Nugent had told him, that this young lady had no common character; and, neglecting his move at chess, he looked up at Grace, as much as to say — “*Draw her out, pray.*”

But Grace was too good a friend to comply with that request; she left miss Broadhurst to unfold her own character.

“It is your move, my lord,” said lady Catharine.

“I beg your ladyship's pardon——”

“Are not these rooms beautiful, miss Broadhurst?” said lady Catharine, determined, if possible, to turn the conversation into a commonplace, safe, channel; for she had just felt, what most of miss Broadhurst's acquaintance had in their

turn felt, that she had an odd way of startling people, by setting their own secret little motives suddenly before them.

“Are not these rooms beautiful?—”

“Beautiful!—Certainly.”

The beauty of the rooms would have answered lady Catharine's purpose for some time, had not lady Anne imprudently brought the conversation back again to miss Broadhurst.

“Do you know, miss Broadhurst,” said she, “that if I had fifty sore throats, I could not have refrained from my diamonds on this GALA night—and such diamonds as you have!—Now, really, I could not believe you to be the same person we saw blazing at the opera the other night!”

“Really I could not you, lady Anne? That is the very thing, that entertains me—I only wish, that I could lay aside my fortune, sometimes, as well as my diamonds, and see how few people would know me then. Might not I, Grace, by

the golden rule, which, next to practice, is the best rule in the world, calculate and answer that question?"

"I am persuaded," said lord Colambre, "that miss Broadhurst has friends, on whom the experiment would make no difference ——"

"I am convinced of it," said miss Broadhurst; "and that is what makes me tolerably happy, though I have the misfortune to be an heiress."

"That is the oddest speech," said lady Anne —— "Now I should so like to be a great heiress, and to have, like you, such thousands and thousands at command."

"And what can the thousands upon thousands do for me? — Hearts, you know, lady Anne, are to be won only by radiant eyes — Bought hearts your ladyship certainly would not recommend — They're such poor things — no wear at all — Turn them which way you will, you can make nothing of them."

“ You’ve tried, then, have you?” said lady Catharine.

“ To my cost — Very nearly taken in by them half a dozen times — for they are brought to me by dozens — and they are so made up for sale, and the people do so swear to you, that it’s real, real love, and it looks so like it — and, if you stoop to examine it, you hear it pressed upon you by such elegant oaths — By all that’s lovely! — By all my hopes of happiness! — By your own charming self! — Why what can one do, but look like a fool, and believe; for these men, at the time, all look so like gentlemen, that one cannot bring oneself flatly to tell them, that they are cheats and swindlers, that they are perjuring their precious souls — Besides, to call a lover a perjured creature, is to encourage him — He would have a right to complain, if you went back after that — ”

“ O dear! what a move was there!” cried lady Catharine — “ Miss Broadhurst

is so entertaining to night, notwithstanding her sore throat, that one can positively attend to nothing else — And she talks of love and lovers too, with such *connoissance de fait* — counts her lovers by dozens, tied up in true-lovers' knots!"

"Lovers! — no, no! — Did I say lovers? — suitors, I should have said — There's nothing less like a lover, a true lover, than a suitor, as all the world knows, ever since the days of Penelope — — Dozens! — never had a lover in my life! — And fear, with much reason, I never shall have one to my mind."

"My lord, you've given up the game," cried lady Catharine — "but you make no battle."

"It would be so vain to combat against your ladyship," said lord Colambre, rising, and bowing politely to lady Catharine, but turning the next instant to converse with miss Broadhurst.

"But when I talked of liking to be an heiress," said lady Anne, "I was not thinking of lovers."

“Certainly—One is not always thinking of lovers, you know,” added lady Catharine.

“Not always,” replied miss Broadhurst. “Well, lovers out of the question on all sides, what would your ladyship buy with the thousands upon thousands?”

“O, every thing, if I were you,” said lady Anne.

“Rank, to begin with,” said lady Catharine.

“Still my old objection, bought rank is but a shabby thing.”

“But there is so little difference made between bought and hereditary rank in these days,” said lady Catharine.

“I see a great deal still,” said miss Broadhurst; “so much, that I would never buy a title.”

“A title without birth, to be sure,” said lady Anne, “would not be so well worth buying; and as birth certainly is not to be bought——”

“And even birth, were it to be bought, I would not buy,” said miss Broadhurst,

“unless I could be sure to have with it all the politeness, all the noble sentiments, all the magnanimity, in short, all that should grace and dignify high birth.”

“Admirable!” said lord Colambre—
Grace Nugent smiled.

“Lord Colambre, will you have the goodness to put my mother in mind, I must go away?”

“I am bound to obey, but I am very sorry for it,” said his lordship.

“Are we to have any dancing to night, I wonder,” said lady Catharine. “Miss Nugent, I am afraid we have made miss Broadhurst talk so much, in spite of her hoarseness, that lady Clonbrony will be quite angry with us — And here she comes!”

My lady Clonbrony came to hope, to beg, that miss Broadhurst would not think of running away; but miss Broadhurst could not be prevailed upon to stay — Lady Clonbrony was delighted to see, that her son assisted Grace Nugent most carefully in *shawling* miss Broadhurst —

his lordship conducted her to her carriage; and his mother drew many happy auguries from the gallantry of his manner, and from the young lady's having stayed three quarters, instead of half an hour—a circumstance, which lady Catharine did not fail to remark.

The dancing, which, under various pretences, lady Clonbrony had delayed, till lord Colambre was at liberty, began immediately after miss Broadhurst's departure; and the chalked mosaic pavement of the Alhambra was, in a few minutes, effaced by the dancers' feet. How transient are all human joys, especially those of vanity! Even on this long meditated, this long desired, this gala night, lady Clonbrony found her triumph incomplete—inadequate to her expectations. For the first hour, all had been compliment, success, and smiles; presently came the *buts*, and the hesitated objections, and the “damning with faint praise”—All *that* could be borne—Every body has his taste—and one person's

taste is as good as another's; and, while she had Mr. Soho to cite, lady Clonbrony thought she might be well satisfied— But she could not be satisfied with colonel Heathcock, who, dressed in black, had stretched his “fashionable length of limb” under the statira canopy, upon the snow-white swandown couch— When, after having monopolised attention, and been the subject of much bad wit, about black swans and rare birds, and swans being geese and geese being swans, the colonel condescended to rise, and, as Mrs. Dareville said, to vacate his couch, that couch was no longer white—the black impression of the colonel remained on the sullied snow.

“Eh now! really didn't recollect I was in black”—was all the apology he made. Lady Clonbrony was particularly vexed, that the appearance of the statira canopy should be spoiled before the effect had been seen by lady Pococke, and lady Chatterton, and lady G——, lady P——, and the duke of V——, and a party

of superlative fashionables, who had promised *to look in upon her*, but who, late as it was, had not yet arrived. They came in at last. But lady Clonbrony had no reason to regret, for their sake, the statira couch — It would have been lost upon them, as was every thing else, which she had prepared with so much pains and cost to excite their admiration — They came resolute not to admire. Skilled in the art of making others unhappy, they just looked round with an air of apathy. — “ Ah! you’ve had Soho! — Soho has done wonders for you here! — Vastly well! — Vastly well! — Soho’s very clever in his way!”

Others, of great importance, came in, full of some slight accident, that had happened to themselves, or their horses, or their carriages; and, with privileged selfishness, engrossed the attention of all within their sphere of conversation. Well, lady Clonbrony got over all this, and got over the history of a letter about a chimney, that was on fire, a week ago, at the

duke of V——'s old house, in Brecknockshire. In gratitude for the smiling patience, with which she listened to him, his grace of V—— fixed his glass to look at the Alhambra, and had just pronounced it to be "Well!—Very well!" when the dowager lady Chatterton made a terrible discovery — a discovery that filled lady Clonbrony with astonishment and indignation — Mr. Soho had played her false! What was her mortification, when the dowager assured her, that these identical Alhambra hangings had not only been shown, by Mr. Soho, to the duchess of Torcaster, but that her grace had had the refusal of them, and had actually rejected them, in consequence of sir Horace Grant the great traveller's objecting to some of the proportions of the pillars — Soho had engaged to make a new set, vastly improved, by sir Horace's suggestions, for her grace of Torcaster.

Now lady Chatterton was the greatest talker extant; and she went about the rooms telling every body of her acquaint-

ance—and she was acquainted with every body — how shamefully Soho had imposed upon poor lady Clonbrony, protesting she could not forgive the man. “For,” said she, “though the duchess of Torcaster has been his constant customer for ages, and his patroness, and all that, yet this does not excuse him—and lady Clonbrony’s being a stranger, and from Ireland, makes the thing worse.” From Ireland!—That was the unkindest cut of all — But there was no remedy.

In vain poor lady Clonbrony followed the dowager about the rooms, to correct this mistake, and to represent, in justice to Mr. Soho, though he had used her so ill, that he knew she was an Englishwoman. The dowager was deaf, and no whisper could reach her ear. And when lady Clonbrony was obliged to bawl an explanation in her ear, the dowager only repeated.—

“In justice to Mr. Soho! — No, no; he has not done you justice, my dear lady Clonbrony! and I’ll expose him to every

body — Englishwoman ! — no, no, no ! — Soho could not take you for an Englishwoman ! ” —

All, who secretly envied or ridiculed lady Clonbrony, enjoyed this scene. The Alhambra hangings, which had been, in one short hour before, the admiration of the world, were now regarded by every eye with contempt, as *cast* hangings, and every tongue was busy, declaiming against Mr. Soho ; every body declared, that, from the first, the want of proportion had struck “ them, but that they would not mention it, till others found it out.”

People usually revenge themselves, for having admired too much, by afterwards despising and depreciating without mercy — In all great assemblies, the perception of ridicule is quickly caught, and quickly, too, revealed. Lady Clonbrony, even in her own house, on her gala night, became an object of ridicule, decently masked, indeed, under the appearance of condolence with her ladyship, and of indignation against “ that abominable Mr. Soho ! ”

Lady Langdale, who was now, for reasons of her own, upon her good behaviour, did penance, as she said, for her former imprudence, by abstaining even from whispered sarcasms. She looked on with penitential gravity, said nothing herself, and endeavoured to keep Mrs. Dareville in order ; but that was no' easy task. Mrs. Dareville had no daughters, had nothing to gain' from the acquaintance of my lady Clonbrony ; and, conscious that her ladyship would bear a vast deal from her presence, rather than forego the honour of her sanction, Mrs. Dareville, without any motives of interest, or good nature of sufficient power to restrain her talent and habit of ridicule, free from hope or fear, gave full scope to all the malice of mockery, and all the insolence of fashion. Her slings and arrows, numerous as they were and outrageous, were directed against such petty objects, and the mischief was so quick, in it's aim and it's operation, that, felt but not seen, it is scarcely possible to register the

hits, or to describe the nature of the wounds.

Some hits, sufficiently palpable, however, were recorded for the advantage of posterity. When lady Clonbrony led her to look at the Chinese pagoda, the lady paused, with her foot on the threshold, as if afraid to enter this porcelain Elysium, as she called it — Fool's Paradise, she would have said ; and, by her hesitation, and by the half pronounced word, suggested the idea — “ None but belles without petticoats can enter here,” said she, drawing her clothes tight round her — “ fortunately, I have but two, and lady Langdale has but one.” Prevailed upon to venture in, she walked on with prodigious care and trepidation, affecting to be alarmed at the crowd of strange forms and monsters, by which she was surrounded.

“ Not a creature here, that I ever saw before, in nature! — Well, now I may boast I've been in a real Chinese pagoda !”

“Why yes, every thing is appropriate here, I flatter myself,” said lady Clonbrony.

“And how good of you, my dear lady Clonbrony, in defiance of bulls and blunders, to allow us a comfortable English fireplace, and plenty of Newcastle coal, in China! — And a white marble — no! white velvet hearth-rug, painted with beautiful flowers — O! the delicate, the *useful* thing!”

Vexed by the emphasis on the word *useful*, lady Clonbrony endeavoured to turn off the attention of the company. “Lady Langdale, your ladyship’s a judge of china — This vase is an unique, I am told ——”

“I am told,” interrupted Mrs. Dareville, “this is the very vase, in which B——, the nabob’s father, who was, you know, a China captain, smuggled his dear litte Chinese wife and all her fortune out of Canton — positively, actually put the lid on, packed her up, and sent her off on shipboard! — True! true! upon

my veracity!—— I'll tell you my authority!——”

With this story, Mrs. Dareville drew all attention from the jar, to lady Clonbrony's infinite mortification.

Lady Langdale at length turned to look at a vast range of china jars.

“Ali Baba and the forty thieves!” exclaimed Mrs. Dareville — “I hope you have boiling oil ready!”

Lady Clonbrony was obliged to laugh, and to vow, that Mrs. Dareville was uncommon pleasant to night —— “But now,” said her ladyship, “let me take you on to the Turkish tent.”

Having, with great difficulty, got the malicious wit out of the pagoda and into the Turkish tent, lady Clonbrony began to breathe more freely; for here she thought she was upon safe ground — “Every thing, I flatter myself,” said she, “is correct, and appropriate, and quite picturesque” — The company, dispersed in happy groups, or reposing on seraglio ottomans, drinking lemonade and sherbet

— beautiful Fatimas admiring, or being admired — “ Every thing here quite correct, appropriate, and picturesque,” repeated Mrs. Dareville.

This lady’s powers as a mimic were extraordinary, and she found them irresistible. Hitherto, she had imitated lady Clonbrony’s air and accent only behind her back ; but, bolder grown, she now ventured, in spite of lady Langdale’s warning pinches, to mimic her kind hostess before her face, and to her face — Now, whenever lady Clonbrony saw any thing, that struck her fancy, in the dress of her fashionable friends, she had a way of hanging her head aside, and saying, with a peculiar sentimental drawl —

“ How pretty! — How elegant! — Now that quite suits my *teeste!*” — This phrase, precisely in the same accent, and with the head set to the same angle of affectation, Mrs. Dareville had the assurance to address to her ladyship, apropos to something, which she pretended to admire in lady Clonbrony’s *costume* — a

costume, which, excessively fashionable in each of its parts, was, all together, so extraordinarily unbecoming, as to be fit for a print-shop. The perception of this, added to the effect of Mrs. Dareville's mimicry, was almost too much for lady Langdale; she could not possibly have stood it, but for the appearance of miss Nugent at this instant behind lady Clonbrony — Grace gave one glance of indignation, which seemed suddenly to strike Mrs. Dareville — Silence for a moment ensued, and afterwards the tone of the conversation was changed.

“Salisbury!—explain this to me,” said a lady, drawing Mr. Salisbury aside. “If you are in the secret, do explain this to me; for unless I had seen it, I could not have believed it—Nay, though I have seen it, I do not believe it—How was that daring spirit laid?—By what spell?”

“By the spell, which superior minds always cast on inferior spirits.”

“Very fine,” said the lady, laughing, “but as old as the days of Leonora de

Galigai, quoted a million times—Now tell me something new, and to the purpose, and better suited to modern days.”

“ Well, then, since you will not allow me to talk of superior minds, in the present days, let me ask you, if you have never observed, that a wit, once conquered in company by a wit of a higher order, is thenceforward in complete subjection to the conqueror, whenever and wherever they meet.”

“ You would not persuade me that yonder gentle looking girl could ever be a match for the veteran Mrs. Dareville?—She may have the wit, but has she the courage?”

“ Yes; no one has more courage, more civil courage, where her own dignity, or the interests of her friends are concerned—I will tell you an instance or two to-morrow.”

“ To-morrow!—To-night!—tell it me now.”

“ Not a safe place——”

“ The safest in the world, in such a crowd as this——Follow my example.

Take a glass of orgeat—sip from time to time, thus—speak low, looking innocent all the while straightforward, or now and then up at the lamps—keep on in an even tone—use no names—and you may tell any thing.”

“ Well, then, when miss Nugent first came to London, lady Langdale——”

“ Two names already—did not I warn ye?——”

“ But how can I make myself intelligible?”

“ Initials—can't you use—or genealogy?—What stops you?——It is only lord Colambre, a very safe person, I have a notion, when the eulogium is of Grace Nugent.”

Lord Colambre, who had now performed his arduous duties as a dancer, and had disembarrassed himself of all his partners, came into the Turkish tent just at this moment to refresh himself, and just in time to hear Mr. Salisbury's anecdotes.

“ Now go on.”

“Lady Langdale, you know, sets an inordinate value upon her curtsies in public, and she used to treat miss Nugent, as her ladyship treats many other people, sometimes noticing, and sometimes pretending not to know her, according to the company she happened to be with. One day they met in some fine company—Lady Langdale looked as if she was afraid of committing herself by a curtsy—Miss Nugent waited for a good opportunity; and, when all the world was silent, leant forward, and called to lady Langdale, as if she had something to communicate of the greatest consequence, skreening her whisper with her hand, as in an aside on the stage—
“Lady Langdale, you may curtsy to me now—nobody is looking.”

“The retort courteous!” said lord Colambre—“the only retort for a woman.”

“And her ladyship deserved it so well—But Mrs. Dareville, what happened about her?”

“Mrs. Dareville, you remember, some

years ago, went to Ireland, with some lady lieutenant, to whom she was related — There she was most hospitably received by lord and lady Clonbrony—went to their country house—was as intimate with lady Clonbrony and with miss Nugent as possible—stayed at Clonbrony castle for a month; and yet, when lady Clonbrony came to London, never took the least notice of her—At last, meeting at the house of a common friend, Mrs. Dareville could not avoid recognising her ladyship; but, even then, did it in the least civil manner and most cursory style possible — “ Ho! lady Clonbrony!—didn't know you were in England!—When did you come?—How long shall you stay in town?—Hope, before you leave England, your ladyship and miss Nugent will give us a day?” — *A day!* — Lady Clonbrony was so astonished by this impudence of ingratitude, that she hesitated how to *take it*; but miss Nugent, quite coolly, and with a smile, an-

swered — “ A day! — Certainly — to you, who gave us a month ! ”

“ Admirable! — Now I comprehend perfectly why Mrs. Dareville declines insulting miss Nugent’s friends in her presence.”

Lord Colambre said nothing, but thought much. — “ How I wish my mother,” thought he, “ had some of Grace Nugent’s proper pride! — She would not then waste her fortune, spirits, health, and life, in courting such people as these.”

He had not seen — he could not have borne to have beheld — the manner, in which his mother had been treated by some of her guests; but he observed, that she now looked harassed and vexed; and he was provoked and mortified, by hearing her begging and beseeching some of these saucy leaders of the ton, to oblige her, to do her the favour, to do her the honour to stay to supper — It was just ready — actually announced. “ No, they

would not — they could not — they were obliged to run away — engaged to the duchess of Torcaster ——”

“ Lord Colambre, what is the matter ? ” said miss Nugent, going up to him, as he stood aloof and indignant — “ Don’t look so like a chafed lion ; others may perhaps read your countenance, as well as I do ——”

“ None can read my mind so well,” replied he. “ Oh ! my dear Grace ! ——”

“ Supper ! —— Supper ! ” —— cried she —— “ Your duty to your neighbour, your hand to your partner ——”

Lady Catharine, as they went down stairs to supper, observed, that miss Nugent had not been dancing, that she had kept quite in the back ground all night —— quite in the shade.”

“ Those,” said lord Colambre, “ who are contented in the shade, are the best able to bear the light ; and I am not surprised, that one, so interesting in the back ground, should not desire to be the foremost figure in a piece ——”

The supper room, fitted up, at great expense, with scenery to imitate Vauxhall, opened into a superb greenhouse, lighted with coloured lamps, a band of music at a distance—every delicacy, every luxury, that could gratify the senses, appeared in profusion. The company ate and drank—enjoyed themselves—went away—and laughed at their hostess. Some, indeed, who thought they had been neglected, were in too bad humour to laugh, but abused her in sober earnest; for lady Clonbrony had offended half, nay, three quarters of her guests, by what they termed her exclusive attention to those very leaders of the ton, from whom she had suffered so much, and who had made it obvious to all, that they thought they did her too much honour in appearing at her gala.—So ended the gala, for which she had lavished such sums; for which she had laboured so indefatigably; and from which she had expected such triumph.

“ Colambre, bid the musicians stop—

they are playing to empty benches," said lady Clonbrony. — "Grace, my dear, will you see that these lamps are safely put out? — I am so tired, so *worn out*, I must go to bed — And I am sure I have caught cold, too! — What a *nervous business* it is to manage these things! — I wonder how one gets through it, or *why* one does it!"

CHAPTER IV.

LADY Clonbrony was taken ill the day after her gala; she had caught cold by standing, when much overheated, in a violent draught of wind, paying her parting compliments to the duke of V——, who thought her a *bore*, and wished her in Heaven all the time, for keeping his horses standing. Her ladyship's illness was severe and long; she was confined to her room for some weeks by a rheumatic fever, and an inflammation in her eyes. Every day, when lord Colambre went to see his mother, he found miss Nugent in her apartment, and every hour he found fresh reason to admire this charming girl. The affectionate tenderness, the indefatigable patience, the strong attachment she showed for her aunt, actually raised lady Clonbrony in

her son's opinion. He was persuaded she must surely have some good or great qualities, or she could not have excited such strong affection. A few foibles out of the question, such as her love of fine people, her affectation of being English, and other affectations too tedious to mention, lady Clonbrony was really a good woman, had good principles, moral and religious, and, selfishness not immediately interfering, she was good natured; and, though her soul and attention were so completely absorbed in the duties of acquaintanceship, that she did not know it, she really had affections — they were concentrated upon a few near relations. She was extremely fond, and extremely proud, of her son. Next to her son, she was fonder of her niece, than of any other creature. She had received Grace Nugent into her family when she was left an orphan, and deserted by some of her other relations. She had bred her up, and had treated her with constant kindness. This kindness and these obligations had

raised the warmest gratitude in miss Nugent's heart; and it was the strong principle of gratitude, which rendered her capable of endurance and exertions seemingly far above her strength. This young lady was not of a robust appearance, though she now underwent extraordinary fatigue. Her aunt could scarcely bear, that she should leave her for a moment: she could not close her eyes, unless Grace sat up with her many hours every night. Night after night, she bore this fatigue; and yet, with little sleep or rest, she preserved her health, at least supported her spirits; and every morning, when lord Colambre came into his mother's room, he saw miss Nugent look as blooming, as if she had enjoyed the most refreshing sleep. The bloom was, as he observed, not permanent; it came and went, with every emotion of her feeling heart; and he soon learned to fancy her almost as handsome, when she was pale, as when she had a colour. He had thought her beautiful, when he be-

held her in all the radiance of light, and with all the advantages of dress at the gala, but he found her infinitely more lovely and interesting now, when he saw her in a sick room—a half-darkened chamber—where often he could but just discern her form, or distinguish her, except by her graceful motion as she passed, or when, but for a moment, a window curtain drawn aside let the sun shine upon her face, or on the unadorned ringlets of her hair.

Much must be allowed for an inflammation in the eyes, and something for a rheumatic fever; yet it may seem strange, that lady Clonbrony should be so blind and deaf, as neither to see nor hear all this time; that, having lived so long in the world, it should never occur to her, that it was rather imprudent to have a young lady, not eighteen, nursing her—and such a young lady!—when her son, not one and twenty—and such a son!—came to visit her daily. But, so it was. Lady Clonbrony knew nothing of love—

She had read of it, indeed, in novels, which sometimes, for fashion's sake, she had looked at, and over which she had been obliged to doze; but this was only love in books—love in real life she had never met with—in the life she led, how should she? She had heard of it's making young people, and old people even, do foolish things; but those were foolish people; and, if they were worse than foolish, why it was shocking, and nobody visited them. But lady Clonbrony had not, for her own part, the slightest notion, how people could be brought to this pass, nor how any body out of Bedlam could prefer, to a good house, a decent equipage, and a proper establishment, what is called love in a cottage. As to Colambre, she had too good an opinion of his understanding—to say nothing of his duty to his family, his pride, his rank, and his being her son—to let such an idea cross her imagination. As to her niece; in the first place, she was her niece, and first cousins should never

marry, because they form no new connexions to strengthen the family interest, or raise it's consequence. This doctrine her ladyship had repeated, for years, so often and so dogmatically, that she conceived it to be incontrovertible, and of as full force as any law of the land, or as any moral or religious obligation. She would as soon have suspected her niece of an intention of stealing her diamond necklace, as of purloining Colambre's heart, or marrying this heir of the house of Clonbrony.

Miss Nugent was so well apprised, and so thoroughly convinced of all this, that she never, for one moment, allowed herself to think of lord Colambre as a lover. Duty, honour, and gratitude—gratitude, the strong feeling and principle of her mind—forbade it; she had so prepared and habituated herself to consider him as a person, with whom she could not possibly be united, that, with perfect ease and simplicity, she behaved towards him exactly as if he was her

brother—Not in the equivocating sentimental romance style, in which ladies talk of treating men as their brothers; whom they are all the time secretly thinking of and endeavouring to please as lovers—Not using this phrase as a convenient pretence, a safe mode of securing herself from suspicion or scandal, and of enjoying the advantages of confidence and the intimacy of friendship, till the propitious moment, when it should be time to declare or avow *the secret of the heart*. No!—This young lady was quite above all double dealing; she had no mental reservation—no metaphysical subtleties—but, with plain, unsophisticated morality, in good faith, and simple truth, acted as she professed; thought what she said, and was that which she seemed to be:

As soon as lady Clonbrony was able to see any body, her niece sent to Mrs. Broadhurst, who was very intimate with the family; she used to come frequently, almost every evening, to sit with the in-

valide. Miss Broadhurst accompanied her mother, for she did not like to go out with any other chaperon — it was disagreeable to spend her time alone at home, and most agreeable to spend it with her friend miss Nugent. In this she had no design, no coquetry; miss Broadhurst had too lofty and independent a spirit to stoop to coquetry: she thought, that, in their interview at the gala, she understood lord Colambre, and that he understood her — that he was not inclined to court her for her fortune — that she would not be content with any suitor, who was not a lover. She was two or three years older than lord Colambre, perfectly aware of her want of beauty, yet with a just sense of her own merit, and of what was becoming and due to the dignity of her sex. This, she trusted, was visible in her manners, and established in lord Colambre's mind; so that she ran no risk of being misunderstood by him; and as to what the rest of the world thought, she was so

well used to hear weekly and daily reports of her going to be married to fifty different people, that she cared little for what was said on this subject. Indeed, conscious of rectitude, and with an utter contempt for mean and commonplace gossiping, she was, for a woman, and a young woman, rather too disdainful of the opinion of the world. Mrs. Broadhurst, though her daughter had fully explained herself respecting lord Colambre, before she began this course of visiting, yet rejoiced, that, even on this footing, there should be constant intercourse between them. It was Mrs. Broadhurst's warmest wish, that her daughter should obtain rank, and connect herself with an ancient family: she was sensible, that the young lady's being older than the gentleman might be an obstacle; and very sorry she was to find, that her daughter had so imprudently, so unnecessarily, declared her age: but still this little obstacle might be overcome; much greater difficulties, in the marriage

of inferior heiresses, were every day got over, and thought nothing of. Then, as to the young lady's own sentiments, her mother knew them better than she did herself: she understood her daughter's pride, that she dreaded to be made an object of bargain and sale; but Mrs. Broadhurst, who, with all her coarseness of mind, had rather a better notion of love matters than lady Clonbrony, perceived, through her daughter's horror of being offered to lord Colambre, through her anxiety, that nothing approaching to an advance on the part of her family should be made, that, if lord Colambre should himself advance, he would stand a better chance of being accepted, than any other of the numerous persons, who had yet aspired to the favour of this heiress. The very circumstance of his having paid no court to her at first, operated in his favour; for it proved that he was not mercenary, and that, whatever attention he might after-

wards show, she must be sure would be sincere and disinterested.

“ And now, let them but see one another in this easy, intimate kind of way; and you will find, my dear lady Clonbrony, things will go on of their own accord, all the better for our—minding our cards—and never minding any thing else.—I remember, when I was young—but let that pass—let the young people see one another, and manage their own affairs their own way—let them be together—that’s all I say. Ask half the men you are acquainted with why they married, and their answer, if they speak truth, will be—‘ Because I met miss such-a-one at such a place, and we were continually together’—Propinquity!—Propinquity!—as my father used to say—And he was married five times, and twice to heiresses”—

In consequence of this plan of leaving things to themselves, every evening lady Clonbrony made out her own little card-

table with Mrs. Broadhurst, and a Mr. and miss Pratt, a brother and sister, who were the most obliging, convenient neighbours imaginable. From time to time, as lady Clonbrony gathered up her cards, she would direct an inquiring glance to the group of young people at the other table; whilst the more prudent Mrs. Broadhurst sat plump with her back to them, pursing up her lips, and contracting her brows, in token of deep calculation, looking down impenetrable at her cards, never even noticing lady Clonbrony's glances, but inquiring, from her partner, "How many they were by honours?"

The young party generally consisted of miss Broadhurst, lord Colambre, miss Nugent, and her admirer, Mr. Salisbury. Mr. Salisbury was a middle-aged gentleman, very agreeable, and well informed; he had travelled; had seen a great deal of the world; had lived in the best company; had acquired what is called good *tact*; was full of anecdote, not mere gos-

sipping anecdotes, that lead to nothing, but anecdotes characteristic of national manners, of human nature in general, or of those illustrious individuals, who excite public curiosity and interest. Miss Nugent had seen him always in large companies, where he was admired for his *sçavoir-vivre*, and for his entertaining anecdotes, but where he had no opportunity of producing any of the higher powers of his understanding, or showing character. She found, that Mr. Salisbury appeared to her quite a different person, when conversing with lord Colambre. Lord Colambre, with that ardent thirst for knowledge, which it is always agreeable to gratify, had an air of openness and generosity, a frankness, a warmth of manner, which, with good breeding, but with something beyond it and superior to it's established forms, irresistibly won the confidence and attracted the affection of those, with whom he conversed. His manners were peculiarly agreeable to a person like Mr. Salisbury,

tired of the sameness and egotism of men of the world.

Miss Nugent had seldom, till now, had the advantage of hearing much conversation on literary subjects. In the life she had been compelled to lead, she had acquired accomplishments, had exercised her understanding upon every thing, that passed before her, and, from circumstances, had formed her judgment and her taste by observations on real life; but the ample page of knowledge had never been unrolled to her eyes. She had never had opportunities of acquiring literature herself, but she admired it in others, particularly in her friend, miss Broadhurst. Miss Broadhurst had received all the advantages of education, which money could procure, and had profited by them in a manner uncommon among those, for whom they are purchased in such abundance: she not only had had many masters, and read many books, but had thought of what she read, and had supplied, by the strength

and energy of her own mind, what cannot be acquired by the assistance of masters. Miss Nugent, perhaps, overvaluing the information, that she did not possess, and free from all idea of envy, looked up to her friend, as to a superior being, with a sort of enthusiastic admiration; and now, with "charmed attention," listened, by turns, to her, to Mr. Salisbury, and to lord Colambre, whilst they conversed on literary subjects — listened, with a countenance so full of intelligence, of animation so expressive of every good and kind affection, that the gentlemen did not always know what they were saying.

"Pray go on," said she, once to Mr. Salisbury — "You stop, perhaps, from politeness to me — from compassion to my ignorance; but, though I am ignorant, you do not tire me, I assure you. Did you ever condescend to read the Arabian tales? — Like him, whose eyes were touched by the magical application from the dervise, I am enabled at once to see the riches of a new world—O! how

unlike, how superior to that, in which I have lived! — the GREAT world, as it is called.”

Lord Colambre brought down a beautiful edition of the Arabian tales, looked for the story, to which miss Nugent had alluded, and showed it to miss Broadhurst, who was also searching for it in another volume.

Lady Clonbrony, from her card table, saw the young people thus engaged —

“I profess not to understand these things so well as you say you do, my dear Mrs. Broadhurst,” whispered she, “But look there now; they are at their books! — What do you expect can come of that sort of thing? — So ill bred, and downright rude of Colambre, I must give him a hint.”

“No, no, for mercy’s sake! my dear lady Clonbrony, no hints, no hints, no remarks! — What would you have? — she reading, and my lord at the back of her chair, leaning over — and allowed, mind, to lean over to read the same thing —

Can't be better!— Never saw any man yet allowed to come so near her!— Now, lady Clonbrony, not a word, not a look, I beseech ——”

“ Well, well!—But if they had a little music ——”

“ My daughter's tired of music. How much do I owe your ladyship now?— three rubbers, I think.—— Now, though you would not believe it, of a young girl,” continued Mrs. Broadhurst, “ I can assure your ladyship, my daughter would often rather go to a book than a ball.”

“ Well now, that's very extraordinary, in the style in which she has been brought up; yet books, and all that, are so fashionable now, that it's very natural,” said lady Clonbrony.

About this time, Mr. Berryl, lord Colambre's Cambridge friend, for whom his lordship had fought the battle of the cur-ricule with Mordicai, came to town. Lord Colambre introduced him to his mother, by whom he was graciously received; for Mr. Berryl was a young gentleman of

good figure, good address, good family, heir to a good fortune, and in every respect a fit match for miss Nugent. Lady Clonbrony thought, that it would be wise to secure him for her niece before he should make his appearance in the London world, where mothers and daughters would soon make him feel his own consequence. Mr. Berryl, as lord Colambre's intimate friend, was admitted to the private evening parties at lady Clonbrony's, and he contributed to render them still more agreeable. His information, his habits of thinking, and his views, were all totally different from Mr. Salisbury's; and their collision continually struck out that sparkling novelty, which pleases peculiarly in conversation. Mr. Berryl's education, disposition, and tastes, fitted him exactly for the station, which he was destined to fill in society—that of *a country gentleman*; not meaning, by that expression, a mere eating, drinking, hunting, shooting, ignorant, country squire, of the old race, which is now nearly extinct; but a cultivated,

enlightened, independent English country gentleman—the happiest, perhaps, of human beings. On the comparative felicity of the town and country life; on the dignity, utility, elegance, and interesting nature of their different occupations, and general scheme of passing their time; Mr. Berryl and Mr. Salisbury had, one evening, a playful, entertaining, and, perhaps, instructive conversation; each party, at the end, remaining, as frequently happens, of their own opinion. It was observed, that miss Broadhurst ably and warmly defended Mr. Berryl's side of the question; and, in their views, plans, and estimates of life, there appeared a remarkable, and, as lord Colambre thought, a happy coincidence. When she was at last called upon to give her decisive judgment between a town and a country life, she declared, that “if she were condemned to the extremes of either, she should prefer a country life, as much as she should prefer Robinson Crusoe's diary to the journal of the idle man in the Spectator.”

“Lord bless me! — Mrs. Broadhurst, do you hear what your daughter is saying?” — cried lady Clonbrony, who, from the card table, lent an attentive ear to all that was going forward — “Is it possible, that miss Broadhurst, with her fortune, and pretensions, and sense, can really be serious in saying she would be content to live in the country?”

“What’s that you say, child, about living in the country?” said Mrs. Broadhurst.

Miss Broadhurst repeated what she had said.

“Girls always think so, who have lived in town,” said Mrs. Broadhurst — “They are always dreaming of sheep and sheephooks; but the first winter the country cures them; a shepherdess, in winter, is a sad and sorry sort of personage, except at a masquerade.”

“Colambre,” said lady Clonbrony, “I am sure miss Broadhurst’s sentiments about town life, and all that, must de-

light you — For do you know, ma'am, he is always trying to persuade me to give up living in town? — Colambre and miss Broadhurst perfectly agree."

"Mind your cards, my dear lady Clonbrony," interrupted Mrs. Broadhurst, "in pity to your partner — Mr. Pratt has certainly the patience of Job — Your ladyship has revoked twice this hand."

Lady Clonbrony begged a thousand pardons, fixed her eyes, and endeavoured to fix her mind, on the cards; but there was something said at the other end of the room, about an estate in Cambridge-shire, which soon distracted her attention again. Mr. Pratt certainly had the patience of Job. She revoked, and lost the game, though they had four by honours.

As soon as she rose from the card table, and could speak to Mrs. Broadhurst apart, she communicated her apprehensions —

"Seriously, my dear madam," said she, "I believe I have done very wrong to

admit Mr. Berryl just now, though it was on Grace's account I did it — But, ma'am, I did not know miss Broadhurst had an estate in Cambridgeshire; their two estates just close to one another, I heard them say—Lord bless me, ma'am! there's the danger of propinquity indeed!”

“No danger, no danger,” persisted Mrs. Broadhurst. “I know my girl better than you do, begging your ladyship's pardon — No one thinks less of estates than she does.”

“Well, I only know I heard her talking of them, and earnestly, too.”

“Yes, very likely — But don't you know, that girls never think of what they are talking about, or rather never talk of what they are thinking about? And they have always ten times more to say to the man they don't care for, than to him they do.”

“Very extraordinary!” said lady Clonbrony — “I only hope you are right.”

“I am sure of it,” said Mrs. Broadhurst — “Only let things go on, and

mind your cards, I beseech you, to morrow night, better than you did to night ; and you will see, that things will turn out just as I prophesied. Lord Colambre will come to a point-blank proposal before the end of the week, and will be accepted, or my name's not Broadhurst. Why, in plain English, I am clear my girl likes him ; and, when that's the case, you know, can you doubt how the thing will end ?”

Mrs. Broadhurst was perfectly right in every point of her reasoning but one. From long habit of seeing and considering, that such an heiress as her daughter might marry whom she pleased ; from constantly seeing, that she was the person to decide and to reject ; Mrs. Broadhurst had literally taken it for granted ; that every thing was to depend upon her daughter's inclinations : she was not mistaken, in the present case, in opining, that the young lady would not be averse to lord Colambre, if he came to what she called a point-blank proposal. It

really never occurred to Mrs. Broadhurst, that any man, whom her daughter was the least inclined to favour, could think of any body else. Quick-sighted in these affairs, as the matron thought herself, she saw but one side of the question; blind and dull of comprehension as she thought lady Clonbrony on this subject, she was herself so completely blinded by her own prejudices, as to be incapable of discerning the plain thing, that was before her eyes; *videlicet*, that lord Colambre preferred Grace Nugent. Lord Colambre made no proposal before the end of the week; but this Mrs. Broadhurst attributed to an unexpected occurrence, which prevented things from going on in the train, in which they had been proceeding so smoothly. Sir John Berryl, Mr. Berryl's father, was suddenly seized with a dangerous illness. The news was brought to Mr. Berryl one evening, whilst he was at lady Clonbrony's. The circumstances of domestic distress, which afterwards occurred in the

family of his friend, entirely occupied lord Colambre's time and attention. All thoughts of love were suspended, and his whole mind was given up to the active services of friendship. The sudden illness of sir John Berryl spread an alarm among his creditors, which brought to light, at once, the disorder of his affairs, of which his son had no knowledge or suspicion. Lady Berryl had been a very expensive woman, especially in equipages; and Mordicai, the coachmaker, appeared at this time the foremost and the most inexorable of their creditors. Conscious, that the charges in his account were exorbitant, and that they would not be allowed, if examined by a court of justice; that it was a debt, which only ignorance and extravagance could have in the first instance incurred, swelled afterwards to an amazing amount by interest, and interest upon interest; Mordicai was impatient to obtain payment whilst sir John yet lived, or at least to obtain legal security for the whole

sum from the heir. Mr. Berryl offered his bond for the amount of the reasonable charges in his account; but this Mordicai absolutely refused, declaring, that, now he had the power in his own hands, he would use it to obtain the utmost penny of his debt; that he would not let the thing slip through his fingers; that a debtor never yet escaped him, and never should; that a man's lying upon his death-bed was no excuse to a creditor; that he was not a whiffler, to stand upon ceremony about disturbing a gentleman in his last moments; that he was not to be cheated out of his due by such niceties; that he was prepared to go all lengths the law would allow; for that, as to what people said of him, he did not care a doit — “Cover your face with your hands, if you like it, Mr. Berryl; you may be ashamed for me, but I feel no shame for myself—I am not so weak.” Mordecai's countenance said more than his words; livid with malice, and with atrocious determination in his

eyes, he stood — “Yes, sir,” said he, “you may look at me as you please — it is possible — I am in earnest. Consult what you’ll do now, behind my back or before my face, it comes to the same thing; — for nothing will do but my money or your bond, Mr. Berryl — The arrest is made on the person of your father, luckily made while the breath is still in the body — Yes — start forward to strike me, if you dare — Your father, sir John Berryl, sick or well, is my prisoner.”

Lady Berryl and Mr. Berryl’s sisters, in an agony of grief, rushed into the room.

“It’s all useless,” cried Mordicai, turning his back upon the ladies — “These tricks upon creditors won’t do with me; I’m used to these scenes; I’m not made of such stuff as you think — Leave a gentleman in peace in his last moments — No! he ought not, nor shan’t die in peace, if he don’t pay his debts; and, if you are all so mighty sorry, ladies, there’s

the gentleman you may kneel to; if tenderness is the order of the day, it's for the son to show it, not me. Ay, now, Mr. Berryl," cried he, as Mr. Berryl took up the bond to sign it — "you're beginning to know I'm not a fool, to be trifled with. Stop your hand, if you choose it, sir; it's all the same to me; the person, or the money, I'll carry with me out of this house."

Mr. Berryl signed the bond, and threw it to him.

"There, monster! — quit the house!"

"*Monster* is not actionable — I wish you had called me *rascal*," said Mordicai, grinning a horrible smile; and, taking up the bond deliberately, returned it to Mr. Berryl — "This paper is worth nothing to me, sir — it is not witnessed."

Mr. Berryl hastily left the room, and returned with lord Colambre. Mordicai changed countenance and grew pale, for a moment, at sight of lord Colambre.

"Well, my lord, since it so happens,

I am not sorry, that you should be witness to this paper," said he; "and indeed not sorry, that you should witness the whole proceeding; for I trust I shall be able to explain to you my conduct."

"I do not come here, sir," interrupted lord Colambre, "to listen to any explanations of your conduct, which I perfectly understand;—I come to witness a bond for my friend Mr. Berryl, if you think proper to extort from him such a bond."

"I extort nothing, my lord. Mr. Berryl, it is quite a voluntary act, take notice, on your part; sign or not, witness or not, as you please, gentlemen," said Mordicai, sticking his hands in his pockets, and recovering his look of black and fixed determination.

"Witness it, witness it, my dear lord," said Mr. Berryl, looking at his mother and weeping sisters — "Witness it, quick!"

"Mr. Berryl must just run over his name again in your presence, my lord,

with a dry pen," said Mordicai, putting the pen into Mr. Berryl's hand.

"No, sir," said lord Colambre—"my friend shall never sign it."

"As you please, my lord — The bond or the body, before I quit this house," said Mordicai.

"Neither, sir, shall you have; and you quit this house directly."

"How! how!—my lord, how's this?"

"Sir, the arrest you have made is as illegal as it is inhuman."

"Illegal, my lord!" said Mordicai, startled.

"Illegal, sir. I came into this house at the moment when your bailiff asked, and was refused admittance. Afterwards, in the confusion of the family above stairs, he forced open the house door with an iron bar — I saw him — I am ready to give evidence of the fact. Now proceed at your peril ——"

Mordicai, without reply, snatched up his hat, and walked towards the door; but lord Colambre held the door open —

the door was immediately at the head of the stairs — and Mordicai, seeing his indignant look and proud form, hesitated to pass; for he had always heard, that Irishmen are “quick in the executive part of justice.”

“Pass on, sir,” repeated lord Colambre, with an air of ineffable contempt: “I am a gentleman — you have nothing to fear.”

Mordicai ran down stairs; lord Colambre, before he went back into the room, waited to see Mordicai and his bailiff out of the house. When Mordicai was fairly at the bottom of the stairs, he turned, and, white with rage, looked up at lord Colambre.

“Charity begins at home, my lord,” said he. “Look at home — You shall pay for this,” added he, standing half-shielded by the house door; for lord Colambre moved forward as he spoke the last words — “And I give you this warning, because I know it will be of no use to you — Your most obedient, my lord.”

The house door closed after Mordicai.

“ Thank Heaven !” thought lord Colambre, “ that I did not horsewhip that mean wretch ! — This warning shall be of use to me — But it is not time to think of that yet.”

Lord Colambre turned from his own affairs to those of his friend, to offer all the assistance and consolation in his power. — Sir John Berryl died that night. His daughters, who had lived in the highest style in London, were left totally unprovided for. His widow had mortgaged her jointure. Mr. Berryl had an estate now left to him, but without any income. He could not be so dishonest, as to refuse to pay his father’s just debts ; he could not let his mother and sisters starve. The scene of distress, to which lord Colambre was witness in this family, made a still greater impression upon him, than had been made by the warning or the threats of Mordicai. The similarity between the circumstances of

his friend's family and of his own struck him forcibly.

All this evil had arisen from lady Berryl's passion for living in London, and at watering places. She had made her husband an ABSENTEE—an absentee from his home, his affairs, his duties, and his estate. The sea, the Irish channel, did not, indeed, flow between him and his estate; but it was of little importance whether the separation was effected by land or water—the consequences, the negligence, the extravagance, were the same.

Of the few people of his age, who are capable of profiting by the experience of others, lord Colambre was one—“Experience,” as an elegant writer has observed, “is an article, that may be borrowed with safety, and is often dearly bought.”

CHAPTER V.

IN the mean time, lady Clonbrony had been occupied with thoughts very different from those, which passed in the mind of her son. Though she had never completely recovered from her rheumatic pains, she had become inordinately impatient of confinement to her own house, and weary of those dull evenings at home, which had, in her son's absence, become insupportable. She told over her visiting tickets regularly twice a day, and gave to every card of invitation a heartfelt sigh. Miss Pratt alarmed her ladyship, by bringing intelligence of some parties given by persons of consequence, to which she was not invited. She feared, that she should be forgotten in the world, well knowing how soon the world forgets those they do not

see every day and every where. How miserable is the fine lady's lot, who cannot forget the world, and who is forgot by the world in a moment! How much more miserable still is the condition of a would-be-fine lady, working her way up in the world with care and pains! By her, every the slightest failure of attention, from persons of rank and fashion, is marked and felt with jealous anxiety, and with a sense of mortification the most acute—an invitation omitted is a matter of the most serious consequence, not only as it regards the present, but the future; for if she be not invited by lady A, it will lower her in the eyes of lady B, and of all the ladies of the alphabet. It will form a precedent of the most dangerous and inevitable application. If she has nine invitations, and the tenth be wanting, the nine have no power to make her happy. This was precisely lady Clonbrony's case—there was to be a party at lady St. James's, for which lady Clonbrony had no card.

“ So ungrateful! so monstrous, of lady St. James!—What! was the gala so soon forgotten, and all the marked attentions paid that night to lady St. James!—attentions, you know, Pratt, which were looked upon with a jealous eye, and made me enemies enough, I am told, in another quarter!—Of all people, I did not expect to be slighted by lady St. James!”

Miss Pratt, who was ever ready to undertake the defence of any person, who had a title, pleaded, in mitigation of censure, that perhaps lady St. James might not be aware, that her ladyship was yet well enough to venture out.

“ O! my dear miss Pratt! that cannot be the thing; for, in spite of my rheumatism, which really was bad enough last Sunday, I went on purpose to the Royal Chapel, to show myself in the closet, and knelt close to her ladyship—And, my dear, we curtsied, and she congratulated me, after church, upon my being abroad again, and was so happy

to see me look so well, and all that — O! it is something very extraordinary, and unaccountable!”

“ But, I dare say, a card will come yet,” said miss Pratt.

Upon this hint, lady Clonbrony's hope revived; and, staying her anger, she began to consider how she could manage to get herself invited. Refreshing tickets were left next morning at lady St. James's, with their corners properly turned up; to do the thing better, separate tickets for herself and for miss Nugent were left for each member of the family; and her civil messages, left with the footman, extended to the utmost possibility of remainder. It had occurred to her ladyship, that, for miss somebody, *the companion*, of whom she had never in her life thought before, she had omitted to leave a card last time, and she now left a note of explanation; she farther, with her rheumatic head and arm out of the coach window, sat, the wind blowing keen upon her, explaining to the porter

and the footman, to discover whether her former tickets had gone safely up to lady St. James ; and, on the present occasion, to make assurance doubly sure, she slid handsome expedition money into the servant's hand — “ Sir, you will be sure to remember ” — “ O certainly ! your ladyship.”

She well knew what dire offence has frequently been taken, what sad disasters have occurred, in the fashionable world, from the neglect of a porter in delivering, or of a footman in carrying up one of those talismanic cards. — But, in spite of all her manœuvres, no invitation to the party arrived next day. Pratt was next set to work. Miss Pratt was a most convenient go-between, who, in consequence of doing a thousand little services, to which few others of her rank in life would stoop, had obtained the entrée to a number of great houses, and was behind the scenes in many fashionable families. Pratt could find out, and Pratt could hint, and Pratt could manage

to get things done cleverly—and hints were given, in all directions, to *work round* to lady St. James. But still they did not take effect. At last, Pratt suggested, that, perhaps, though every thing else had failed, dried salmon might be tried with success. Lord Clonbrony had just had some uncommonly good from Ireland, which Pratt knew lady St. James would like to have at her supper, because a certain personage, whom she would not name, was particularly fond of it—Wheel within wheel, in the fine world, as well as in the political world!—Bribes for all occasions, and for all ranks!—The timely present was sent, accepted with many thanks, and understood as it was meant. Per favour of this propitiatory offering, and of a promise of half a dozen pair of real Limerick gloves to miss Pratt—a promise, which Pratt clearly comprehended to be a conditional promise—the grand object was at length accomplished. The very day before the party was to take place,

came cards of invitation to lady Clonbrony and to miss Nugent, with lady St. James's apologies; her ladyship was concerned to find, that, by some negligence of her servants, these cards were not sent in proper time. "How slight an apology will do from some people," thought miss Nugent; "how eager to forgive, when it is for our interest or our pleasure; how well people act the being deceived, even when all parties know, that they see the whole truth; and how low pride will stoop, to gain it's object!"

Ashamed of the whole transaction, miss Nugent earnestly wished, that a refusal should be sent, and reminded her aunt of her rheumatism; but rheumatism and all other objections were overruled — lady Clonbrony would go. It was just when this affair was thus, in her opinion, successfully settled, that lord Colambre came in, with a countenance of unusual seriousness, his mind full of

the melancholy scenes he had witnessed in his friend's family.

“What is the matter, Colambre?”

He related what had passed; he described the brutal conduct of Mordicai; the anguish of the mother and sisters; the distress of Mr. Berryl. Tears rolled down miss Nugent's cheeks—Lady Clonbrony declared it was very *shocking*; listened with attention to all the particulars; but never failed to correct her son, whenever he said Mr. Berryl.

“*Sir Arthur Berryl, you mean.*”

She was, however, really touched with compassion, when he spoke of lady Berryl's destitute condition; and her son was going on to repeat what Mordicai had said to him, but lady Clonbrony interrupted—

“O! my dear Colambre! don't repeat that detestable man's impertinent speeches to me—If there is any thing really about business, speak to your father—At any rate, don't tell us of it now,

because I've a hundred things to do," said her ladyship, hurrying out of the room — "Grace, Grace Nugent! I want you!"

Lord Colambre sighed deeply.

"Don't despair," said miss Nugent, as she followed to obey her aunt's summons — "Don't despair, don't attempt to speak to her again till to morrow morning — Her head is now full of lady St. James's party — When it is emptied of that, you will have a better chance — Never despair."

"Never, while you encourage me to hope — that any good can be done."

Lady Clonbrony was particularly glad, that she had carried her point about this party at lady St. James's; because, from the first private intimation, that the duchess of Torcaster was to be there, her ladyship flattered herself, that the long-desired introduction might then be accomplished. But of this hope lady St. James had likewise received intimation

from the double-dealing miss Pratt ; and a warning note was dispatched to the duchess to let her grace know, that circumstances had occurred, which had rendered it impossible not to ask *the Clonbronies*. An excuse, of course, for not going to this party, was sent by the duchess—Her grace did not like large parties—she would have the pleasure of accepting lady St. James's invitation for her select party, on Wednesday the 10th. Into these select parties, lady Clonbrony had never been admitted. In return for her great entertainments, she was invited to great entertainments, to large parties ; but farther she could never penetrate.

At lady St. James's, and with her set, lady Clonbrony suffered a different kind of mortification from that, which lady Langdale and Mrs. Dareville made her endure. She was safe from the witty raillery, the sly inuendo, the insolent mimicry ; but she was kept at a cold, impassable distance, by ceremony—“ So

far shalt thou go, and no farther," was expressed in every look, in every word, and in a thousand different ways.

By the most punctilious respect and nice regard to precedency, even by words of courtesy—"Your ladyship does me honour," &c.—lady St. James contrived to mortify, and to mark the difference between those, with whom she was, and with whom she was not, upon terms of intimacy and equality. Thus the ancient grandees of Spain drew a line of demarcation between themselves and the newly created nobility.—Whenever or wherever they met, they treated the new nobles with the utmost respect, never addressed them but with all their titles, with low bows, and with all the appearance of being, with the most perfect consideration, any thing but their equals; whilst towards one another, the grandees laid aside their state, and, omitting their titles, it was, "Alcalá — Medina — Sidonia — Infantado," and a freedom and familiarity, which marked equality. Entrenched in etiquette in this

manner, and mocked with marks of respect, it was impossible either to intrude or to complain of being excluded.

At supper, at lady St. James's, lady Clonbrony's present was pronounced by some gentleman to be remarkably high flavoured. This observation turned the conversation to Irish commodities and Ireland. Lady Clonbrony, possessed by the idea, that it was disadvantageous to appear as an Irishwoman, or as a favourer of Ireland, began to be embarrassed by lady St. James's repeated thanks — Had it been in her power to offer any thing else, with propriety, she would not have thought of sending her ladyship any thing from Ireland. Vexed by the questions, that were asked her about *her country*, lady Clonbrony, as usual, denied it to be her country, and went on to depreciate and abuse every thing Irish; to declare, that there was no possibility of living in Ireland; and that, for her own part, she was resolved never to return thither. Lady St. James, preserving

perfect silence, let her go on. Lady Clonbrony, imagining that this silence arose from coincidence of opinion, proceeded, with all the eloquence she possessed, which was very little, repeating the same exclamations, and reiterating her vow of perpetual expatriation; till at last, an elderly lady, who was a stranger to her, and whom she had till this moment scarcely noticed, took up the defence of Ireland with much warmth and energy; the eloquence with which she spoke, and the respect, with which she was heard, astonished lady Clonbrony.

“Who is she?” whispered her ladyship.

“Does not your ladyship know lady Oranmore — the Irish lady Oranmore?”

“Lord bless me! — what have I said! — what have I done! — O! why did not you give me a hint, lady St. James?”

“I was not aware, that your ladyship was not acquainted with lady Oranmore,” replied lady St. James, unmoved by her distress.

Every body sympathised with lady Oranmore, and admired the honest zeal, with which she abided by her country, and defended it against unjust aspersions and affected execrations. Every one present enjoyed lady Clonbrony's confusion, except miss Nugent, who sat with her eyes bowed down by penetrative shame, during the whole of this scene; she was glad, that lord Colambre was not witness to it, and comforted herself with the hope, that, upon the whole, lady Clonbrony would be benefited by the pain she had felt. This instance might convince her, that it was not necessary to deny her country to be received in any company in England; and that those, who have the courage and steadiness to be themselves, and to support what they feel and believe to be the truth, must command respect. Miss Nugent hoped, that, in consequence of this conviction, lady Clonbrony would lay aside the little affectations, by which her manners were painfully constrained and ridiculous; and

above all, she hoped, that what lady Oranmore had said of Ireland might dispose her aunt to listen with patience to all lord Colambre might urge in favour of returning to her home. — But miss Nugent hoped in vain. Lady Clonbrony never in her life generalised any observations, or drew any but a partial conclusion from the most striking facts.

“ Lord ! my dear Grace ! ” said she, as soon as they were seated in their carriage — “ What a scrape I got into to night at supper, and what disgrace I came to ! — And all this because I did not know lady Oranmore — Now you see the inconceivable disadvantage of not knowing everybody — Every body of a certain rank, of course, I mean. ”

Miss Nugent endeavoured to slide in her own moral on the occasion, but it would not do.

“ Yes, my dear, lady Oranmore may talk in that kind of style of Ireland, because, on the other hand, she is so highly connected in England, and, besides, she

is an old lady, and may take liberties ; in short, she is lady Oranmore, and that's enough."

The next morning, when they all met at breakfast, lady Clonbrony complained bitterly of her increased rheumatism, of the disagreeable, stupid party they had had the preceding night, and of the necessity of going to another formal party that night, the next, and the next, and, in the true fine lady style, deplored her situation, and the impossibility of avoiding those things,

" Which felt they curse, yet covet still to feel."

Miss Nugent determined to retire, as soon as she could, from the breakfast room, to leave lord Colambre an opportunity of talking over his family affairs at full liberty. She knew, by the seriousness of his countenance, that his mind was intent upon doing so, and she hoped, that his influence with his father and mother would not be exerted in vain. But, just as she was rising from the breakfast table, in came sir Terence

O'Fay, and, seating himself quite at his ease, in spite of lady Clonbrony's repulsive looks, his awe of lord Colambre having now worn off—

“ I'm tired,” said he, “ and have a right to be tired ; for it's no small walk I've taken for the good of this noble family this morning—And, miss Nugent, before I say more, I'll take a cup of *ta* from you, if you please —”

Lady Clonbrony rose, with great stateliness, and walked to the farthest end of the room, where she established herself at her writing table, and began to write notes.

Sir Terence wiped his forehead deliberately —

“ Then I've had a fine run—Miss Nugent, I believe you never saw me run ; — but I can run, I promise you, when it's to serve a friend—And, my lord—(turning to lord Clonbrony) — what do you think I run for this morning—to buy a bargain—and of what ? — a bargain of a bad debt—a debt of yours, which I bargained

for, and up just in time—and Mordicai's ready to hang himself this minute —— For what do you think but that rascal was bringing upon you — but an execution?—he was.”

“ An execution !” repeated every body present, except lord Colambre.

“ And how has this been prevented, sir ?” said lord Colambre.

“ O ! let me alone for that,” said sir Terence. “ I got a hint from my little friend, Paddy Brady, who would not be paid for it either, though he's as poor as a rat. Well ! as soon as I got the hint, I dropped the thing I had in my hand, which was the Dublin Evening, and ran for the bare life—for there wasn't a coach—in my slippers, as I was, to get into the prior creditor's shoes, who is the little solicitor, that lives in Crutched Friars, which Mordicai never dreamt of, luckily ; so he was very genteel, though he was taken on a sudden, and from his breakfast, which an Englishman don't like particularly—I popped him a *douceur* of

a draught, at thirty-one days, on Garrahty, the agent ; of which he must get notice ; but I won't descant on the law before the ladies — he handed me over his debt and execution, and he made me prior creditor in a trice. Then I took coach in state, the first I met, and away with me to Long Acre — saw Mordicai. — ‘ Sir,’ says I, ‘ I hear you’re meditating an execution on a friend of mine.’ — ‘ Am I,’ said the rascal, ‘ who told you so?’ — ‘ No matter,’ said I — ‘ But I just called in to let you know there’s no use in life of your execution ; for there’s a prior creditor with his execution, to be satisfied first.’ So he made a great many black faces, and said a great deal, which I never listened to, but came off here clean to tell you all the story.”

“ Not one word of which do I understand,” said lady Clonbrony.

“ Then, my dear, you are very ungrateful,” said lord Clonbrony.

Lord Colambre said nothing, for he wished to learn more of sir Terence

O'Fay's character, of the state of his father's affairs, and of the family methods of proceeding in matters of business.

"Faith! Terry, I know I'm very thankful to you — But an execution's an ugly thing — and I hope there's no danger ——"

"Never fear!" said sir Terence — "Havn't I been at my wits' ends for myself or my friends ever since I come to man's estate — to years of discretion I should say, for the deuse a foot of estate have I — But use has sharpened my wits pretty well for your service; so never be in dread, my good lord; for look ye!" cried the reckless knight, sticking his arms akimbo. — "look ye here! in sir Terence O'Fay stands a host, that desires no better than to encounter, single witted, all the duns in the united kingdoms, Mordicai the jew inclusive."

"Ah! that's the devil, that Mordicai," said lord Clonbrony — "that's the only man on Earth I dread."

“Why he is only a coachmaker; is not he?” said lady Clonbrony — “I can’t think how you can talk, my lord, of dreading such a low man — Tell him, if he’s troublesome, we won’t bespeak any more carriages; and, I’m sure, I wish you would not be so silly, my lord, to employ him any more, when you know he disappointed me the last birthday about the landau, which I have not got yet.”

“Nonsense, my dear,” said lord Clonbrony, “you don’t know what you are talking of——Terry, I say, even a friendly execution is an ugly thing.”

“Phoo! phoo!—an ugly thing!—So is a fit of the gout.—But one’s all the better for it after. ’Tis just a renewal of life, my lord, for which one must pay a bit of a fine, you know. Take patience, and leave me to manage all properly.—You know I’m used to these things—Only you recollect, if you please, how I managed my friend lord ——— it’s bad to be mentioning names—but lord every-

body-knows-who—Didn't I bring him through cleverly, when there was that rascally attempt to seize the family plate? I had notice, and what did I do, but broke open a partition between that lord's house and my lodgings, which I had taken next door; and so, when the sheriff's officers were searching below on the ground floor, I just shoved the plate easy through to my bedchamber at a moment's warning, and then bid the gentlemen walk in, for they couldn't set a foot in my Paradise, the devils!—So they stood looking at it through the wall, and cursing me, and I holding both my sides with laughter at their fallen faces."

Sir Terence and lord Clonbrony laughed in concert.

"This is a good 'story," said miss Nugent, smiling; "but surely, sir Terence, such things are never done in real life?"

"Done! ay, are they; and I could tell you a hundred better strokes, my dear miss Nugent."

"Grace!" cried lady Clonbrony, "do

pray have the goodness to seal and send these notes; for really," whispered she, as her niece came to the table, I *cawnt stea*, I cawnt bear that man's *vice*, his accent grows horrider and horrider! —"

Her ladyship rose, and left the room.

"Why, then," continued sir Terence, following up miss Nugent to the table, where she was sealing letters — "I must tell you how I sarved that same man, on another occasion, and got the victory too."

No general officer could talk of his victories, or fight his battles o'er again, with more complacency, than sir Terence O'Fay recounted his *civil* exploits.

"Now I'll tell miss Nugent. There was a footman in the family, not an Irishman, but one of your powdered English scoundrels, that ladies are so fond of having hanging to the backs of their carriages; one Fleming he was, that turned spy, and traitor, and informer, went privately, and gave notice to the creditors, where the plate was hid in the thickness of the chimney — but if he did, what

happened? — Why, I had my counter-spy, an honest little Irish boy, in the creditor's shop, that I had secured with a little douceur of usquebaugh; and he outwitted, as was natural, the English lying valet, and gave us notice just in the nick, and I got ready for their reception; and, miss Nugent, I only wish you'd seen the excellent sport we had, letting them follow the scent they got; and, when they were sure of their game, what did they find? — Ha! ha! ha! — dragged out, after a world of labour, a heavy box of — a load of brick-bats; not an item of my friend's plate, that was all snug in the coal-hole, where them dunces never thought of looking it — Ha! ha! ha!”

“But come, Terry,” cried lord Clonbrony, “I'll pull down your pride. — How finely, another time, your job of the false ceiling answered, in the hall — I've heard that story, and have been told how the sheriff's fellow thrust his bayonet up through your false plaster, and down came tumbling the family plate —

Hey! Terry? — That hit cost your friend, lord every-body-knows who, more than your head's worth, Terry."

"I ask your pardon, my lord, it never cost him a farthing."

"When he paid 7000*l.* for the plate, to redeem it?"

"Well! and did not I make up for that, at the races of —? The creditors learned that my lord's horse, Naboclish, was to run at — races; and, as the sheriff's officer knew he dare not touch him on the race ground, what does he do, but he comes down, early in the morning, on the mail coach, and walks straight down to the livery stables. — He had an exact description of the stable, and the stall, and the horse's body clothes —

"I was there, seeing the horse taken care of; and, knowing the cut of the fellow's jib, what does I do, but whips the body clothes off Naboclish, and claps them upon a garrone, that the priest would not ride —

"In comes the bailiff — ' Good mor-

row to you, sir,' says I, leading out of the stable my lord's horse with an *ould* saddle and bridle on——

“ ‘Tim Neal,' says I, to the groom, who was rubbing down the garrone's heels, ‘mind your hits to day, and *wee'l* wet the plate to night'—— ‘Not so fast, neither,' says the bailiff—— ‘Here's my writ for seizing the horse'——

“ ‘Och,' says I, ‘you wouldn't be so cruel'——

“ ‘That's all my eye,' says he, seizing the garrone, while I mounted Naboclisch, and rode him off deliberately to——”

“ Ha! ha! ha!——That *was* neat, I grant you, Terry,” said lord Clonbrony——“ But what a dolt of a born ignorant must that sheriff's fellow have been, not to know Naboclisch when he saw him!——”

“ But, stay my lord——stay, miss Nugent——I have more for you,” following her wherever she moved——“ I did not let him off so, even——At the cant, I bid

and bid against them for the pretended Naboclish, till I left him on their hands for 500 guineas—Ha! ha! ha!—Was not that famous?——”

“But,” said miss Nugent, “I cannot believe you are in earnest, sir Terence——Surely this would be——”

“What?—out with it, my dear miss Nugent.”

“I am afraid of offending you——”

“You can’t, my dear, I defy you—say the word, that came to the tongue’s end, it’s always the best.”

“I was going to say, swindling,” said the young lady, colouring deeply——

“O! you was going to say wrong, then!—It’s not called swindling, amongst gentlemen, who know the world—it’s only jockeying—fine sport—and very honourable, to help a friend, at a dead lift—Any thing to get a friend out of a present pressing difficulty——”

“And when the present difficulty is over, do your friends never think of the future?”

“The future! leave the future to posterity,” said sir Terence—“I’m counsel only for the present, and when the evil comes it’s time enough to think of it—I can’t bring the guns of my wits to bear, till the enemy’s alongside of me, or within sight of me, at the least—And besides, there never was a good commander yet, by sea or land, that would tell his little expedients beforehand, or before the very day of battle.”

“It must be a sad thing,” said miss Nugent, sighing deeply, “to be reduced to live by little expedients—daily expedients——”

Lord Colambre struck his forehead, but said nothing.

“But if you are beating your brains about your own affairs, my lord Colambre, my dear,” said sir Terence, “there’s an easy way of settling your family affairs at once; and, since you don’t like little daily expedients, miss Nugent, there’s one great expedient, and an expedient for life, that will settle it all to your satisfac-

tion—and ours—I hinted it delicately to you before, but, between friends, delicacy is impertinent—So I tell you, in plain English, you've nothing to do, but go and propose yourself, just as you stand, to the heiress miss B——, that desires no better——”

“Sir,”—cried lord Colambre, stepping forward, red with sudden anger——Miss Nugent laid her hand upon his arm—

“O! my lord!”

“Sir Terence O'Fay,” continued lord Colambre, in a moderated tone, “you are wrong to mention that young lady's name in such a manner——”

“Why then I said only miss B——, and there are a whole hive of *bees*. But I'll engage she'd thank me for what I suggested, and think herself the queen bee, if my expedient was adopted by you.”

“Sir Terence,” said his lordship, smiling, “If my father thinks proper, that you should manage his affairs, and devise expedients for him, I have nothing to say

on that point; but I must beg you will not trouble yourself to suggest expedients for me, and that you will have the goodness to leave me to settle my own affairs."

Sir Terence made a low bow, and was silent for five seconds; then, turning to lord Clonbrony, who looked much more abashed than he did—

"By the wise one! my good lord, I believe there are some men—noblemen, too—that don't know their friends from their enemies——It's my firm persuasion now, that, if I had served you, as I served my friend I was talking of; your son there would, ten to one, think I had done him an injury, by saving the family plate."

"I certainly should, sir. The family plate, sir, is not the first object in my mind," replied lord Colambre; "family honour——Nay, miss Nugent, I must speak," continued his lordship; perceiving, by her countenance, that she was alarmed.

“ Never fear, miss Nugent dear,” said sir Terence, “ I’m as cool as a cucumber. —“ Faith then! my lord Colambre, I agree with you, that family honour’s a mighty fine thing, only troublesome to one’s self and one’s friends, and expensive to keep up, with all the other expenses and debts a gentleman has nowa days—So I, that am under no natural obligations to it by birth or otherwise, have just stood by through life, and asked myself, before I would volunteer being bound to it, what could this same family honour do for a man in this world? And, first and foremost, I never remember to see family honour stand a man in much stead in a court of law—never saw family honour stand against an execution, or a custodiam, or an injunction even. —“Tis a rare thing, this same family honour, and a very fine thing; but I never knew it yet, at a pinch, pay for a pair of boots even,” added sir Terence, drawing up his own, with much complacency.

At this moment, sir Terence was called

out of the room, by one, who wanted to speak to him on particular business —

“ My dear father,” cried lord Colambre, “ do not follow him; stay, for one moment, and hear your son, your true friend.”

Miss Nugent went out of the room, that she might leave the father and son at liberty —

“ Hear your natural friend for one moment,” cried lord Colambre. “ Let me beseech you, father, not to have recourse to any of these paltry expedients, but trust your son with the state of your affairs, and we shall find some honourable means——”

“ Yes, yes, yes, very true; when you’re of age, Colambre, we’ll talk of it; but nothing can be done till then. We shall get on, we shall get through, very well, till then, with Terry’s assistance—And I must beg you will not say a word more against Terry—I can’t bear it—I can’t hear it—I can’t do without him. Pray don’t detain me—I can say no more—

except," added he, returning to his usual concluding sentence, "that there need, at all events, be none of this, if people would but live upon their own estates, and kill their own mutton." He stole out of the room, glad to escape, however shabbily, from present explanation and present pain. There are persons without resource, who, in difficulties, return always to the same point, and usually to the same words.

While lord Colambre was walking up and down the room, much vexed and disappointed, at finding that he could make no impression on his father's mind, nor obtain his confidence, as to his family affairs, lady Clonbrony's woman, Mrs. Petito, knocked at the door, with a message from her lady, to beg, if lord Colambre was *by himself*, he would go to her dressing room, as she wished to have a conference with him — He obeyed her summons.

"Sit down, my dear Colambre——"

And she began precisely with her old sentence —

“With the fortune I brought your father, and with my lord’s estate, I *cannot* understand the meaning of all these pecuniary difficulties; and all that strange creature sir Terence says is algebra to me, who speak English — And I am particularly sorry he was let in this morning — but he’s such a brute, that he does not think any thing of forcing one’s door, and he tells my footman he does not mind *not at home* a pinch of snuff. Now what can you do with a man, who could say that sort of thing, you know — the world’s at an end.”

“I wish my father had nothing to do with him, ma’am, as much as you can wish it,” said lord Colambre; “but I have said all, that a son can with propriety say, and without effect.”

“What particularly provokes me against him,” continued lady Clonbrony, “is what I have just heard from Grace,

who was really hurt by it, too, for she is the warmest friend in the world—I allude to the creature's indelicate way of touching upon a tender *pint*, and mentioning an amiable young heiress's name.—My dear Colambre, I trust you have given me credit for my inviolable silence, all this time, upon the *pint* nearest my heart. I am rejoiced to hear you *was* so warm when she was mentioned inadvertently by that brute, and I trust you now see the advantages of the projected union in as strong and agreeable a *pint* of view as I do, my own Colambre; and I should leave things to themselves, and let you prolong the *dees* of courtship as you please, only for what I now hear, incidentally, from my lord and the brute, about pecuniary embarrassments and the necessity of something being done before next winter. And indeed I think now, in propriety, the proposal cannot be delayed much longer; for the world begins to talk of the thing as done; and even Mrs. Broadhurst, I know, had no doubt,

that, if this *contretemps* about the poor Berryls had not occurred, your proposal would have been made before the end of last week."

Our hero was not a man to make a proposal, because Mrs. Broadhurst expected it, or to marry because the world said he was going to be married. He steadily said, that, from the first moment the subject had been mentioned, he had explained himself distinctly; that the young lady's friends could not, therefore, be under any doubt, as to his intentions; that, if they had voluntarily deceived themselves, or exposed the lady in situations, from which the world was led to make false conclusions, he was not answerable—he felt his conscience at ease—entirely so, as he was convinced, that the young lady herself, for whose merit, talents, independence, and generosity of character, he professed high respect, esteem, and admiration, had no doubts, either of the extent or the nature of his regard.

“ Regard, respect, esteem, admiration — Why, my dearest Colambre! this is saying all I want; satisfies me, and I am sure would satisfy Mrs. Broadhurst and miss Broadhurst too!”

“ No doubt it will, ma’am; but not if I aspired to the honour of miss Broadhurst’s hand, or professed myself her lover.”

“ My dear, you are mistaken; miss Broadhurst is too sensible a girl, a vast deal, to look for love, and a dying lover, and all that sort of stuff; I am persuaded — indeed I have it from good, from the best authority — that the young lady — you know one must be delicate in these cases, where a young lady of such fortune, and no despicable family, too, is concerned — therefore I cannot speak quite plainly. — but I say I have it from the best authority, that you would be preferred to any other suitor, and, in short, that ——”

“ I beg your pardon, madam, for in-

interrupting you," cried lord Colambre, colouring a good deal—"But you must excuse me; if I say, that the only authority, on which I could believe this, is one, from which, I am morally certain, I shall never hear it—from miss Broadhurst herself."

"Lord child! if you would only ask her the question, she would tell you it is truth, I dare say."

"But as I have no curiosity on the subject, ma'am——"

"Lord bless me! I thought every body had curiosity—But still, without curiosity, I am sure it would gratify you, when you did hear it; and can't you just put the simple question?"

"Impossible!"

"Impossible!—now that is so very provoking, when the thing is all but done. Well, take your own time; all I will ask of you then is, to let things go on as they are going—smoothly and pleasantly; and I'll not press you farther on

the subject at present—Let things go on smoothly, that's all I ask, and say nothing."

"I wish I could oblige you, mother; but I cannot do this. Since you tell me, that the world and miss Broadhurst's friends have already misunderstood my intentions, it becomes necessary, in justice to the young lady and to myself, that I should make all farther doubt impossible—I shall, therefore, put an end to it at once, by leaving town to-morrow."

Lady Clonbrony, breathless for a moment with surprise, exclaimed—"Bless me! leave town to-morrow! Just at the beginning of the season!—Impossible!—I never saw such a precipitate, rash young man——But stay only a few weeks, Colambre; the physicians advise Buxton for my rheumatism, and you shall take us to Buxton early in the season—you cannot refuse me that—Why, if miss Broadhurst was a dragon; you could not be in a greater hurry to run

away from her—What are you afraid of?”

“Of doing what is wrong—the only thing, I trust, of which I shall ever be afraid.”

Lady Clonbrony tried persuasion and argument—such argument as she could use—but all in vain—lord Colambre was firm in his resolution; at last, she came to tears; and her son, in much agitation, said—

“I cannot bear this, mother!—I would do any thing you ask; that I could do with honour; but this is impossible.”

“Why impossible?—I will take all blame upon myself; and you are sure, that miss Broadhurst does not misunderstand you, and you esteem her, and admire her, and all that; and all I ask is, that you'll go on as you are, and see more of her; and how do you know but you may fall in love with her, as you call it, to morrow?”

“Because, madam, since you press me

so far, my affections are engaged to another person. — Do not look so dreadfully shocked, my dear mother — I have told you truly, that I think myself too young, much too young, yet to marry. In the circumstances, in which I know my family are, it is probable that I shall not for some years be able to marry as I wish. You may depend upon it, that I shall not take any step, I shall not even declare my attachment to the object of my affection, without your knowledge; and, far from being inclined to follow headlong my own passions—strong as they are—be assured, that the honour of my family, your happiness, my mother, my father's, are my first objects—I shall never think of my own, till these are secured."

Of the conclusion of this speech, lady Clonbrony heard only the sound of the words; from the moment her son had pronounced, that his affections were engaged, she had been running over in her

head every probable and improbable person she could think of; at last, suddenly starting up, she opened one of the folding doors into the next apartment, and called —

“ Grace! — Grace Nugent! — put down your pencil, Grace, this minute, and come here!”

Miss Nugent obeyed with her usual alacrity, and the moment she entered the room, lady Clonbrony, fixing her eyes full upon her, said —

“ There’s your cousin Colambre tells me his affections are engaged.”

“ Yes, to miss Broadhurst, no doubt,” said miss Nugent, smiling, with a simplicity and openness of countenance, which assured lady Clonbrony, that all was safe in that quarter; — a suspicion, which had darted into her mind was dispelled.

“ No doubt — Ay, do you hear that no doubt, Colambre? — Grace, you see, has no doubt; nobody has any doubt but yourself, Colambre.”

THE ABSENTEE.

“And are your affections engaged not to miss Broadhurst?” said miss Nugent, approaching lord Colambre.

“There now! you see how you surprise and disappoint every body, Colambre.”

“I am sorry, that miss Nugent may be disappointed,” said lord Colambre.

“But because I am disappointed, do not call me miss Nugent, away from me, as if you were disappointed.”

“It must, then, be some Cambridge lady,” said lady Clonbrony. “I am very sorry he ever went to Cambridge, Oxford I advised — one miss Berryls, I presume, who has something — I’ll have nothing more to do with those Berryls — There was a reason of the son’s vast intimacy — you may give up all thoughts of Broadhurst.”

“I have no thoughts to give up, ma’am,” said miss Nugent, “Miss Broadhurst,” continued she, “on eagerly with what she was saying.”

lord Colambre — “ miss Broadhurst’ is my friend, a friend I love and admire; but you will allow, that I strictly kept my promise, never to praise her to you, till you should begin to praise her to me. Now recollect, last night, you did praise her to me, so—justly,—that I thought you liked her, I confess; so that it is natural I should feel a little disappointed. Now you know the whole of my mind; I have no intention to encroach on your confidence; therefore, there is no occasion to look so embarrassed.. I give you my word, I will never speak to you again upon the subject,” said she, holding out her hand to him, provided you will never again call me miss Nugent. “ Am I not your own cousin Grace?—Do not be displeased with her.”

“ You are my own dear cousin Grace; and nothing can be farther from my mind, than any thought of being displeased with her; especially just at this moment, when I am going away, probably, for a considerable time——”

“ Away! — when? — where? — ”

“ To morrow morning, for Ireland — ”

“ Ireland! of all places,” cried lady Clonbrony — “ What upon Earth puts it into your head to go to Ireland? — You do very well to go out of the way of falling in love ridiculously, since that is the reason of your going; but what put Ireland into your head, child?”

“ I will not presume to ask my mother, what put Ireland out of her head,” said lord Colambre, smiling — “but she will recollect, that it is my native country.”

“ That was your father’s fault, not mine,” said lady Clonbrony — “ for I wished to have been confined in England; but he would have it to say, that his son and heir was born at Clonbrony Castle — and there was a great argument between him and my uncle, and something about the prince of Wales and Caernarvon Castle was thrown in, and that turned the scale, much against my will; for it was my wish, that my son should be an Englishman born — like myself. But,

after all, I don't see, that having the misfortune to be born in a country should tie one to it in any sort of way — and I should have hoped your English *education*, Colámbre, would have given you too liberal *idears* for that — So I *reelly* don't see why you should go to Ireland merely because it's your native country."

"Not merely because it is my native country — but I wish to go thither — I desire to become acquainted with it — because it is the country, in which my father's property lies, and from which we draw our subsistence."

"Subsistence! Lord bless me! what a word! — fitter for a pauper than a nobleman — subsistence! Then, if you are going to look after your father's property, I hope you will make the agents do their duty, and send us remittances. And pray how long do you mean to stay?"

"Till I am of age, madam, if you have no objection. I will spend the ensuing months in travelling in Ireland, and I will return here by the time I am of age, unless

you and my father should, before that time, be in Ireland."

"Not the least chance of that, if I can prevent it, I promise you," said lady Clonbrony.

Lord Colambre and miss Nugent sighed.

"And I am sure I shall take it very unkindly of you, Colambre, if you go and turn out a partizan for Ireland, after all, like Grace Nugent."

"A partizan! no; — I hope not a partizan, but a friend," said miss Nugent.

"Nonsense, child! — I hate to hear people, women especially, and young ladies particularly, talk of being friends to this country or that country. What can they know about countries? Better think of being friends to themselves, and friends to their friends ——"

"I was wrong," said miss Nugent, "to call myself a friend to Ireland; I meant to say, that Ireland had been a friend to me; that I found Irish friends, when I had no other; an Irish home, when I

had no other; that my earliest and happiest years, under your kind care, had been spent there; and that I can never forget *that*, my dear aunt — I hope you do not wish that I should.”

“Heaven forbid, my sweet Grace!” said lady Clonbrony, touched by her voice and manner — “Heaven forbid! I don’t wish you to do or be any thing but what you are; for I am convinced there’s nothing I could ask, you would not do for me; and, I can tell you, there’s few things you could ask, love, I would not do for you.”

A wish was instantly expressed in the eyes of her niece.

Lady Clonbrony, though not usually quick at interpreting the wishes of others, understood and answered, before she ventured to make her request in words.

“Ask any thing but *that*, Grace — Return to Clonbrony, while I am able to live in London, that I never can or will do for you, or any body!” — looking at her son in all the pride of obstinacy — “so

there is an end of the matter. Go you where you please, Colambre; and I shall stay where I please:—I suppose, as your mother, I have a right to say this much?”

Her son, with the utmost respect, assured her, that he had no design to infringe upon her undoubted liberty of judging for herself; that he had never interfered, except so far as to tell her circumstances of her affairs, with which she seemed to be totally unacquainted, and of which it might be dangerous to her to continue in ignorance.

“Don’t talk to me about affairs,” cried she, drawing her hand away from her son—“Talk to my lord, or my lord’s agents, since you are going to Ireland, about business—I know nothing about business; but this I know, I shall stay in England, and be in London, every season, as long as I can afford it; and, when I cannot afford to live here, I hope I shall not live any where.—That’s my notion of life; and that’s my determination,

once for all; for, if none of the rest of the Clonbrony family have any, I thank Heaven I have some spirit." Saying this, with her most stately manner she walked out of the room. Lord Colambre instantly followed her; for, after the resolution and the promise he had made, he did not dare to trust himself at this moment with miss Nugent.

There was to be a concert this night at lady Clonbrony's, at which Mrs. and miss Broadhurst were, of course, expected. That they might not be quite unprepared for the event of her son's going to Ireland, lady Clonbrony wrote a note to Mrs. Broadhurst, begging her to come half an hour earlier than the time mentioned in the cards, "that she might talk over something *particular*, that had just occurred."

What passed at this cabinet council, as it seems to have had no immediate influence on affairs, we need not record. Suffice it to observe, that a great deal was said, and nothing done. Miss Broad-

hurst, however, was not a young lady, who could be easily deceived, even where her passions were concerned. The moment her mother told her of lord Colambre's intended departure, she saw the whole truth. She had a strong mind — was capable of drawing aside, at once, the curtain of self delusion, and looking steadily at the skeleton of truth — she had a generous, perhaps because a strong mind; for, surrounded, as she had been from her childhood, by every means of self indulgence, which wealth and flattery could bestow, she had discovered early, what few persons in her situation discover till late in life, that selfish gratifications may render us incapable of other happiness, but can never, of themselves, make us happy. Despising flatterers, she had determined to make herself friends — to make them in the only possible way — by deserving them. Her father made his immense fortune by the power and habit of constant, bold, and just calculation. The power and habit,

which she had learned from him, she applied on a far larger scale; with him, it was confined to speculations for the acquisition of money; with her, it extended to the attainment of happiness. He was calculating and mercenary—she was estimative and generous.

Miss Nugent was dressing for the concert, or, rather, was sitting half dressed before her glass, reflecting, when miss Broadhurst came into her room—Miss Nugent immediately sent her maid out of the room.

“ Grace,” said miss Broadhurst; looking at Grace, with an air of open, deliberate composure—“ you and I are thinking of the same thing—of the same person.”

“ Yes, of lord Colambre;” said miss Nugent, ingenuously and sorrowfully.

“ Then I can put your mind at ease, at once, my dear friend, by assuring you, that I shall think of him no more—That I have thought of him, I do not deny—I have thought, that if, notwithstanding

the difference in our ages, and other differences, he had preferred me, I should have preferred him to any person; who has ever yet addressed me. On our first acquaintance, I clearly saw, that he was not disposed to pay court to my fortune; and I had also then coolness of judgment sufficient to perceive, that it was not probable he should fall in love with my person. But I was too proud in my humility, too strong in my honesty, too brave, too ignorant; in short, I knew nothing of the matter. We are all of us, more or less, subject to the delusions of vanity, or hope, or love—I—even I!—who thought myself so clear sighted, did not know how, with one flutter of his wings, Cupid can set the whole atmosphere in motion; change the proportions, size, colour, value, of every object; lead us into a *mirage*, and leave us in a dismal desert.”

“ My dearest friend!” — said miss Nugent, in a tone of true sympathy.

“ But none but a coward, or a fool,

would sit down in the desert, and weep, instead of trying to make his way back, before the storm rises, obliterates the track, and overwhelms every thing. Poetry apart, my dear Grace! you may be assured, that I shall think no more of lord Colambre."

"I believe you are right—But I am sorry, very sorry, it must be so."

"O! spare me your sorrow!"

"My sorrow is for lord Colambre," said miss Nugent. "Where will he find such a wife?—Not in miss Berryl, I am sure—pretty as she is—a mere fine lady!—Is it possible, that lord Colambre! lord Colambre! should prefer such a girl——lord Colambre!"

Miss Broadhurst looked at her friend as she spoke, and saw truth in her eyes; saw, that she had no suspicion, that she was herself the person beloved.

"Tell me, Grace, are you sorry, that lord Colambre is going away?"

"No! I am glad. I was sorry when I first heard it; but now I am glad, very

glad; it may save him from a marriage unworthy of him, restore him to himself, and reserve him for——, the only woman I ever saw, who is suited to him, who is equal to him, who would value and love him, as he deserves to be valued and loved.”

“ Stop, my dear; if you mean me, I am not, and I never can be, that woman. Therefore, as you are my friend, and wish my happiness, as I sincerely believe you do, never, I conjure you, present such an idea before my mind again—it is out of my mind, I hope, for ever.—It is important to me, that you should know and believe this.—At least I will preserve my friends. Now let this subject never be mentioned or alluded to again between us, my dear.—We have subjects enough of conversation, we need not have recourse to pernicious sentimental gossipings. There is a great difference between wanting a *confidante*, and treating a friend with confidence. My confidence you possess; all

that ought, all that is to be known of my mind, you know, and——Now I will leave you in peace to dress for the concert.”

“ O! don't go! you don't interrupt me—I shall be dressed in a few minutes; stay with me, and you may be assured, that neither now, nor at any other time, shall I ever speak to you on the subject you desire me to avoid—I entirely agree with you about *confidantes* and sentimental gossipings—I love you for not loving them.”

A thundering knock at the door announced the arrival of company.

“ Think no more of love, but as much as you please of friendship—dress yourself as fast as you can,” said miss Broadhurst—“ Dress, dress is the order of the day.”

“ Order of the day and order of the night, and all for people I don't care for in the least,” said Grace — “ So life passes !”

“ Dear me, miss Nugent,” cried Pe-

tito, lady Clonbrony's woman, coming in with a face of alarm — “ Not dressed yet! — My lady is gone down, and Mrs Broadhurst, and my lady Pococke's come, and the honourable Mrs. Trembleham; and signor, the Italian singing gentleman, has been walking up and down the apartments there by himself, disconsolate, this half hour, and I wondering all the time nobody rang for me. — but my lady dressed, Lord knows how! without any body — O, merciful! miss Nugent, if you could stand still for one single particle of a second. — So then I thought of stepping in to miss Nugent; for the young ladies are talking so fast, says I to myself, at the door, they will never know how time goes, unless I give 'em a hint. — But now my lady is below, there's no need, to be sure, to be nervous, so we may take the thing quietly, without being in a flustrum. — Dear ladies, is not this now a very sudden motion of our young lord's for Ireland? — Lud a mercy! miss Nugent, I'm sure your motions is

sudden enough; and your dress behind is all, I'm sure, I can't tell how.—”
“O! never mind,” said the young lady, escaping from her, “it will do very well, thank you, *Petito*.”

“It will do very well, never mind”—repeated *Petito*, muttering to herself, as she looked after the ladies, whilst they ran down stairs—“I can't abide to dress any young lady, who says never mind, and it will do very well—That, and her never talking to one *confidantially*, or trusting one with the least bit of her secrets, is the thing I can't put up with from miss Nugent; and miss Broadhurst holding the pins to me, as much as to say, do your business, *Petito*, and don't talk——Now, that's so impertinent, as if one wasn't the same flesh and blood, and had not as good a right to talk of every thing, and hear of every thing, as themselves. And Mrs. Broadhurst, too, cabinet-councillings with my lady, and pursing up her city mouth, when I come in, and turning off the discourse to snuff,

forsooth; as if I was an ignoramus, to think they closetted themselves to talk of snuff. Now, I think a lady of quality's woman has as good a right to be trusted with her lady's secrets, as with her jewels; and if my lady Clonbrony was a real lady of quality, she'd know that, and consider the one as much my paraphernalia as the other.—So I shall tell my lady to night, as I always do, when she vexes me, that I never lived in an Irish family before, and don't know the ways of it—then she'll tell me she was born in Hoxfordshire—then I shall say, with my saucy look, 'O! was you my lady—I always forget that you was an English-woman:' then may-be she'll say, 'Forget!—you forget yourself strangely, Petito.'—Then I shall say, with a great deal of dignity, 'If your ladyship thinks so, my lady, I'd better go.'—And I'd desire no better, than that she would take me at my word; for my lady Dashfort's is a much better place, I'm told, and she's dying to have me, I know."

And having formed this resolution, **Petito** concluded her apparently interminable soliloquy, and went with my lord's gentleman into the antichamber, to hear the concert, and give her judgment on every thing: as she peeped in, through the vista of heads, into the **Apollo** saloon — for to night the **Alhambra** was transformed into the **Apollo** saloon — she saw, that whilst the company, rank behind rank, in close semicircles, had crowded round the performers, to hear a favourite singer, **miss Broadhurst** and **lord Colambre** were standing in the outer semicircle, talking to one another earnestly. Now would **Petito** have given up her reversionary chance of the three nearly new gowns she expected from **lady Clonbrony**, in case she stayed; or, in case she went, the reversionary chance of any dress of **lady Dashfort's**, except her scarlet velvet, merely to hear what **miss Broadhurst** and **lord Colambre** were saying. Alas! she could only see their lips move; and of what they were talking, whether of mu-

sic or love, and whether the match was to be on or off, she could only conjecture. But the diplomatic style having now descended to waiting maids, Mrs. Petito talked to her friends, in the antichamber, with as mysterious and consequential an air and tone as a *chargé d'affaires*, or as the lady of a *chargé d'affaires*, could have assumed. She spoke of her *private belief*; of *the impression left upon her mind*; and her *confidential* reasons for thinking as she did; of her "having had it from the *fountain's head*;" and of "her fear of any *committal* of her authorities."

Notwithstanding all these authorities, lord Colambre left London next day, and pursued his way to Ireland, determined, that he would see and judge of that country for himself, and decide, whether his mother's dislike to residing there was founded on caprice or reasonable causes.

In the mean time, it was reported, in London, that his lordship was gone to Ireland to make out the title to some

estate, which would be necessary for his marriage settlement with the great heiress, miss Broadhurst. Whether Mrs. Petito or sir Terence O'Fay had the greater share in raising and spreading this report, it would be difficult to determine; but it is certain, however or by whomsoever raised, it was most useful to lord Clonbrony, by keeping his creditors quiet."

END OF VOL. V.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



3 9015 05365 9184

