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Printed in Great Britain.

THE
BRITISH NOVELISTS;

WITH AN
ESSAY, AND PREFACES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY
MRS. BARBAULD.

A New Edition.

VOL. XXXVI.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; W. LOWNDES; SCATCHERD
AND LETTERMAN; J. NUNN; J. CUTHELL; JEFFERY AND SON;
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BRITISH NOVELISTS;

ESSAY AND REPLY,

HONOURABLE AND CRITICAL

MRS. ARBUTHNOT.

OF THE

WELLS.

LONDON:

Printed by G. Woodfall, Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.

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MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH

THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

AMONG those writers who have distinguished themselves in the polite literature of the present day, the late Mrs. CHARLOTTE SMITH well deserves a place, both from the number and elegance of her publications. She was the eldest daughter of Nicholas Turner, esq. a gentleman of fortune, who possessed estates in Surry and Sussex; a man, it is said, of an improved mind and brilliant conversation. She lost her mother when very young, and was brought up under the care of an aunt, whose ideas of female education were less favourable to mental accomplishments than those of her father. She received, therefore, rather a fashionable than a literary education, and she was left to gratify her taste for books by desultory reading, and almost by stealth. Her genius, indeed, early showed itself in a propensity to poetry; but she was introduced while very young to the gaieties and dissipation of London, and, becoming a wife before she was sixteen, was plunged into the cares of a married life before her fine genius had received all the advantages it might have gained by a culture more regular and persevering.

Her husband, Mr. Smith, was the younger son of a rich West-Indian merchant, and associated with him in the business. The marriage had been brought about by parents, and did not prove a happy one; it had probably been hastened on her side by the dread of a mother-in-law, as her father was on the point of marrying a second wife. The married pair lived at first in London, in the busy part of the town, but soon after took a house at Southgate. The husband had little application to business; and probably, of the young couple, neither party had much notion of economy. The management of the concern was soon resigned to the father of Mr. Smith, who purchased for them an estate in Hampshire, called Lys Farm. Here Mrs. Smith found her tastes for rural scenery and for elegant society gratified; but building and expensive improvements, joined to an increasing family, soon brought them into difficulties, which were not lessened by the death of her husband's grandfather, to whom Mr. Smith acted as executor, in the discharge of which office a litigation arose with the other branches of the family, which plunged them into lawsuits for life. The vexation attending these perplexities, together with the pecuniary embarrassments she was continually involved in, clouded the serenity of Mrs. Smith's mind, and gave to her writings that bitter and querulous tone of complaint which is discernible in so many of them.

Possessed of a fine imagination, an ear and a taste for harmony, an elegant and correct style, the natural bent of Mrs. Smith's genius seems

to have been more to poetry than to any other walk of literature. Her *Sonnets*, which was the first publication she gave to the world, were universally admired. That species of verse, which in this country may be reckoned rather an exotic, had at that time been but little cultivated. For plaintive, tender, and polished sentiment the Sonnet forms a proper vehicle, and Mrs. Smith's success fixed at once her reputation as a poet of no mean class. They were published while her husband was in the King's Bench, where she attended him with laudable assiduity, and exerted herself to further his liberation; her feelings upon which event she thus describes in a letter to a friend: "For more than a month I had shared the restraint of my husband amidst scenes of misery, of vice, and even of terror. Two attempts had, since my last residence among them, been made by the prisoners to procure their liberation by blowing up the walls of the house. Throughout the night appointed for this enterprise I remained dressed, watching at the window. After such scenes and such apprehensions, how deliciously soothing to my wearied spirits was the soft pure air of the summer's morning, breathing over the dewy grass, as, having slept one night upon the road, we passed over the heaths of Surry!"

Their difficulties, however, were far from being terminated; and the increasing derangement of Mr. Smith's affairs soon afterwards obliged them to leave England; and they were settled some time in a large gloomy chateau in Normandy, where Mrs. Smith gave birth to her

youngest child. Here also she translated *Manon l'Escaut*, a novel of the Abbé Prevôt, a work of affecting pathos, though exceptionable with regard to its moral tendency.

Returning to England, they occupied for some time an ancient mansion belonging to the Mills' family, at Woodlading, in Sussex, where Mrs. Smith wrote several of her poems.

An entire separation afterwards taking place between her and her husband, she removed with most of her children to a small cottage near Chichester, where she wrote her novel of *Emmeline* in the course of a few months. She afterwards resided in various places, mostly on the coast of Sussex; for she was particularly fond of the neighbourhood of the sea. The frequent changes of scene which, either from necessity or inclination, she experienced, were no doubt favourable to that descriptive talent which forms a striking feature of her genius. Her frequent removals may be traced in her poems and other works. The name of the Arun is consecrated in poetry, and is often mentioned by her :

“ Farewell, Aruna! on whose varied shore
My early vows were paid to Nature's shrine,
And whose lorn stream has heard me since deplore
Too many sorrows. . . . ”

In another sonnet she addresses the South Downs :

“ Ah, hills beloved! where once, a happy child,
Your beechen shades, your turf, your flowers among,
I wove your blue-bells into garlands wild,
And woke your echoes with my artless song :

Ah, hills beloved! your turf, your flowers remain:
But can they peace to this sad breast restore,
For one poor moment soothe the sense of pain,
And teach a breaking heart to thro' no more?"

Poets are apt to complain, and often take a pleasure in it; yet they should remember that the pleasure of their readers is only derived from the elegance and harmony with which they do it. The reader is a selfish being, and seeks only his own gratification. But for the language of complaint in plain prose, or the exasperations of personal resentment, he has seldom much sympathy. It is certain, however, that the life of this lady was a very chequered one.

Mrs. Smith had a family of twelve children, six only of whom survived her. Her third son lost a limb in the service of his country, and afterwards fell a sacrifice to the yellow fever at Barbadoes, whither he had gone to look after the family property. The severest stroke she met with was the loss of a favourite daughter, who died at Bath, where Mrs. Smith also was for the recovery of her health. The young lady had been married to the Chevalier de Faville, a French emigrant. Her mother is said never entirely to have recovered from this affliction.

Her last removal was to Stoke, a village in Surry, endeared to her by her having spent there many years of her childhood; and there she died, Oct. 28th, 1806, in her 57th year, after a tedious and painful illness. She was a widow at the time of her death, and, being in possession of her own fortune, had a prospect of greater ease in her pecuniary circumstances than she

had for some time enjoyed. Her youngest son, who was advancing in the military career, fell a victim to the pestiferous climate of Surinam before her death; but the news had not reached her.

Though she was worn by illness, the powers of her mind retained their full vigour, and her last volume of poems, entitled *Beachy Head*, was in the press at the time of her decease; an elegant work, which no ways discredits her former performances.

She was the author of several publications for children and young people, which are executed with great taste and elegance, and communicate, in a pleasing way, much knowledge of botany and natural history, of which two studies she was very fond. That entitled *Conversations* is interspersed with beautiful little descriptive poems on natural objects.

Mrs. Smith is most known to readers in general by her novels; yet they seem to have been less the spontaneous offspring of her mind than her poems. She herself represents them as being written to supply money for those emergencies which, from the perplexed state of her affairs, she was often thrown into; but, though not of the first order, they hold a respectable rank among that class of publications. They are written in a style correct and elegant; they show a knowledge of life, and of genteel life; and there is much beauty in the descriptive scenery, which Mrs. Smith was one of the first to introduce. Descriptions, of whatever beauty, are but little attended to in a novel of high interest, particu-

larly if introduced, as they often are, during a period of anxious suspense for the hero or heroine; but are very properly placed, at judicious intervals, in compositions of which variety rather than deep pathos, and elegance rather than strength, are the characteristics.

The two most finished novels of Mrs. Smith are *Emmeline* and *Celestina*. In the first she is supposed to have drawn her own character (with what degree of impartiality others must judge) in that of Mrs. Stafford.

Celestina is not inferior to *Emmeline* in the conduct of the piece, and possesses still more beauties of description. The romantic scenes in the south of France are rich and picturesque. The story of Jesse and her lover is interesting, as well as that of Jaquelina.

The *Old Manor-House* is said to be the most popular of the author's productions. The best drawn character in it is that of a wealthy old lady who keeps all her relations in constant dependence, and will not be persuaded to name her heir. This was written during the war with America; and the author takes occasion, as also in many other of her publications, to show the strain of her politics.

She also wrote *Desmond*, *The Wanderings of Warwick*, *Montalbert*, and many others, to the number of thirty-eight volumes. They all show a knowledge of life, and facility of execution, without having any very strong features, or particularly aiming to illustrate any moral truth. The situations and the scenery are often

romantic; the characters and the conversations are from common life.

Her later publications would have been more pleasing, if the author in the exertions of fancy could have forgotten herself; but the asperity of invective and the querulousness of complaint too frequently cloud the happier exertions of her imagination.

Another publication of this lady's ought to have been mentioned, *The Romance of real Life*, a very entertaining work, consisting of a selection of remarkable trials from the *Causes Célèbres*. The title, though a happy and a just one, had the inconvenience of misleading many readers, who really thought it a novel. Their mistake was pardonable; for few novels present incidents so wonderful as are to be found in these surprising stories, which rest upon the sanction of judicial records.

THE
OLD MANOR HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

IN an old Manor House in one of the most southern counties of England, resided some few years since the last of a family that had for a long series of years possessed it. Mrs. Rayland was the only survivor of the three co-heiresses of Sir Hildebrand Rayland; one of the first of those to whom the title of Baronet had been granted by James the First. The name had been before of great antiquity in the county—and the last baronet having only daughters to share his extensive possessions, these ladies had been educated with such very high ideas of their own importance, that they could never be prevailed upon to lessen, by sharing it with any of those numerous suitors who for the first forty or fifty years of their lives surrounded them; and Mrs. Barbara the eldest, and Mrs. Catharine the youngest, died single—one at the age of seventy, and the other at that of sixty-eight; by which events the second, Mrs. Grace, saw herself at the advanced age of sixty-nine sole inheritor of the fortunes of her house, without any near relation, or indeed any relation at all whom she chose to consider as entitled to possess it after her death.

About four miles from the ancient and splendid seat she inhabited, dwelt the only person, who could claim any affinity with the Rayland family; this was a gentleman of the name of Somerive;

who was considered by the people of the country as heir at law, as he was the grandson of one of the sisters of Sir Hildebrand ; but Mrs. Rayland herself, whose opinion was more material, since it was all at her own disposal, did not by any means seem to entertain the same idea.

The venerable lady, and her two sisters, had never beheld this their relation with the eyes of friendly interest ; nor had they ever extended towards him that generous favour which they had so much the power to afford, and which could not have failed to prove very acceptable ; since he had married early in life, and had a family of two sons and four daughters to support on the produce of an estate, which, though he farmed it himself, did not bring in a clear five hundred pounds a year.

Various reasons, or rather prejudices, had concurred to occasion this coolness on the part of the ladies towards their cousin.—Their aunt, who had married his ancestor, had, as they had always been taught, degraded herself extremely, by giving herself to a man who was a mere yeoman.—The son of this union had however been received and acknowledged as the cousin of the illustrious heiresses of the house of Rayland ; but following most plebeian-like the unambitious inclination of his own family, he had fallen in love with a young woman who lived with them as companion ; when it was believed that, as he was a remarkably handsome man, he might have lifted his eyes with impunity to one of the ladies, his cousins : this occasioned an estrangement of many years, and had never been forgiven.—The recollection of it returned with acrimonious violence, when the son of this imprudent man imitated his father, five-and-twenty years afterwards, and married a woman who had nothing to recommend her but beauty, simplicity, and goodness.

However, notwithstanding the repeated causes of complaint which this luckless family of Somerive had given to the austere and opulent inhabitants of Rayland Hall, the elder lady had on her death-bed recollected, that though debased by the alloy of unworthy alliances, they carried in their veins a portion of that blood which had circulated in those of the august personage Sir Orlando de Rayland her grandfather; and she therefore recommended Mr. Somerive and his family, but particularly his youngest son (who was named, by reluctantly obtained permission, after Sir Orlando), to the consideration of her sisters, and even gave to Mr. Somerive himself a legacy of five hundred pounds; a gift which her sisters took so much amiss (though they possessed between them a yearly income of near twice five thousand) that it had nearly rendered her injunction abortive; and they treated the whole family for some time afterwards with the greatest coolness, and even rudeness; as if to convince them, that though Mrs. Rayland had thus acknowledged their relationship, it gave them no claim whatever on the future kindness of her surviving sisters.

For some years afterwards the dinners, to which in great form the whole family were invited twice a year, were entirely omitted, and none of them admitted to the honour of visiting at the Hall, but Orlando, then a child of nine or ten years old; and even his introduction was principally owing to the favour of an old lady, the widow of a clergyman, who was among the ancient friends of the family, that still enjoyed the privilege of being regularly sent for in the old family coach, once a year; a custom which, originating in the days of Sir Hildebrand, was still retained.

This lady was a woman of sense and benevolence,

and had often attempted to do kind offices to the Somerive family with their rich maiden relations ; but the height of her success amounted to no more than obtaining a renewal of the very little notice that had ever been taken of them, after those capricious fits of coldness which sometimes happened ; and once, some time after the death of the elder Mrs. Rayland, bringing Orlando to the Hall in her hand (whom she had met by chance fishing in a stream that ran through their domain), not without being chidden for encouraging an idle child to catch minnows, or for leading him all dirty and wet into their parlour, at a time when the best embroidered chairs, done by the hands of dame Gertrude Rayland, were actually unpapered, and uncovered for the reception of company.

There was indeed in the figure, face, and manner of the infant Orlando, something so irresistible, that if Mesdames Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megara had seen him, they would probably have been softened in his favour—And this something, had always so pleaded for him with the three equally formidable ladies his relations, that notwithstanding the opposition of their favourite maid, who was in person and feature well worthy to make the fourth in such a group, and the tales of their old and confidential butler, who did not admire the introduction of any competitor whatever, Orlando had always been in some degree of favour—even when his father, mother, and sisters were shut out, and his elder brother entirely disclaimed as a wild and incorrigible boy, who had been caught in the fact of hunting divers cats, and shooting one of their guinea hens—Orlando, though not at all less wild than his brother, and too artless to conceal his vivacity, was still endured—A new half-crown from each of the ladies was presented to him on every

return to school, together with abundance of excellent advice; and if any one observed that he was a remarkably handsome boy, the ladies never contradicted it; though, when the same observation was made as to the rest of the family, it was declared to be most absurd, and utterly unfounded in truth.—To the beauty indeed of any female the ladies of Rayland Hall had a particular objection, but that of the Miss Somerives was above all obnoxious to them—Nor could they ever forget the error the grandfather of these children had committed in marrying for her beauty the young woman, whose poverty having reduced her to be their humble companion, they had considered as an inferior being, and had treated with supercilious insolence and contempt—To those therefore to whom her unlucky beauty was transmitted, they bore irreconcilable enmity, even in the second generation; and had any one been artful enough to have suggested that Orlando was like his grandmother, it would probably have occasioned the loss even of the slight share of favour he possessed.

When Orlando was about twelve years old, the younger of the three antique heiresses died: she left not however even a small legacy to the Somerive family, but gave every thing she possessed to her surviving sister. Yet even by this lady, though the coldest and most unsociable tempered of the three, Orlando was not entirely forgotten—she left him the bible she always used in her closet, and ten pounds to buy mourning; the other members of his family were not even named.

One only of the Mrs. Raylands now remained; a woman who, except regularly keeping up the payment of the annual alms, which had by her ancestors been given once a year to the poor of her parish, was never known to have done a vo-

luntary kindness to any human being: and though she sometimes gave away money, it was never without making the wretched petitioner pay most dearly for it, by many a bitter humiliation—never, but when it was surely known, and her great goodness, her liberal donation to such and such people, were certainly related with exaggeration, at the two market-towns within four or five miles of her house.

With a very large income, and a great annual saving, her expenses were regulated exactly by the customs of her family.—She lived, generally alone, at the Old Hall, which had not received the slightest alteration, either in its environs or its furniture, since it was embellished for the marriage of her father Sir Hildebrand, in 1698.

Twice a year, when courts were held for the manors, there were tenants' feasts—and twice there was a grand dinner, to which none were admitted but a neighbouring nobleman, and the two or three titled people who resided within ten miles.—Twice too in the course of the year the family of Somerive were invited in form; but Mrs. Rayland generally took the same opportunity of asking the clergy of the surrounding country with their wives and daughters, the attorneys and apothecaries of the adjoining towns with theirs, as if to convince the Somerives that they were to expect no distinction on account of the kindred they claimed to the house of Rayland.—And indeed it was on these occasions that Mrs. Rayland seemed to take peculiar pleasure in mortifying Mrs. Somerive and her daughters, who dreaded these dinner days as those of the greatest penance; and who at Christmas, one of the periods of these formal dinners, have blest more than once the propitious snow; through which that important and magisterial personage,

the body coachman of Mrs. Rayland, did not choose to venture himself, or the six sleek animals of which he was sole governor; for on these occasions it was the established rule to send for the family, with the same solemnity and the same parade that had been used ever since the first sullen and reluctant reconciliation between Sir Hildebrand and his sister; when she dared to deviate from the fastidious arrogance of her family, and to marry a man who farmed his own estate—and who, though long settled as a very respectable land-owner, had not yet written ‘Armiger’ after his name.

But when the snow fell not, and the ways were passable; or when in summer no excuse was left, and the rheumatism of the elder, or the colds of the younger ladies could not be pleaded; the females of the family of Somerive were compelled to endure, in all their terrific and tedious forms, the grand dinners at the Hall. And though on these occasions the mother and the daughters endeavoured, by the simplicity of their dress, and the humility of their manners, to disarm the haughty dislike which Mrs. Rayland never took any pains to conceal, they never could obtain from her even as much common civility as she deigned to bestow on the ladies who were not connected with her; and Mr. Somerive had often been so much hurt by her supercilious behaviour towards his wife and daughters, that he had frequently resolved they should never again be exposed to endure it. But these resolutions his wife, hateful as the ceremony was to her, always contrived to prevail upon him to give up, rather than incur the hazard of injuring her family by an unpardonable offence against a capricious and ill-natured old woman, who, however oddly she behaved, was still by many people believed to intend giving all her fortune to those who had undoubt-

edly the best claim to it; others indeed thought, with more appearance of probability, that she would endow an hospital, or divide it among public charities.

When the young Orlando was at home, and accompanied his family in these visits, the austere visage of Mrs. Rayland was alone seen to relax into a smile—and as he grew older, this partiality was observed evidently to increase, insomuch that the neighbours observed, that whatever aversion the old lady had to feminine beauty, she did not detest that which nature had very liberally bestowed on Orlando.—He was seventeen, and was not only one of the finest looking lads in that country, but had long since obtained all the knowledge he could acquire at a neighbouring grammar school; from whence his father now took him, and began to consider of plans for his future life.—The eldest son, who would, as the father fondly hoped, succeed to the Rayland estate, he had sent to Oxford, where he had been indulged in his natural turn to expense; and his father had suffered him to live rather suitably to what he expected than to what he was sure of.—In this Mr. Somerive had acted extremely wrong; but it was from motives so natural, that his error was rather lamented than blamed. An error however, and of the most dangerous tendency, he had now discovered it to be; young Somerive had violent passions, and an understanding very ill suited to their management.—He had early in life seized with avidity the idea, which servants and tenants were ready enough to communicate, that he must have the Rayland estate; and had very thoughtlessly expressed this to those who failed not to repeat it to their present mistress, tenacious of her power, and jealous of every attempt to encroach on her property.—He had besides trespassed on

some remote corners of her manors ; and her game-keeper had represented him as a terrible depredator among her partridges, pheasants, and hares. These offences, added to the cat-chases, and tying canisters to the tails of certain dogs, of which he had been convicted in the early part of his life, had made so deep an impression against him, that now, whenever he was at home, the family were never asked ; and insensibly, from calling now and then to inquire after her while Mrs. Rayland lay ill of a violent fit of the gout, Orlando had been admitted to drink his tea at the Hall ; then to dine there ; and at last, as winter came on with stormy evenings and bad roads, he had been allowed to sleep in a little tapestry room, next to the old library at the end of the north wing—a division of the house so remote from that inhabited by the female part (or indeed by any part) of the family, that it could give no ideas of indecorum even to the iron prudery of Mrs. Rayland herself.

Though Orlando was of a temper which made it impossible for him to practise any of those arts by which the regard of such a woman could be secured ; and though the degree of favour he had obtained was long rather a misery than a pleasure to him ; his brother beheld the progress he made with jealousy and anger, and began to hate Orlando for having gained advantages of which he openly avowed his disdain and contempt.—As his expenses, which his father could no longer support, had by this time obliged him to quit the university, he was now almost always at home ; and his sneering reproaches, as well as his wild and unguarded conversation, rendered that home every day less pleasant to Orlando—while the quiet asylum he had obtained at the Hall, in a room adjoining to that where a great collection of books

were never disturbed in their long slumber by any human being but himself, endeared to him the gloomy abode of the Sybil, and reconciled him to the penance he was still obliged to undergo; for he was now become passionately fond of reading, and thought the use of such a library cheaply earned by acting as a sort of chaplain, reading the psalms and lessons every day, and the service in very bad weather; with a sermon on Sunday evening. And he even gradually forgot his murmurings at being imprisoned on Sundays and on Fridays in the great old long-bottomed coach, while it was dragged in a most solemn pace either to the next parish church, which was indeed at but a short distance from the mansion, or to that of a neighbouring town, whither, on some propitious and sunny days of summer, the old lady loved to proceed in state, and to display to her rustic or more enlightened neighbours a specimen of the magnificence of the last century. But as history must conceal no part of the truth, from partiality to the hero it celebrates, it must not be denied that the young Orlando had, though insensibly and almost unknown to himself, another motive for submitting with a good grace to pass much of his time in a way, for which, thinking as he thought, the prospect of even boundless wealth could have made him no compensation.—To explain this, it may be necessary to describe the persons who from his ninth year, when he became first so much distinguished by Mrs. Rayland, till his eighteenth, composed the household, of which he, during that period, occasionally made a part.

CHAPTER II.

THE confidential servant, or rather companion and *femme de charge* of Mrs. Rayland, was a woman of nearly her own age, of the name of Lennard.— This person, who was as well as her mistress a spinster, had been well educated, and was the daughter of a merchant who lost the fruits of a long course of industry in the fatal year 1720. He died of a broken heart, leaving his two daughters, who had been taught to expect high affluence, to the mercy of the world. Mrs. Rayland, whose pride was gratified in having about her the victim of unsuccessful trade, for which she had always a most profound contempt, received Mrs. Lennard as her own servant. She was however so much superior to her mistress in understanding, that she soon governed her entirely; and while the mean pliability of her spirit made her submit to all the contemptuous and unworthy treatment, which the paltry pride of Mrs. Rayland had pleasure in inflicting, she secretly triumphed in the consciousness of superior abilities, and knew that she was in fact the mistress of the supercilious being whose wages she received.

Every year she became more and more necessary to Mrs. Rayland, who, after the death of both her sisters, made her not only governess of her house, but her companion. Her business was, to sit with her in her apartment when she had no company; to read the newspaper; to make tea; to let in and out the favourite dogs (the task of combing and washing them was transferred to a deputy); to collect and report at due seasons intelligence of all that happened in the neighbouring families; to give regular returns of the behaviour of all the servants, except the old butler and the old coachman, who

had each a jurisdiction of their own ; to take especial care that the footmen and helpers behaved respectfully to the maids (who were all chosen by herself, and exhibited such a group, as secured, better than her utmost vigilance, this decorous behaviour from the male part of the family) ; to keep the keys ; to keep her mistress in good humour with herself, and as much as possible at a distance from the rest of the world, above all, from that part of it who might interfere with her present and future views ; which certainly were to make herself amends for the former injustice of fortune, by securing to her own use a considerable portion of the great wealth possessed by Mrs. Rayland.

Of the accomplishment of this she might well entertain a reasonable hope ; for she was some few years younger than her mistress (though she artfully added to her age, whenever she had occasion to speak of it), and was besides of a much better constitution, possessing one of those frames where a good deal of bone and no flesh seem to defy the gripe of disease. The sister of this Mrs. Lennard had experienced a very different destiny—She had been taken at the time of her father's misfortunes into the family of a nobleman ; she had married the chaplain, and retired with him on a small living, where she died in a few years, leaving several children ; among others a daughter, to whom report imputed uncommon beauty, and scandal a too intimate connexion with the noble patron of her father. Certain it is, that on his marriage, he gave her a sum of money, and she became the wife of a young attorney, who was a kind of steward, by whom she had three children ; of which none survived their parents, but a little girl born after her father's death, and whose birth occasioned that of her mother. To this little orphan, her great aunt

Mrs. Lennard, who with all her starched prudery had a considerable share of odd romantic whim in her composition, had given the dramatic and uncommon name of Monimia—Such at least was the history given in Mrs. Rayland's family of an infant girl, which at about four years old had been by the permission of her patroness taken, as it was said, from nurse, at a distant part of the county, and received by Mrs. Lennard at Rayland Hall; where she at first never appeared before the lady but by accident, but was the inhabitant of the house-keeper's room, and under the immediate care of the still-room maid, who was a person much devoted to Mrs. Lennard.

Mrs. Rayland had an aversion to children, and had consented to the admission of this into her house, on no other condition, but that she should never hear it cry, or ever have any trouble about it.—Her companion easily engaged for that; as Rayland Hall was so large, that *les enfans trouvés* at Paris might have been the inhabitants of one of its wings, without alarming a colony of ancient virgins at the other. The little Monimia, though she was described as having been

“The child of misery, baptiz'd in tears.” LANGHORN.
was not particularly disposed to disturb, by infantine expressions of distress, the chaste and silent solitudes of the Hall; for though her little fair countenance had at times something of a melancholy cast, there was more of sweetness than of sorrow in it; and if she ever shed tears, they were so mingled with smiles, that she might have sat to the painter of the Seasons for the representative of infant April. Her beauty however was not likely to recommend her to the favour of her aunt's affluent patroness; but as to recommend her was the design of Mrs. Lennard, she saw that a beauty

of four or five years old would be much less obnoxious than one of fifteen, or even nine or ten; and therefore she contrived to introduce her by degrees; that when she grew older, her charms, by being long seen, might lose their power to offend.

She contrived that Mrs. Rayland might first see the little orphan as by chance; then she sent her in, when she knew her mistress was in good humour, with a basket of fruit, an early pine, some preserves in brandy, or something or other which was acceptable to her lady's palate; and on these occasions Monimia acquitted herself to a miracle; and presented her little offering, and made her little curtsy, with so much innocent grace, that Hecate in the midst of her rites might have suspended her incantations to have admired her. At six years old she had so much won upon the heart of Mrs. Rayland, that she became a frequent guest in the parlour, and saved her aunt the trouble of opening the door for Bella, and Pompey, and Julie. From the tenderness of her nature she became an admirable nurse for the frequent litters of kittens, with which two favourite cats continually increased the family of her protectress; and the numerous daily applications from robins and sparrows under the windows, were never so well attended to as since Monimia was entrusted with the care of answering their demands.

But her name—Monimia—was an incessant occasion of reproach—Why, said Mrs. Rayland, why would you, Lennard, give the child such a name? As the girl will have nothing, why put such romantic notions in her head, as may perhaps prevent her getting her bread honestly?—Monimia!—I protest I don't love even to repeat the name; it puts me so in mind of a very hateful play, which I remember shocked me so when I was a mere girl, that

I have always detested the name. Monimia!—'tis so very unlike a Christian's name, that, if the child is much about me, I must insist upon having her called Mary.

To this Mrs. Lennard of course consented, excusing herself for the romantic impropriety of which her lady accused her, by saying, that she understood Monimia signified an orphan, a person left alone and deserted; and therefore had given it to a child who was an orphan from her birth—but that, as it was displeasing, she should at least never be called so. The little girl then was Mary in the parlour; but among the servants, and with the people around the house, she was still Monimia.

Among those who fondly adhered to her original name was Orlando; who, when he first became a frequent visitor as a school-boy at the Hall, stole often into the still-room to play with the little girl, who was three years younger than himself—and insensibly grew as fond of her as of one of his sisters. Mrs. Lennard always checked this innocent mirth; and when she found it impossible wholly to prevent two children who were in the same house from playing with each other, she took every possible precaution to prevent her lady's ever seeing them together; and threatened the severest punishment to the little Monimia, if she at any time even spoke to Master Somerive, when in the presence of Mrs. Rayland.—But nothing could be so irksome to a healthy and lively child of nine or ten years old, as the sort of confinement to which Monimia was condemned in consequence of her admission to the parlour; where she was hardly ever suffered to speak, but sat at a distant window, where, whether it was winter or summer, she was to remain no otherwise distinguished from a statue than by being employed in making the household linen, and some-

times in spinning it with a little wheel which Mrs. Rayland, who piqued herself upon following the notable maxims of her mother, had bought for her, and at which she kept her closely employed when there was no other work to do.—When any company came, then and then only she was dismissed; but this happened very rarely; and many many hours poor Monimia vainly prayed for the sight of a coach or chaise at the end of the long avenue, which was to her the blessed signal of transient liberty.

Her dress, the expense of which Mrs. Rayland very graciously took upon herself, was such as indicated to all who saw her, at once the charity and prudence of her patroness, who repeatedly told her visitors, that she had taken the orphan niece of her old servant Lennard, not with any view of making her a gentlewoman, but to bring her up to get her bread honestly; and therefore she had directed her to be dressed, not in gauzes and flounces, like the flirting girls she saw so tawdry at church, but in a plain stuff; not flaring without a cap, which she thought monstrously indecent for a female at any age, but in a plain cap, and a clean white apron, that she might never be encouraged to vanity by any kind of finery that did not become her situation.—Monimia, though dressed like a parish girl, or in a way very little superior, was observed by the visitors who happened to see her, and to whom this harangue was made, to be so very pretty, that nothing could conceal or diminish her beauty. Her dark stuff gown gave new lustre to her lovely complexion; and her thick muslin cap could not confine her luxuriant dark hair. Her shape was symmetry itself, and her motions so graceful, that it was impossible to behold her, even attached to her humble employment at the wheel, without ac-

knowledging that no art could give what nature had bestowed upon her.

Orlando, who had loved her as a play-fellow while they were both children, now began to feel a more tender and more respectful affection for her; though unconscious himself that it was her beauty that awakened these sentiments. On the last of his holidays, before he entirely left school, the vigilance of Mrs. Lennard was redoubled, and she so contrived to confine Monimia, that their romping was at end, and they hardly ever saw each other, except by mere chance, at a distance, or now and then at dinner, when Monimia was suffered to dine at table; an honour which she was not always allowed, but which Mrs. Lennard cautiously avoided entirely suspending when Orlando was at the Hall, as there was nothing she seemed to dread so much as alarming Mrs. Rayland with any idea of Orlando's noticing her niece. This however never happened at that time to occur to the old lady; not only because Mrs. Lennard took such pains to lead her imagination from any such probability, but because she considered them both as mere children, and Monimia as a servant.

It was however at this time that a trifling incident had nearly awakened such suspicions, and occasioned such displeasure, as it would have been very difficult to have subdued or appeased. Mrs. Rayland had been long confined by a fit of the gout; and the warm weather of Whitsuntide had only just enabled her to walk, leaning on a crutch on one side, and on Mrs. Lennard on the other, in a long gallery which reached the whole length of the south wing, and which was hung with a great number of family pictures.—Mrs. Rayland had peculiar satisfaction in relating the history of the heroes and dames of her family, who were repre-

sented by these portraits.—Sir Roger De Coverley never went over the account of his ancestors with more correctness or more delight. Indeed, the reflections of Mrs. Rayland were uninterrupted by any of those little blemishes in the history of her progenitors, that somewhat bewildered the good knight; for she boasted that not one of the Rayland family had ever condescended to degrade himself by trade; and that the marriage of Mrs. Somerive, her aunt, was the only instance in which a daughter of the Raylands had stooped to an inferior alliance.—The little withered figure, bent down with age and infirmity, and the last of a race which she was thus arrogantly boasting—a race which in a few years, perhaps a few months, might be no more remembered—was a ridiculous instance of human folly and human vanity, at which Lennard had sense enough to smile internally, while she affected to listen with interest to stories which she had heard repeated for near forty years. It was in the midst of her attention to an anecdote which generally closed the relation of a speech made by Queen Anne to the last Lady Rayland on her having no son, that a sudden and violent bounce towards the middle of the gallery occasioned an interruption of the story, and equal amazement in the lady and her confidante; who both turning round, not very nimbly indeed, demanded of Monimia, who had been sitting in one of the old-fashioned bow-windows of which the casement was open, what was the matter?

Monimia, covered with blushes, and in a sort of scuffle to conceal something with her feet, replied, hesitating and trembling, that she did not know.

Mrs. Lennard, who probably guessed the truth, declared loudly that she would immediately find out. But it was not the work of a moment to set

her lady safely on one of the leathern settees, while she herself hastened to the window to discover, if possible, who had from the court below thrown in the something that had thus alarmed them. Before she reached the window, therefore, the court was clear; and Monimia had recovered from her confusion, and went on with her work.

Mrs. Lennard now thought proper to give another turn to the incident. She said, it must have been some accidental noise, from the wainscot's cracking in dry weather—though I could have sworn at the moment, cried she, that something very hard, like a stone or a stick, had been thrown into the room. However to be sure, I must have been mistaken, for certainly there is nobody in the court; and really one does recollect hearing in this gallery very odd noises, which, if one was superstitious, might sometimes make one uneasy.—Many of the neighbours some years ago used to say to me, that they wondered I was not afraid of crossing it of a night by myself, when you, Ma'am, used to sleep in the worked bed-chamber, and I lay over the house-keeper's room. But I used to say, that you had such an understanding, that I should offend you by shewing any foolish fears; and that all the noble family that owned this house time out of mind, were such honourable persons, that none of them could be supposed likely to walk after their decease, as the spirits of wicked persons are said to do. But, however, they used to answer in reply to that, that some of your ancestors, Ma'am, had hid great sums of money and valuable jewels in this house, to save it from the wicked rebels in the time of the blessed Martyr; and that it was to reveal these treasures that the appearances of spirits had been seen and strange noises heard about the house.

This speech was so exactly calculated to please

the lady to whom it was addressed, that it almost obliterated the recollection of the little alarm she had felt, and blunted the spirit of inquiry, which the twinges of the gout also contributed to diminish; and fortunately the arrival of the apothecary, who was that moment announced, and whose visits were always a matter of importance, left her no longer any time to interrogate Monimia. But Mrs. Lennard, having led her down to her great chair, and seen her safely in conference with her physical friend, returned hastily to the gallery, where Monimia still remained demurely at work; and peremptorily insisted on knowing what it was that had bounced into the room, and struck against the picture of Sir Hildebrand himself; who in armour, and on a white horse whose flanks were overshadowed by his stupendous wig, pranced over the great gilt chimney-piece, just as he appeared at the head of a county association in 1707.

Monimia was a poor dissembler, and had never in her life been guilty of a falsehood. She was as little capable of disguising as of denying the truth; and the menaces of her aunt frightened her into an immediate confession, that it was Mr. Orlando, who passing through the court to go to cricket in the park, had seen her sitting at the window, and, not thinking any harm, had thrown up his ball only in play to make her jump; but that it had unluckily gone through the window, and hit against the picture.

And what became of it afterwards? angrily demanded Mrs. Lennard.

It bounded, answered the innocent culprit—it bounded across the floor, and I rolled it away with my feet, under the chairs.

And how dared you, exclaimed the aunt, how dared you, artful little hussey, conceal the truth

from me? how dared you encourage any such abominable doings?—A pretty thing indeed to have happen!—Suppose the good-for-nothing boy had hit my lady or me upon the head or breast, as it was a mercy he did not—there would have been a fine story!—Or suppose he had broke the windows, shattered the panes, and cut us with the glass!—or what if he had beat the stained glass of my lady's coat of arms, up at top there, all to smash—what d'ye think would have become of you, you worthless little puss! what punishment would have been bad enough for you?

My dear aunt, said the weeping Monimia, how could I help it? I am sure I did not know what Mr. Orlando was going to do; I saw him but a moment before; and you know that, if I *had* known he intended to throw the ball up, I dared not have spoken to him to have prevented it.

Have spoken to him, indeed?—No, I think not; and remember this, girl, that you have come off well this time, and I shan't say any thing of the matter to my lady; but if I ever catch you speaking to that wicked boy, or even daring to look at him, I will turn you out of doors that moment—and let this teach you that I am in earnest. Having thus said, she gave the terrified trembling girl a violent blow, or what was in her language a good box on the ear, which forcing her head against the stone window-frame almost stunned her: she then repeated it on the lovely neck of her victim, where the marks of her fingers were to be traced many days afterwards; and flounced out of the room, and, composing herself, went down to give her share of information, as to her lady's complaint, to the apothecary.

The unhappy Monimia, who had felt ever since her earliest recollection the misery of her situation,

was never so sensible of it as at this moment. The work fell from her hands—she laid her head on a marble slab, that was on one side of the bow window, and gave way to an agony of grief.—Her cap had fallen from her head, and her fine hair concealed her face, which resting on her arms was bathed in tears. Sobs, that seemed to rend her heart, were the only expression of sorrow she was able to utter; she heard, she saw nothing—but was suddenly startled by something touching her hand as it hung lifelessly over the table. She looked up—and beheld, with mingled emotions of surprise and fear, Orlando Somerive: who, with tears in his eyes, and in a faltering whisper, conjured her to tell him what was the matter. The threat so recently uttered yet vibrated in her ears—and her terror, lest her aunt should return and find Orlando there, was so great, that, without knowing what she did, she started up and ran towards the door; from whence she would have fled, disordered as she was, down stairs, and through the very room where Mrs. Rayland, her aunt, and the apothecary were in conference, if Orlando, with superior strength and agility, had not thrown himself before her, and, setting his back against the door, insisted upon knowing the cause of her tears before he suffered her to stir.

Gasping for breath, trembling and inarticulately she tried to relate the effects of his indiscretion, and that therefore her aunt had threatened and struck her. Orlando, whose temper was naturally warm, and whose generous spirit revolted from every kind of injustice, felt at once his indignation excited by this act of oppression, and his anger that Mrs. Leonard should arraign him for a childish frolic, and thence take occasion so unworthily to treat an innocent girl; and being too rash to reflect on con-

sequences, he declared that he would go instantly into the parlour, confess to Mrs. Rayland what he had done, and appeal against the tyranny and cruelty of her woman.

It was now the turn of poor Monimia to entreat and implore; and she threw herself half frantic on her knees before him, and besought him rather to kill her, than to expose her to the terrors and distress such a step would inevitably plunge her into. Indeed, dear Orlando, cried she, you would not be heard against my aunt. Mrs. Rayland, if she forgave you, would never forgive me; but I should be immediately turned out of the house with disgrace; and I have no friend, no relation in the world but my aunt, and must beg my bread. But it is not so much that, added she, while sobs broke her utterance, it is not so much *that* I care for—I am so unfortunate that it does not signify what becomes of me: I can work in the fields, or can go through any hardship; but Mrs. Rayland will be very angry with you, and will not suffer you to come to the Hall again, and I shall—never—never see you any more.

This speech, unguarded and simple as it was, had more effect on Orlando than the most studied eloquence. He took the weeping trembling Monimia up in his arms, seated her in a chair; and drying her eyes, he besought her to be comforted, and to assure herself, that whatever he might feel, he would do nothing that should give her pain.—Oh! go then, for Heaven's sake go from hence instantly! replied Monimia.—If my aunt should come to look for me, as it is very likely she will, we should be both undone!

Good God! exclaimed Orlando, why should it be so?—why are we never to meet? and what harm to any one is done by my friendship for you, Monimia?

Alas! answered she, every moment more and more apprehensive of the arrival of her aunt, alas! Orlando, I know not; I am sure it was once, before my aunt was so enraged at it, all the comfort I had in the world; but now it is my greatest misery, because I dare not even look at you when I happen to meet you.—Yet I am sure I meant no hurt to any body; nor can it do my cruel aunt any harm, that you pity a poor orphan who has no friend upon earth.

I will, however, replied he warmly, pity and love you too—love you as well as I do any of my sisters—even the sister I love best—and I should hate myself if I did not. But, dear Monimia, tell me, if I cannot see you in the day time, is it possible for you to walk out of an evening, when these old women are in bed?—When I am not at the Hall they would suspect nothing; and I should not mind walking from home after our people are in bed, to meet you for half an hour any where about these grounds.

Ignorant of the decorum required by the world, and innocent, even to infantine simplicity, as Monimia was, at the age of something more than fourteen, she had that natural rectitude of understanding, that at once told her these clandestine meetings would be wrong. Ah no, Mr. Orlando! said she sighing, that must not be; for if it should be known——

It cannot, it shall not be known, cried he, eagerly interrupting her.

But it is impossible, my good friend, if it were not wrong; for you remember that to-day is Saturday, and your school begins on Monday.

Curse on the school! I had indeed forgot it.—Well, but promise me then, Monimia, promise me that you will make yourself easy now; and that when I come from school entirely, which I shall do

at Christmas, we shall contrive to meet sometimes, and to read together, as we used to do, the Fairy Tales, and the Arabian Nights, last year, and the year before.—Will you promise me, Monimia?

Monimia, whose apprehensions every moment increased, and who even fancied she heard the rustle of Mrs. Lennard's gown upon the private staircase that led down from the gallery, was ready to promise any thing.—Oh! yes, yes, Orlando!—I promise—do but go now, and we shall not perhaps be so unhappy: my aunt may not be so very ill-humoured when you come home again.

And say you will not cry any more now!

I will not, indeed I will not—but for God's sake go!—I'm sure I hear somebody.

There is nobody indeed; but I will go, to make you easy.—He then, trembling as much as she did, hastily kissed the hand he held; and gliding on tip-toe to the other end of the gallery, went through the apartments that led down the great staircase, and taking a circuit round another part of the house, entered the room where Mrs. Rayland was sitting, as if he had been just come from cricket in the park.

He had not left the gallery a moment before Mrs. Lennard came to look for Monimia, whom she found in greater agitation than she had left her, and still drowned in tears. She again began in the severest terms to reprove her; and as the sobs and sighs of the suffering girl deprived her of the power of answering her invectives, she violently seized her arm; and, dragging rather than leading her to her own room, she bade her instantly undress and go to bed—that you may not, said she, expose your odious blubbered face.

Poor Monimia was extremely willing to obey.—She sat down and began to undress, listening as

patiently as she could to the violent scolding which her indefatigable aunt still kept up against her; who having at length exhausted her breath, bounced out and locked the door.

Monimia, then left alone, again began to indulge her tears; but her room was in a turret over a sort of lumber-room, where the game-keeper kept his nets and his rods, and where Orlando used to deposit his bow, his cricket-bats, and other instruments of sport, with which he was indulged with playing in the park. She now heard him come in, with one of the servants; for such an effect had his voice, that she could distinguish it amid a thousand others, and when it did not seem to be audible to any one else.—Though she could not now distinguish the words, she heard him discoursing as if he seemed to be bidding the place farewell for that time. She got upon a chair (for the long narrow window was so far from the ground that she could not see through it as she stood;) and she perceived Orlando cross the park on foot, and slowly and reluctantly walk towards that part of it that was next to his father's house. She continued to look at him till a wood, through which he had to pass, concealed him from her view. She then retired to her bed, and shed tears. Orlando left his home the next day, for his last half-year at the school (having that evening taken leave of Mrs. Rayland;) and it was six months before Monimia saw him again.

CHAPTER III.

HOWEVER trifling the incident was that is related in the foregoing chapter, it so much alarmed the prudent sagacity of Mrs. Lennard, that when, on the

following Christmas, Mr. Orlando returned to his occasional visits at the Hall, she took more care than before to prevent any possibility of his ever having an opportunity of meeting Monimia alone; and as much as she could without being remarked by her lady, from seeing her at all. But while she took these precautions, she began to think them useless. Orlando was no longer the giddy boy, eager at his childish sports, and watching with impatience for a game of blindman's buff in the servant's hall, or a romp with any one who would play with him. Orlando was a young man as uncommonly grave, as he was tall and handsome. There was something more than gravity, there was dejection in his manner; but it served only to make him more interesting. He now slept oftener than before at the Hall, but he was seen there less; and passed whole days in his own room, or rather in the library; where, as this quiet and studious temper recommended him more than ever to Mrs. Rayland, she allowed him to have a fire, to the great comfort and benefit of the books, which had been without that advantage for many years.

Mrs. Lennard, who now beheld him with peculiar favour, though she had formerly done him ill offices, seemed willing to oblige him in every thing but in allowing him ever to converse with her niece, who was seldom suffered to appear in the parlour, but was kept to work in her own room. Mrs. Rayland's increasing infirmities, though not such as threatened her life, threw the management of every thing about her more immediately into the hands of Mrs. Lennard; and, occupied by the care of her own health, Mrs. Rayland's attention to what was passing around her was less every day, and the imbecility of age hourly more perceptible. She therefore made no remark on this change of system; but

if she happened to want Monimia, or, as she chose to call her, Mary, she sent for her, and dismissed her when her service was performed, without any farther inquiry as to how she afterwards passed her time.

Orlando, however, though he had, since his last return, never spoken a word to Monimia, and though, in their few and short meetings, the presence of Mrs. Lennard prevented their exchanging even a look, was no longer at a loss to discriminate those sentiments which he felt for the beautiful orphan, whose charms, which had made almost in infancy an impression on his heart, were now opening to a perfection even beyond their early promise. Her imprisonment, the harshness of her aunt towards her, and her desolate situation, contributed to raise in his heart all that the most tender pity could add to the ardency of a first passion. Naturally of a warm and sanguine temper, the sort of reading he had lately pursued, his situation, his very name, all added something to the romantic enthusiasm of his character; but in the midst of the fairy dreams which he indulged, reason too often stepped in to poison his enjoyments, and represented to him, that he was without fortune, and without possession—that far from seeing at present any probability of ever being able to offer an establishment to the unfortunate Monimia, he had to procure one for himself. It was now he first felt an earnest wish, that the hopes his relations had sometimes encouraged might be realized, and that some part of the great wealth of the Rayland family might be his; but with this he had no new reason to flatter himself; for Mrs. Rayland, though she seemed to become every day more fond of his company, never took any notice of the necessity there was, that now in his nineteenth year he

should fix upon some plan for his future establishment in the world.

This necessity however lay heavy on the heart of his father, who had long felt with anguish, that the misconduct of his eldest son had rendered it impossible for him to do justice to his younger. With a small income and a large family, he had never, though he lived as economically as possible, been able to lay by much money; and what he had saved, in the hope of accumulating small fortunes for his daughters, had been paid away for his eldest son in the first two years of his residence at Oxford; the third had nearly devoured the five hundred pounds legacy given to the family by the elder Mrs. Rayland; and the first half-year after he left the university, and which he passed between London and his father's house, entirely exhausted that resource; while Mr. Somerive in vain represented to him, that, in continuing such a career, he must see the estate mortgaged, which was the sole dependence of his family now, and *his* sole dependence hereafter.

So deep, and often so fatal, are early impressions in minds where reason slowly and feebly combats the influence of passion, that though nothing was more certain than that Mrs. Rayland's fortune was entirely at her own disposal, and nothing more evident than her dislike to him, he never could be persuaded that, as he was the heir at law, he should not possess the greater part of the estate; and he was accustomed, in his orgies, among his companions, to drink "to their propitious meeting at the Hall, when the old girl should be in Abraham's bosom," and not unfrequently "to her speedy departure." He settled with himself the alterations he should make, and the stud he should collect; proposed to refit in an excellent style the old ken-

nel, and to restore to Rayland Hall the praise it had formerly boasted, of having the best pack of fox hounds within three counties. When it was represented that the possibility of executing these plans was very uncertain, since the old lady certainly preferred Orlando, he answered—Oh! damn it, that's not what I'm afraid of—No, no, the old hag has been, thanks to my fortunate stars, brought up in good old-fashioned notions, and knows that the first-born son is in all Christian countries the head of the house, and that the rest must scramble through the world as well as they can—As for my solemn brother, you see nature and fortune have designed him for a parson. The tabby may like him for a chaplain, and means to qualify him by one of her livings for the petticoats; but take my word for it, that however she may set her weazen face against it, just to impose upon the world, she likes at the bottom of her heart a young fellow of spirit—and you'll see me master of the Hall. Egad, how I'll make her old hoards spin again! Down go those woods that are now every year the worse for standing. Whenever I hear she's fairly off, the squirrels will have notice to quit.

It was in vain that the mild and paternal arguments of Mr. Somerive himself, or the tears and tender remonstrances of his wife, were employed, whenever their son would give them an opportunity, to counteract this unfortunate prepossession. He by degrees began to absent himself more and more from home; and when he was there, his hours were such as put any conversation on serious topics out of their power. He was never indeed sullen, for that was not his disposition; but he was so thoughtless, so volatile, and so prepossessed that he had a right to do as other young men did with whom he had been accustomed to associate, that

his father gave up as hopeless every attempt to bring him to his senses.

The greater the uneasiness to which Mr. Somerive was thus subject by the conduct of his eldest son, the more solicitous he became for the future establishment of the younger. But he knew not how to proceed to obtain it. He had now no longer the means of sending him to the university, of which he had sometimes thought, in the hope that Mrs. Rayland might, if he were qualified for orders, give him one of the livings of which she was patronness; nor could he, exhausted as his savings were by the indiscretion of his eldest son, command money enough to purchase him a commission, which he once intended. Sometimes he fancied that, if he were to apply to Mrs. Rayland, she would assist in securing an establishment in future for one about whom she appeared so much interested at present; but he oftener apprehended, from the oddity and caprice of her temper, that any attempt to procure more certain and permanent favours for Orlando, might occasion her to deprive him of what he now possessed.

Mrs. Somerive, though a woman of an excellent understanding, had contracted such an awe of the old lady, that she was positively against speaking to her about her son; while maternal partiality, which was indeed well justified by the good qualities and handsome person of Orlando, continually suggested to her that Mrs. Rayland's prepossession in his favour, if left to take its course, would finally make him the heir of at least great part of her property.

Thus his father, from uncertainty how to act for the best, suffered weeks and months to pass away, in which he could not determine to act at all; and as more than half those weeks and months were

passed at the Hall, his mother fondly flattered herself, that he was making rapid advances in securing to his family the possessions they had so good a claim to.

Neither of them saw the danger to which they exposed him, of losing himself in an imprudent and even fatal attachment to a young woman, while they supposed him wholly given up to acquire the favour of an old one; for in fact Mrs. Lennard had so artfully kept her niece out of sight, that neither of them knew her—they barely knew that there was a young person in the house who was considered in the light of a servant; but whether she was well or ill-looking, it had never occurred to them to inquire, because they never supposed her more acquainted with their son than any other of the female domestics.

Poor Orlando, however, was cherishing a passion, which had taken entire possession of his heart before he was conscious that he had one, and which the restraints that every way surrounded him served only to inflame. Monimia now appeared in his eyes, what she really was, infinitely more lovely than ever. She was on his account a prisoner, for he learned that when he was not in the country she was allowed more liberty. She was friendless, and harshly treated; and, with a form and face that he thought would do honour to the highest rank of society, she seemed to be condemned to perpetual servitude, and he feared to perpetual ignorance; for he knew that Mrs. Rayland had, with the absurd prejudice of narrow minds, declared against her being taught any thing but the plainest domestic duties, and the plainest work. She had, however, taught herself, with very little aid from her aunt, to read; and lately, since she had been so much alone, she had tried to write; but she had not

always materials, and was frequently compelled to hide those she contrived to obtain : so that her progress in this was slow, and made only by snatches, as the ill-humour of her aunt allowed or forbade her to make these laudable attempts at improvement.

Her apartment was still in the turret that terminated one wing of the house, and Orlando had been at the Hall the greater part of a fortnight, without their having exchanged a single word. They had indeed met only twice by mere accident, in the presence of the lady of the mansion and of Mrs. Lennard ; once when she crossed the hall when he was leading the lady to her chair out of the gallery ; and a second time when she was sent for on an accession of gout, to assist in adjusting the flannels and cushions, which Mrs. Rayland declared she managed better than any body.

As she knelt to perform this operation, Orlando, who was reading a practical discourse on faith in opposition to good works, was surprised by her beautiful figure in her simple stuff gown, which had such an effect on his imagination that he no longer knew what he was reading : but, after half a dozen blunders in less than half a dozen lines, he became so conscious of his confusion that he could not proceed at all, but, affecting to be seized with a violent cough, got up and went out. Again, however, this symptom escaped Mrs. Rayland, who, though she read good books as a matter of form, and to impress people with an idea of her piety and understanding, cared very little about their purport, and was just then more occupied with the care of her foot than with abstract reasonings on the efficacy of faith.

In the meantime Monimia, who blushed if she beheld the shadow of Orlando at a distance, and

whose heart beat at the sound of his voice, as if it would escape from her bosom, had never an opportunity of hearing it, unless he accidentally spoke to some person in the room under hers, where she knew he often went, and particularly at this season, which was near the end of February, when the ponds were drawn, and the nets and poles in frequent use : but the door by which this room opened to the court was on the other side, Monimia had only one high long window in a very thick wall that looked into the park : whenever, therefore, as she sat alone in her turret, she heard any person in the room beneath her, she listened with an anxious and palpitating heart, and at length fancied that she could distinguish the step of Orlando from that of the game-keeper or any of the other servants.

If she was thus attentive to him, without any other motive than to enjoy the pleasure of fancying he was near her, Orlando was on his side studying how to obtain an opportunity of seeing her ; not in the intention of communicating to her those sentiments which he now too well understood, but in the hope of finding means to make her amends for the injustice of fortune. If there was any dependence to be placed on expression of countenance, the animation and intelligence that were visible in the soft features of Monimia promised an excellent understanding. What pity that it should not be cultivated ! What delight to be her preceptor, and, in despite of the malignity of fortune, to render her mind as lovely as her form ! This project got so entirely the possession of Orlando's imagination, that he thought, he dreamed of nothing else ; and, however difficult, or even impracticable it seemed, he determined to undertake it.

Mrs. Lennard slept at some distance; but there was no other way of Monimia's going into any part of the house but by a passage which led through her room; for every other avenue was closed up, and the last thing she did every night was to lock the door of the room where her niece lay, and to take away the key.

The window was equally well secured, for it was in effect only a loop; and of this, narrow as it was, the small square of the casement that opened was secured by iron bars. The Raylands had been eminent royalists in the civil wars, and Rayland Hall had held out against a party of Fairfax's army that had closely besieged it. Great part of the house retained the same appearance of defensive strength which had then been given it; and no knight of romance ever had so many real difficulties to encounter in achieving the deliverance of his princess, as Orlando had in finding the means merely to converse with the little imprisoned orphan. Months passed away, in which his most watchful diligence served only to prove that these difficulties were almost insurmountable; nor would he perhaps, with all the enthusiasm of love and romance, have ever conquered them, if chance had not befriended him.

Mrs. Rayland had given him, under restrictions that he should use it only while he was at the Hall, a very fine colt, which was of a breed of racers, the property of the Raylands, and very eminent in the days of Sir Hildebrand. Out of respect to its ancient prowess, the breed was still kept up, though the descendants no longer emulated the honours of their progenitors on the turf: but the produce was generally sold by the coachman, who had the management of the stable, and who was supposed to have profited very considerably by his dealings.

Orlando, highly gratified by this mark of Mrs. Rayland's favour, undertook to break the young horse himself, and to give it among other accomplishments that of leaping. There was no leaping-bar about the grounds; but in the lumber-room on the ground-floor of one of the turrets he had seen the timber of one that had formerly stood in the park. To this place, therefore, he repaired; and in removing the large posts, which were very little injured by time, some other slabs of wood, boards, and pieces of scaffolding were moved also, and Orlando saw that they had concealed a door, formerly boarded up, but of which the boards were now broken and decayed; he forced away a piece of the rotten wood, and saw a flight of broken stone steps, just wide enough to admit one person with difficulty. His heart bounded with transport: he knew that this staircase must lead to the top of the turret, and consequently wind round the room occupied by Monimia, which it was probable had a communication also with the stairs. But, unable to determine in a moment how he should avail himself, or acquaint her, of this fortunate discovery, and trembling lest it should be known, and his hopes at once destroyed, he hastily replaced the spars of wood that had concealed the door, before the return of the gardener and the under game-keeper, who had been assisting him in his operations about the leaping-bar; and hastily following them to the spot where they were putting it up, he affected to be interested in its completion while his mind was really occupied only by plans for seeing without fear of discovery his adored Monimia.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE rendered Orlando so politic, that he determined rather to defer the happiness he hoped for, in gaining unmolested access to Monimia for two or three days, than to risk by precipitancy the delightful secret of the concealed door, and to watch the motion of the dragon whose unwearied vigilance might at once render it useless. He therefore set himself to observe the hours when Mrs. Lennard was most certainly engaged about her mistress; and he found, that as she indulged very freely in the pleasures of a good table, of which she was herself directress, she became frequently unwilling to encounter much exertion after dinner; and generally left Monimia (who either did not dine below, or retired with the table cloth) unmolested till six o'clock, when, if he was not there, she was called down to make tea.

These hours therefore seemed most propitious for the experiment he must of necessity make, which was to ascend the staircase, and seek for the door that probably, though now blocked up, had originally led from it into the room inhabited by Monimia; from whence, as it was perhaps only boarded up, he hoped to make her hear, and to prevail upon her to assist in forcing a passage through it.

He knew Mrs. Lennard was less upon the *qui vive*? when he was not about the house; and therefore, the evening before that when he intended to put his project in execution, he took leave of Mrs. Rayland, and told her that he was going home for a few days, when with her permission he would return. Mrs. Rayland, who now thought the house melancholy without him, bade him come back to

the Hall as soon as he could, which he promised with a beating heart, and departed.

The next day, however, having taken the precaution to get a letter of compliment from his father to Mrs. Rayland, the better to account for his quick return, if to account for it should be necessary, he set out on foot after dinner; and as he arrived at Rayland Hall just as the servants of that family were eating theirs, which was always a long and momentous business, he had the good fortune not to meet any one, but to enter the lower room of the turret; and as he had often the key, he now locked the door, and listening very attentively heard Monimia walking above, and convinced himself that she was alone.

As silently as he could he removed the planks and timber that concealed the door; and having so placed them that, without discovering the aperture, they leaned so hollow from the wall that he could get under them, he tore away the remaining impediments that obstructed him, and entered the low staircase, of which about fourteen broken and decayed steps led, as he expected, to another door which was also boarded up, and then wound up to the top of the turret. He stopped a moment and listened; he distinctly heard Monimia sigh deeply, and open a drawer. He considered a moment what way of accosting her would be least likely to alarm her too suddenly, and at length he determined to speak.

After another pause, and finding all was silent in her room, he tapped softly against the boarded door; and lowering his voice he called, Monimia, Monimia!

The affrighted girl exclaimed, Good God! who is there? who speaks? Be not affrighted, replied he, speaking louder, it is Orlando. Orlando! and from whence, dear sir, do you speak! I know not,

for I cannot tell what part of your room this door opens to; tell me, where do you hear the sound I now make? Against the head of my bed. Cannot you then remove the bed, and see if there is not a door? I can, replied Monimia, if my trembling does not prevent me, for my bed goes upon casters; but indeed I tremble so! if my aunt should come! She will not come, replied Orlando impatiently: do not give way to groundless fears, Monimia; but, if ever you had any friendship for me, exert yourself now, to procure the only opportunity we shall ever have of meeting—remove your bed, and see what is behind it.

Monimia, trembling and amazed as she was, found in the midst of her alarm a sensation of joy that was undescribable. It lent her strength to remove the bed, which it was not difficult to do; but the room was hung with old-fashioned glazed linen, when many years before it had been fitted up as a bed-chamber: this kind of arras entirely hid the door. Ah! cried Monimia, there is no door, Mr. Orlando. The hangings are just the same here as about the rest of the room. Cut them, cried he, with your scissors, and you will find there is a door. But if my aunt should discover that they are cut? Oh heavens, exclaimed Orlando, if you are thus apprehensive, Monimia, we shall never meet; but if you have any regard for me—The adjuration was too powerful: Monimia forgot the dread of her aunt in the superior dread of offending Orlando. She took her scissors, and, cutting the hangings, which through time were little more than tinder, discovered the door, which was very thin, and only nailed up, strengthened on the outside by a few slight deals across it. Orlando, who like another Pyramus, watched with a beating heart the breach through which he now saw the light, forced away

these slight barriers with very little difficulty; and then, setting his foot against the door, it gave way, and the remnant of tattered hanging made no resistance. He found himself in the room with Monimia, who from mingled emotions of pleasure and fear could hardly breathe. At length, cried he, I have found you, Monimia! at length, I have got to you. But we shall both be utterly ruined, interrupted she, if my aunt should happen to come; speak low, for Heaven's sake, speak low. I should die upon the spot, if she should happen to find you here.

Let us consider, said Orlando, how we may meet for the future. I do not mean to stay now; but you see this door gives us always an opportunity of seeing each other. But how shall I dare? cried the trembling Monimia: my aunt watches me so narrowly, that I am never secure of being alone a moment: even now, perhaps, she may be coming.

So great was the terror which this idea impressed on the timid Monimia, that Orlando saw there was no time to be lost in settling their more secure meetings. Have you, said he, have you, Monimia, courage enough to make use of this door, to come down into the study to me when we are sure all the house is quiet? You know there is a passage to that end of the house, without crossing either of the great courts or any of the apartments, by going through the old chapel, and nobody can hear you. I only propose this, because I suppose you are afraid of letting me come up here.

Oh! either is very wrong, replied she, and I shall be sadly blamed.

Well, then, Monimia, I am deceived, cruelly deceived. I did believe that you had some regard for me, and I protest to Heaven that I mean nothing but the purest friendship towards you. I want you to read, which I know you have now no opportunity

of doing. I would find proper books for you; for you may one day have occasion for more knowledge than you can acquire in the way in which you now live. Perhaps clandestine meetings might not be right in any other case; but, persecuted as you are, Monimia, we must meet clandestinely or not meet at all. Alas! my dear friend, it may not be long that I may be here to ask this favour of you, or to request you to oblige me for your own good. My father is considering how to settle me in life.

To settle you! said Monimia, faintly.

Yes—I mean, to put me into some profession in the world; and whatever it is, it will of course carry me quite away from hence. As soon as it is determined upon, therefore, Monimia, I shall go—and perhaps we shall never meet again: yet you now refuse to grant me the only happiness that possibly my destiny will ever suffer me to taste—I mean that of being of some little service to you. What harm can there really be, Monimia, in what I request? Have we not lived from children together, like brother and sister? and why should we give up the sweet and innocent pleasure of loving each other, because your aunt is of a temper so detestably severe and suspicious?

Indeed I know not, said Monimia, whose tears now streamed down her cheeks; but I know, Orlando, that I cannot refuse what you ask; for, indeed, I do not believe you would desire me to act wrong.

No, I would die first.

Tell me then, what would you have me do? I tremble so that I am really ready to sink, lest my aunt should come: tell me, dear Orlando, what would you have me do?

Replace your bed as soon as I am gone, and I will take care that no signs shall remain below of

the discovery I have made. As soon as the family are all in bed, and you are sure your aunt is gone for the night, I will come up and fetch you into the study; where, whenever I am here, we can read for an hour or two every night: tell me, Monimia, do you agree to this?

I do, replied she; and now, dear Orlando, go; it will soon be tea-time, my aunt will come to call me.

You will be ready then to-night, Monimia.

To-night?

Yes; for why should we lose an hour, when perhaps so few are left me? When I am gone to some distant part of the world, you may be sorry for me, Monimia, and repent that when we could see each other you refused.

The idea of his going, perhaps for ever, was insupportable, and the timid doubts of Monimia vanished before it. She thought at that moment, that to pass one hour with him were well worth any risk—even though her aunt should discover and kill her. She hesitated therefore no longer, but promised to be ready in the evening, and to listen for his signal. Having thus gained his point, Orlando no longer refused to quit her, but returned by his propitious staircase; and replacing the boards, at its entrance below, as nearly as possible as he found them, he went out unseen by any body; and going back to the road which led through the park, he walked hastily across that part of it that was immediately before the windows of the apartment where Mrs. Rayland sat; and then went into the house, and sent up, as was his custom, to know if he might be admitted. She ordered him to be shewn up, and received him with pleasure; for she just then was in a very ill humour, and wanted somebody in whom she could find a

patient listener, while she related the cause of it, and declaimed against the persons who had occasioned it—which was thus :

The estates in this country were very large, and that possessed by the house of Rayland yielded in extent to none, but was equal to that of its nearest neighbour, a nobleman, who owned a great extent of country which immediately adjoined to the manors and farms of Mrs. Rayland, and on which there was also a fine old house, situated in the midst of the domain, at the distance of about five miles from Rayland Hall ; the estates divided by a river, which was the joint property of both.

Lord Carloraine, the last possessor of this property, was a man very far advanced in life. Many years had passed since the world in which he had lived had disappeared ; and being no longer able or desirous to take part in what was passing about a court, to him wholly uninteresting, and being a widower without children, he had retired above thirty years before to his paternal seat ; where he lived in splendid uniformity, receiving only the nobility of the county and the baronets (whom he considered as forming an order that made a very proper barrier between the peerage and the squirality), with all the massive dignity and magnificent dulness that their fathers and grandfathers had been entertained with since the beginning of the century. Filled with high ideas of the consequence of ancient blood, he suffered no consideration to interfere with his respect for all who had that advantage to boast ; while, for the upstart rich men of the present day, he felt the most ineffable contempt ; and while such were, in neighbouring counties, seen to figure away on recently acquired fortunes, Lord Carloraine used to pique himself upon the inviolability of that part of the world where he lived—and say, that

very fortunately for the morals and manners of the country, it had not been chosen by nabobs and contractors for the display of their wealth and taste. And that none such might gain any footing in the neighbourhood, he purchased every farm that was to be sold; and contrived to be so much of a despot himself, that those who were only beginning to be great, shunned his established greatness as inimical to their own.

Mrs. Rayland perfectly agreed with him in these sentiments; and had the most profound respect for a nobleman, who acknowledged, proud as he was of his own family, that it had no other superiority over that of Rayland, than in possessing an higher title. He had been, though a much younger man, acquainted with the late Sir Hildebrand; and whenever Mrs. Rayland and Lord Carloraine met, which they did in cumbrous state twice or thrice a year, their whole conversation consisted of eulogiums on the days that were passed, in expressing their dislike of all that was now acting in a degenerate world, and their contempt of the actors.

But the winter preceding the period of which this history is relating the events, had carried off this ancient and noble friend at the age of ninety-six, to the regret of nobody so much as of Mrs. Rayland. His estate fell to the grandson of his only sister, a man of three-and-twenty, who was as completely the nobleman of the present day, as his uncle had been the representative of those who lived in the reign of George the First. He cared nothing for the ancient honours of his family; and would not have passed a fortnight in the gloomy solitude of his uncle's castle, to have been master of six times its revenue. His paternal property and parliamentary interest lay in a northern county; and therefore, as ready money was a greater ob-

ject to him than land in another part of England, he offered the estate of Lord Carloraine to sale, as soon as it came into his possession; and in a few months it was bought by the son of a rich merchant—a young man lately of age, of the name of Stockton; whose father having had very lucrative contracts in that war which terminated in 1763, had left his son a minor with a fortune, which at the end of a ten years minority amounted to little short of half a million.

The purchase of Carloraine Castle by such a man had given Mrs. Rayland inexpressible concern and mortification, which every circumstance that came to her knowledge had contributed to increase. She had already heard enough to foresee all the inconveniencies of this exchange of neighbours; on which she dwelt continually, yet seemed to take strange pains to irritate her own uneasiness by daily inquiries into the alterations and proceedings of Mr. Stockton; who, even before the purchase was generally known to be completed, had begun, under the auspices of modern taste, to new-model every thing. He came down to Carloraine Castle twice or thrice a week, every time with a new set of company; almost every one of his visitors was willing to assist him in his plan of improvements, and he listened to them all—so that what was built up to-day, was pulled down to-morrow. All the workmen, such as bricklayers, &c. &c. in the neighbourhood, for many miles, were engaged to work at the Castle; and the delicacies which used to be supplied by the neighbouring country, and in which Mrs. Rayland had usually a preference, were now offered first to his honour, 'Squire Stockton:—and his honour's servants, to whom the regulation of his house was entrusted, were so willing to do credit to their master's large fortune, that they gave London

prices for every thing: the vicinity of affluent luxury was thus severely felt by those to whom it was of much more real consequence than to Mrs. Rayland.

To her, however, this circumstance was particularly grating. She complained bitterly to every body she saw, that poultry, if she had by any accident occasion to buy it, was doubled in price; that the prime sea fish was carried to the Castle; and more money demanded for the refuse than she was accustomed to give for the finest. But with the beginning of September more aggravating offences began also. An army of sportsmen came down to the Castle, who had no respect for the hitherto inviolate manors, nor for the preserved grounds around Rayland Hall, which not even the game-keepers ever alarmed with an hostile sound. Her park—even her park, where no profane foot had ever been suffered to enter, was now invaded; and on the second of September, the day of which the occurrences have been here related; five young men and two servants with a whole kennel of pointers, had crossed the park, and killed three brace of partridges within its enclosure, laughing at the threats, and threatening in their turns the keepers, who had attempted to oppose them.

No injury or affront that could be devised could have made so deep an impression on Mrs. Rayland's mind, as such a trespass. She was yet in the first paroxysm of her displeasure, though the occasion of it happened early in the morning, when Orlando was admitted; whose mind, attuned to the harmonizing hope of being indulged with the frequent sight of Monimia, was but little in unison with the petulant and querulous complaints of Mrs. Rayland; while she for above an hour held forth with unwearied invective against the new inhabitant of

Carloraïne. These, cried she, these are modern gentlemen!—Gentlemen! a disgrace to the name!—City apprentices, that used to live soberly at their shops, are turned sportsmen, forsooth, and have the impudence to call themselves gentlemen. I hear, and I suppose 'tis true enough, that Mr. Philip Somerive thinks proper to be acquainted with this mushroom fellow—and to be one of his party!—Pray, child, can you tell me—is it true?

I believe, madam, my brother has some acquaintance, but I fancy only a slight acquaintance, with Mr. Stockton.

Oh! I have very little curiosity—I dare say he is one of the set, and it is very fit he should. Birds of a feather, you know, flock together. But this I assure you, Mr. Orlando—take this from me—that if you should ever think proper to know that person, that Stockton, your visits here will from that time be dispensed with.

Orlando, conscious that he had never exchanged a word with any inhabitant or visitant of Carloraïne, and conscious too that all his wishes were centred in what the Hall contained, assured Mrs. Rayland with equal warmth and sincerity, that he never had, nor ever would have, any connexion with the people who assembled there. So far from my wishing to hold with such people any friendly converse, I shall hardly be able to refrain from remonstrating with them on their very improper and unhandsome manner of acting towards you, madam; and if I meet them on your grounds, I shall, unless you forbid me, very freely tell them my opinion of their conduct.

Mrs. Rayland had never in her life been so pleased with Orlando as she was at that moment. The readiness with which he entered into her injuries, and the spirit with which he undertook to

check the aggressors, placed him higher in her favour than he had ever yet been; but her way of testifying this her satisfaction, consisted in what of all others was at this moment the most mortifying; for she invited him to stay to supper in her apartment, which was a favour she hardly did him twice a year. Orlando, wretched as it made him, could not make any excuse to escape; and it was near an hour later than usual, before Mrs. Rayland, retiring, dismissed Orlando to watch for the silence of the house, which was a signal for his going to the beloved turret.

CHAPTER V.

THE clock in the servants' hall struck twelve, and was answered by that in the north gallery. With yet deeper tone the hour was re-echoed from the great clock in the cupola over the stables; when Orlando, listening a moment to hear if all was quiet, proceeded through an arched passage which led from the library to the chapel, and then through the chapel itself, whose principal entrance was from a porch which opened to a sort of triangular court on the back of the house next the park. He had previously unbarred the chapel door, which was slightly secured by an iron rod: the lock had long since been rusted by time, and the key lost; for, since the death of Sir Hildebrand, who was buried with his ancestors in the chancel, the ladies his daughters had found themselves too much affected to enter the chapel (which was also the church of the small parish of Rayland), and had removed the parochial service to that of the next parish, within a mile: and as both belonged to them, the livings

were united, and the people of either were content to say their prayers wherever their ladies chose to appoint.

Orlando, till he found it opened his way to Monimia, without going through or near any inhabited part of the house, had never explored the chapel; but the night before that on which the experiment was to be made, he had taken care to see that in his passage through it he had no impediment to fear; for of those superstition might have raised to deter a weaker mind, or one engaged in a less animating cause, he was insensible.

He now, having convinced himself that all the family were retired, walked softly through the aisle; and having without any difficulty opened the door of the porch, that adjoined the pavement round the east or back front, he stepped with light feet along it, entered the lower room of the turret which was nearly opposite, and ascended, still as silently as he could, the narrow staircase.

Monimia! Monimia! cried he in a half whisper, Monimia, are you ready? I am, replied a low and tremulous voice. Remove the hangings, then, said Orlando. Slowly the faltering hands of the trembling girl removed them. Orlando eagerly received her as she came through the door-way. Are you here at last? cried he vehemently. Shall I be at liberty at last to see you? But how cold you are! how you tremble! Ah! Mr. Orlando, answered Monimia, half shrinking from him, ah! I am so certain that all this is wrong, I so dread a discovery, that it is impossible to conquer my terrors: besides, I have recollected that one of the windows of my aunt's closet up stairs looks this way. If she should be in it, if she should see us!—

How can she be in it without a light? She hardly sits there in the dark for her amusement. You

know it is impossible she can have any suspicion; yet you torment yourself, and destroy all my happiness by your timidity. Ah, Monimia! you are cruel to me.—I would not be cruel to you for a thousand worlds, Orlando, you know I would not. But, if I were to die, I cannot conquer my terrors. I tremble too with cold as well as with fright; for I have waited so long past my hour of going to bed, that I am half frozen.

And yet you are not glad to see me, Monimia, when at last I am come.

Indeed I am glad, Orlando; but hush! hark, surely I heard a noise. Listen a moment for Heaven's sake, before we go down.

It is nothing, said Orlando, after a pause, it is nothing, upon my soul, but the wind that rushes up the narrow staircase to the top of the tower.

Speak low, however, replied Monimia, as she gave him her cold tremulous hand to lead her slowly down the ruined steps; speak very low; or rather let us be quite silent, for you remember what an echo there is in the court.

They then proceeded silently along the flagstones that surrounded the court opening on one side to the park, and entered the porch of the chapel; where when Monimia arrived, she seemed so near fainting, that, as they were now sheltered from all observation, Orlando entreated her to sit down on one of the thick old worm-eaten wooden benches that were fixed on either side.

Unable to support herself, Orlando made her lean against him, as endeavouring to re-assure her, he besought her to conquer an alarm, for which, said he, Monimia, I cannot account. What do you fear, my sweet friend? Do you already repent having entrusted yourself with me?

Oh! no indeed, sighed Monimia, but the chapel!—What of the chapel? cried Orlando impatiently.—It is haunted, you know, every night, by the spirit of one of the Lady Raylands, who I know not how long ago died for love, and whose ghost now sits every night in the chancel, and sometimes walks round the house, and particularly along the galleries, at midnight, groaning and lamenting her fate.

Orlando, laughing at her simplicity, cried, And who, my dear Monimia, who has violated thy natural good sense by teaching thee these ridiculous stories? Believe me, none of the Lady Raylands, as you called them, ever died for love; indeed I never heard that any of them ever were in love but my grandmother, who saved herself the absurdity of dying, by marrying the man she liked, in despite of the opposing pride of her family; and as she was very happy, and never repented her disobedience, I do not believe her spirit walks: or if it should, Monimia, if it were possible that it should, could you not face a ghost with me for your protector?

Any living creature I should not fear, Orlando, if you were with me; but there is something so dreadful in the idea of a spirit!

This is not a place, said Orlando with quickness, this is not a place to argue with your prejudices, Monimia, for you seem half dead with cold; but come, I beseech you, into the library, where there is a fire, and trust to my arm to defend you from all supernatural beings at least, on the way.

He then drew her arm within his, and pushed open the door of the chapel. When Monimia felt the cold damp that environed her as he shut it after them, and found herself in such a place, without any other light than what was afforded by

two gothic windows half blocked with stone work, and almost all the rest by stained glass, at midnight, in a night of September, she again shuddered and shrunk back: but Orlando again encouraging her, and ridiculing her fears, she moved on, and passing the stone passage, he at length seated her safely by the study fire, which he now replenished with wood. As she was still pale and trembling, he brought her a glass of wine (of which Mrs. Rayland allowed him whatever he chose), which he insisted on her drinking, and then, seating himself by her, inquired with a gay smile, how she did after her encounter with the lady who died for love?

You think me ridiculous, Orlando, and perhaps I am so; but my aunt has often told me, that ghosts always appeared to people who were doing wrong, to reproach them; and, alas! Orlando, I am too sensible that I am not doing right.

Curse on her prudish falsehood! cried the impetuous Orlando. If ghosts, as you call them, were always on the watch to persecute evil doers, I believe from my soul that *she* would have been beset by those of all the Raylands that are packed together in the chancel.

Such was the awe of her aunt in which Monimia had been brought up, that the little respect and vehement manner in which Orlando spoke of her, had in it additional terror. She did not speak; she was not able; but the tears which had till then trembled in her eyes now stole down her cheeks. Orlando was tempted to kiss them away before they reached her bosom; but he remembered that she was wholly in his power, and that he owed her more respect than it would have been necessary to have shewn even in public.

Let us talk no more of your old aunt, re-assumed

Orlando; but tell me, Monimia, all that has happened in these long, long months of absence.

Happened, Mr. Orlando! repeated Monimia.

Nay, interrupted he, let me not be *Mr. Orlando*, my lovely friend, but call me Orlando, and try to fancy me your brother. Tell me, Monimia, how have you passed your time since I was allowed to see you last? What an age it is ago! Have you practised your writing, Monimia, and has Lennard allowed you the use of any books?

A few I got at by the assistance of Betty Richards, who has the key of this room to clean it when you are absent, Orlando; but if my aunt had found it out, she would never have forgiven either of us. I was forced therefore to hide the books she took out for me with the greatest care, and to read only by snatches. And as to writing, I have done a little of it because you desired me; but it has been very difficult; for my aunt Lennard never would allow me to have pens and ink; and Betty Richards has given me these too by stealth, when she was able to procure them, as if they were for herself, of Mr. Pattenson the butler, who was always very kind to her about such things, till a week or two ago; when he was so cross at her asking for more paper, that we thought it better to let alone applying to him again for some time.

The old thief was jealous, I suppose, answered Orlando. I believe he was, said Monimia, for he has a liking, I fancy, to Betty, though to be sure he is old enough to be her father.

Orlando was now struck with an apprehension which had never before occurred to him: he feared that, in the gratitude of her unadulterated heart for the kindness she received from this Betty Richards, she might betray to her the secret of their nocturnal visits: and he knew that the love of

gossiping, the love of finery, the love of nice morsels which the butler had it in his power to give, or even the love of shewing she was entrusted with a secret, were any of them sufficient to overset all the fidelity which this girl (the under house-maid) might either feel or profess to feel for Monimia.

Against this therefore it was necessary to put her on her guard; which Orlando endeavoured to do in the most impressive manner possible, and even urged her with warmth to give him her solemn promise that she never would entrust this servant with any secret, or mention to her his name on any account whatever.

Indeed, Orlando, replied Monimia, when he had finished this warm exhortation, indeed you need not be uneasy or anxious about it; for there is one reason that, if I had no other, would never permit me to tell this poor girl that I meet you unknown to my aunt.

And what is that?

It is, that Betty is, like myself, a very friendless orphan, a poor girl that my aunt has taken from the parish; and as I know very well that all our meetings will one day or other be discovered, it would entirely ruin her, and occasion the loss of her place and her character, if Betty were supposed to know any thing about it; therefore you may be assured, Orlando, that she never shall: for whatever misery it may be my fate to suffer myself, I shall not so much mind, as I should being the cause of ruining and injuring another person, especially a friendless girl, who has always been as kind to me as her situation allowed her to be.

Enchanted with her native rectitude of heart and generosity of spirit, Orlando rapturously exclaimed, Charming girl! how every sentence you utter, every sentiment of your pure and innocent mind

delight me! No, Monimia, I am very sure that such a security as you have given me is of equal force, perhaps superior as it ought to be, even to your faith to me—superior, Monimia, to the wish (which I am sure you have, to spare me any sort of unhappiness. The fine eyes of Monimia were swimming in tears, as, tenderly pressing her hand between his, Orlando said this. You do me justice, said she in a faltering voice, and I thank you. I do not know, Orlando, why I should be ashamed to say that I love you better than any body else in the world; for indeed who is there in it that I have to love? If you were gone, it would be all a desert to me; for though I hope I am grateful, and not undutiful to my aunt Lennard, I find I do not love her as I love you. But indeed I do believe she would not have me feel affection for any body; for she is always telling me, that it is the most disgraceful and odious thing imaginable, for a young woman, dependant as I am, to think about any person, man, woman, or child; and that, if I would not be an undone and disgraced creature, I must mind nothing but praying to God, which I hope I never neglected, and learning to earn my bread by my hands. And then she tells me continually how much I owe her for taking me into her lady's family, and what a wicked wretch I should be if I were ungrateful.

Don't tell me any more about your aunt, do not, I entreat you, cried Orlando impatiently. I should be sorry to say any thing that should stain, even with the most remote suspicion of ingratitude, that unadulterated mind. But—I cannot—no, it is impossible to resist saying, that, like all other usurped authority, the power of your aunt is maintained by unjust means, and supported by prejudices, which if once looked at by the eye of reason

would fall, so slender is the hold of tyranny, my Monimia!

Dear Orlando, said Monimia smiling through her tears, you talk what is by me very little understood. No! replied he, she has taken care to fetter you in as much ignorance as possible; but your mind rises above the obscurity with which she would surround it. She has however brought in supernatural aid; and, fearful of not being able to keep you in sufficient awe by her terrific self, she has called forth all the deceased ladies of the Rayland family, and gentlemen too for aught I know, and beset you with spirits and hobgoblins if you dare to walk about the house.

Ah! Orlando, answered Monimia timidly, and throwing round the room a half fearful glance, I do believe you injure my aunt Lennard in that notion; for I am almost sure she believes what she tells me.

Pooh! replied he, she has too much sense. A good bottle of Barbadoes water, or ratafia, would call your pious aunt in the darkest night, and just as the clock strikes twelve, into the very chancel of the chapel itself, or even into the vaults under it.

Do not laugh at such things, Orlando; do not, pray; unless you are very sure they are all foolish and superstitious fancies. I assure you, Orlando, that having been used to walk about this great old rambling house by myself, at all times of the day, and sometimes, when you have not been here, late of a night, I cannot have been much used to indulge fear; for, frightened or not frightened, I must have gone if my lady or my aunt had ordered me. But though I am not the least afraid, or used not to be afraid, when I was assured in my own heart that I had never done or intended any harm, yet I have seen and heard——

Nay then, Monimia, tell me what you have seen

and heard, cried he, fixing his eyes eagerly on her face, and pulling his chair nearer to hers, and let us draw round the fire and have a discourse upon apparitions.

You will laugh at me, Orlando, said she, looking smilingly and yet grave; but what I have to tell you is true nevertheless.

Tell it then, Monimia—If any proofs have power to make me a convert, they must be yours.

Well then, Orlando, I assure you it is no fancy, but absolutely true, that some time last February, at which time my aunt was very ill by the fall she had down stairs, she used to intrust me with the keys, and to send me all about the house for things she wanted. You know that when Mr. Pattenson is out, she always insists upon having the keys of the great cellars, as well as all the rest, left with her; and that, after quarrelling some years about it, she has got the better; and, though he will not give her his keys, has my lady's leave to have keys of her own, which she always takes particular pleasure in using when he is out (which he happened to be that night at the christening of Mr. Butterworth's child), whether she really wants the things she sends for or no. It was a terrible stormy night, and very dark, when my aunt, who was but just got well enough to sit in my lady's room, took it into her head, after every body was gone to bed, but Betty Richards and I, that she wanted some hot shrub and water. She sent me to look for shrub in her closet, where I believe she knew there was none; and when I came back to say there was none, she bade me go into the east wing-cellar, which goes, you know, under the house, towards this end of it, and fetch half a dozen bottles; and she gave me the key and a basket. I stood trembling with fear; for had I been sure of being killed even at

that moment, I am very certain I could not have determined to venture alone.

What is the foolish girl afraid of? said my aunt. Of going alone so far, Ma'am, said I, at this time of night.

And is not *this* time of night, said my aunt angrily, or is not *any* time of night, or any time of day, the same thing to *you*? Idiot!—and do you dare to affect any choice, how and when you shall obey my commands?

Oh! no indeed, my dear, dear aunt, answered I trembling, no indeed; but remember—remember, before you are so angry with me, that an hundred and an hundred times you have told me, that all the galleries and passages about this house are haunted; and that you have yourself seen strange sights and heard frightful noises, though you never would tell me what they were: how shall I, my dear aunt, encounter that which has terrified you?—Pray, forgive me! or, if you will not, inflict upon me any punishment you please: only be assured, my dear, dear aunt, that, terrible as your anger is to your poor girl, she had rather endure it than go into those passages and vaults alone.

Why thou art a driveller, a perfect idiot, answered Mrs. Lennard, and art fit only for a cap and bells, clean straw, and a whirligig.—Apparitions, you stupid fool! But tell me, will you go for what I want, if this other moppet, who looks as white as a cheese-curd, will go with you?

The offer of going with Betsy Richards had somehow quite a charm with it, compared with the terrors of going alone; and therefore I readily agreed to the proposal, flattering myself that Betsy would refuse, and that I should so be excused.

But poor Betsy had, like myself, a most terrible awe of my aunt, whom ever since she could remem-

ber she had been taught to fear. To be sure I will go, said poor Betsy; to be certain, I will go, if, madam, she desires it; though for certain——

None of your ifs, you silly baggage! but here, take the candle; and do you, you nonsensical ninnyhammer, take the basket, and fetch instantly what I want. The old shrub stands in a bin, quite at the lower end of the farthest arched vault, next the chapel wing: put your hands elbow deep in the saw-dust, and you will feel it; bring half a dozen bottles, and mind you take care of your candle—for the whole family of Rayland are piled up in their velvet coffins within two or three feet of you; and it would be a very unhandsome thing to set their old dry bones in a blaze on their own premises.

Neither Betsy nor I dared answer; for, as my aunt spoke these last words, she waved her hands for us to go. After we were out of hearing, I, who held Betsy fast by the arm, expressed my apprehension at what had passed. I did this more particularly, because I had never heard my aunt talk so freely before. Betsy, frightened as she was at the thought of the expedition we were undertaking, could not help tittering at the surprise I expressed, and said, Lord! why, the old woman has been sitting so long after supper with madam, that she has been taking care to keep the cold out of her stomach:—meaning that Mrs. Lennard had been drinking too much, which till then I had never any notion of. I am sure, replied I to my trembling companion, as we went down the cellar stairs, and were frightened by the echo of our feet, I am sure, Betsy, we want something to keep the cold of fear out of *ours*.—Do I tremble as much as you do, and do I look as pale? Oh! hush, said she, hush! I shall drop if I hear a voice—it sounds so among

these hollow doors. Her teeth chattered in her head, and she held the candle in her hand so unsteadily that I was afraid it would have gone out. In this manner we proceeded to the bottom of the stairs, which you know are very long, and had got half a dozen paces along the passage, which is, you may remember, very high and narrow and long, when we heard a loud rushing noise at the other end of it. Something came sweep along; but Betsy let fall the candle, and fell herself against the wall, where I endeavoured in vain to support her. She sunk quite down; and, as I stooped to assist her, somebody certainly brushed by me. I know not what I heard afterwards, for fear deprived me of my senses. This, however, lasted but a moment; for, my recollection returning, I was sensible that whatever there was to hurt us, we should do more wisely to endeavour to return back to my aunt's room than to remain in that dismal place. With great difficulty, by rubbing her hands within mine, and reasoning with her as soon as she seemed able to hear it, I prevailed upon Betsy Richards to try to walk. The apprehension that this frightful apparition might return (which she whispered me had the figure of a tall man in a white or light-coloured gown), had more effect upon her than any thing I could say; and she consented to try to return up the stairs. It was so dark, however, that we were obliged to feel our way with our hands; and I own I every moment expected to put them against the frightful figure which my companion had seen.

But you were wrong there, said the incredulous Orlando; for if it were a ghost, Monimia, you know a ghost is only air, and of course you could not have touched it.—But tell me how your aunt received you.

It was, I am sure, almost half an hour before we

got back, more dead than alive, to the oak parlour. She asked us very impatiently, what we had been so long about? but neither of us was presently able to answer. She saw how it was by our faces, but very sharply bade us tell her that moment what was the matter. Betsy had then more courage than I had; for I was more afraid of my aunt, if possible, than of the ghost, and so she related as well as she could all she saw or fancied she saw. Mrs. Lennard was extremely angry with us both, and scolded us for a quarter of an hour; which I thought a little unreasonable towards me, since she was angry with me now for being afraid of the very things she had been teaching me to fear. However, as there was no chance of persuading us to make another attempt that night, and she was disabled by lameness from going herself, she was forced to be content with some other of the cordials she had in her closet; and afterwards she rather wished to have the story hushed up and forgotten, for somehow or other that key of the cellar was never found after that night. The basket and the candle remained where they were dropped; yet the key, which was a very great heavy key, and which I had in my hand, was gone; and Mr. Patenson would have made such a racket about it, that my aunt, as she had another, let the story drop, and contrived an excuse a week or two afterwards, when she was able to get about herself, to have the lock changed.

And this is all the reason you have, my Monimia, from your own observation, to believe in spirits? said Orlando.

All! replied she, and is it not then enough?

Not quite, I fear, to convince the scepticism of the present day. I do not, however, wish to prejudice your mind on the other side, by bringing

arguments against the possibility of their existence; but I will give your reason an opportunity of deciding for itself. Against to-morrow night, when we shall meet again, I will look out and mark for you all those stories of supernatural appearances that are related by the most reasonable people, and are the best authenticated. You shall fairly inquire whether any of those visits of the dead were ever found to be of any use to the living. We are told that they have been seen (as is reported of that vision which Clarendon tells of), to warn the persons to whom they appeared, or some others to whom they were to repeat their mission, of impending danger. But the danger, however foretold, has never been avoided; and shall we therefore believe, that an all-wise and all-powerful Being shall suffer a general law of nature to be so uselessly violated, and shall make the dead restless, only to terrify the living?

Oh! but in cases of murder you know what spectres have appeared!

Yes, Monimia, to the conscience of the guilty; but even that is not always ready to raise hideous shadows to persecute the sanguinary monsters who are stained with crimes; for if it were, Monimia, I am afraid not one of our kings or heroes could have slept in their beds.

And yet, said Monimia shuddering, and yet, Orlando, you sometimes talk of being a soldier!

Ah! my sweet friend, replied Orlando, I have no choice, but must be what they would have me. Yet believe me, Monimia, if I had a choice, it would be to pass all my life in some quiet retirement with you. We should not want either of us to be very rich, for we should certainly be very happy.

To this poor Monimia felt herself quite unable to answer; but sighing deeply, from the fear that

it could never be, she tried to turn the discourse :
Is it not very late, Orlando, said she, and had I
not better go?

If you insist upon going yet, I shall be half
tempted to let you travel through the chapel alone,
replied he smiling, and, to revenge myself for
your desertion, expose you to meet the tall man in
the white dress. He then led the conversation to
other subjects, gave her some books he had selected
for her reading, and some materials for writing ;
and, after insisting upon her promise to meet him
the next night, he consented that she should return
to her turret. As, with his arm round her waist,
he conducted her through the chapel, and still
found her tremble, he gently reproached her with it.
Ah! said she, Orlando, you are surely unreasonable,
if you expect me to be as courageous as you are !
Not at all, answered he ; for you may derive your
confidence from the same source, and say, as I do,
I fear no evil angel, and have offended no good one.

Monimia promised to do all she could towards
conquering her apprehensions. They were by this
time arrived at the door of her chamber, where
tenderly kissing her hand, he again bade her good
night, or rather good morning, for it was near
three o'clock ; and waiting till he heard the door
safely concealed by her bed, and hearing that all
was secure, he turned to his own room, and went to
rest in spirits disposed to indulge delicious dreams
of happiness to come.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER and another evening Orlando attended
at the turret, and the apprehensions of Monimia

decreased in proportion as her reason, aided by her confidence in him, taught her that there was in reality little to fear from the interposition of supernatural agency. The dread of being discovered by people in the house, however, still interrupted the hours which passed with imperceptible rapidity while they were together. This might happen a thousand ways, which Monimia was ingenious in finding out; while Orlando was sometimes successful, and sometimes failed, in ridiculing those apprehensions, which he could not always help sharing.

The mind of the innocent Monimia had been till now like that of Miranda in her desert island. To her, the world that was past, and that which was now passing, was alike unknown; and all the impressions that her infant understanding had received, tended only to confirm the artificial influence which her aunt endeavoured to establish over her imagination. Her poverty, her dependence, the necessity of her earning a subsistence by daily labour, had been the only lessons she had been taught; and the only hope held out to her, that of passing through life in an obscure service.

But she had learned now that abject and poor as she was, she was an object of affection to Orlando, who seemed in her eyes the representation of divinity. The reading he had directed her to pursue, had assisted in teaching her some degree of self-value. She found that to be poor was not disgraceful in the eye of Heaven, or in the eyes of the good upon earth; and that the great Teacher of that religion which she had been bid to profess, though very little instructed in it, was himself poor, and the advocate and friend of poverty. In addition to all this knowledge, so suddenly acquired, she had lately made another discovery. Her aunt had always told

her that she was a very plain girl, had a bad person, and was barely fit to be seen ; but since the marriage of the servant who had lived at the Hall during the infancy of Monimia, Betty Richards, the under house-maid, had been ordered to do the little that Monimia was allowed to have done in her room. Mrs. Lennard had taken her from the parish officers as an apprentice ; and having long seen her only in her coarse gown and nailed shoes, and observed in her manner only a great deal of rustic simplicity, had not the least idea that under that semblance she concealed the cunning and the vanity of a country coquette ; and that the first week she passed in Mrs. Rayland's family had called forth these latent qualities. She was a ruddy, shewy girl, with a large but rather a good figure ; and her face was no sooner washed, and her hair combed over a roll, than she became an object which attracted the attention of the great Mr. Pattenson himself ; who, proceeding in the usual way by which he had won the favour of so many of the subaltern nymphs in Mrs. Rayland's kitchen, began to make her many presents, and to talk of her beauty ; and as she could not forbear repeating all these extravagant expressions of his admiration, Monimia could as little help reflecting, though she was somehow humbled as she made the comparison, that if Betty was so handsome, she could not herself be so ugly as her aunt had always represented her. The fineries which her new friend received, Monimia beheld without any wish to enjoy such herself ; though on Betty, a poor girl bred in a work-house, they had a most intoxicating effect. They were given under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, which was tolerably well observed towards the rest of the house ; and the finery, which at first consisted only of beads and ribbons, was reserved for Sunday afternoons,

and put on at a friend's cottage near a distant church. But it was not in female nature to conceal these acquisitions from Monimia; and it was in her drawers that they were often deposited, when there was reason to apprehend that the little deal box, which had till lately been amply sufficient for the check apron and linsey-woolsey gown of Betty, might not safely conceal the ribbands "colour of emperors' eyes," the flowered shawls, the bugle necklaces, and caps with new edging to them, which she now possessed.

Sometimes, when Betty obtained leave to go out, and thought that, Mrs. Lennard being engaged with her lady, and the other servants gone different ways, she should escape unnoticed across the park, she persuaded Monimia, who knew not how to refuse her any thing, to let her dress at her little glass; and there the progress of rural coquetry had full power to display itself. She tried on her various topknots, disposed her hair in a thousand fanciful ways, and called to Monimia for her opinion, which of them was most becoming; appealing for the authority of these variations to a certain pocket-book, presented her also from the same quarter, which represented in one of its leaves "six young ladies in the most fashionable head-dresses for 1776."

Monimia, with all her ingenuous simplicity, had sense enough to smile at the ridiculous vanity of the girl; and to know, that her accepting all this finery from the old butler was quite wrong. But she felt also that to reprove her for it would look like envy, and that to remonstrate would probably be vain. She contented herself therefore with keeping as much out of her confidence as she could: and had reasons enough of her own, which were continually strengthened by the exhortations of Or-

lands, for keeping her from being a too frequent visitor in her room.

But the remarks she made upon all this, and upon numberless circumstances in the house which Betty related to her, no longer left her in her original ignorance. In a great house there are among the servants as many cabals, and as many schemes, as among the leaders of a great nation; and few exhibited a greater variety of interests than did the family of Mrs. Rayland. Mrs. Lennard at once hated, feared, and courted Pattenson, who having been taken a boy from the plough, had been gradually promoted till he became the favourite footman of the elder Mrs. Rayland, who, on the death of an old man who had long occupied that post, made him butler; where he was supposed to have accumulated in the course of five-and-twenty years a great deal of money, was known to have several sums out at interest, and had bought two or three small farms in the county, with the approbation of his lady, whose favour had never once failed him, though various attempts had been made to injure him in her opinion by complaints of his amours. Though he was a perfect Turk in morals, and though in his advanced life he rather indulged than corrected this propensity to libertinism, he had hitherto contrived to escape his lady's wrath; and indeed knew that nobody but Mrs. Lennard or the old coachman had, among the domestics, interest enough to shake her good opinion of him; and of both the one and the other, though aware that neither of them bore him any good will, he was tolerably secure.

How the prudent and guarded Mrs. Lennard came to be in his power was never fully understood; but in his power she certainly felt herself: for though they were in habits of frequent squabbling about trifles, which indeed with the lady seem-

ed necessary to break the tedious uniformity of her life, yet whenever she found Mr. Pattenson really angry, she, albeit unused to the condescending mood, began to palliate and apologize—and peace was generally made over some nice thing, and some fine old wine, by way of a *petit souper* in Mr. Pattenson's parlour, after Mrs. Rayland was gone to bed. The old coachman, who was the other favourite servant, was always a third in these peace-making meetings. He was a man grown unwieldy from excess of good living, and more than seventy years old; but he possessed an infinite deal of cunning, and knew how to get and how to keep money, with which it was his ambition to portion his two daughters, and to marry them to gentlemen, and his dealings in contraband goods, as Rayland Hall was only eight miles from the coast, his having the management of the great farms in hand, and his concern in buying and selling horses, were together supposed to have rendered this object of ambition an easy attainment. Of deeper sagacity than the other two, he foresaw that the time could not be far distant when Rayland Hall, and all the wealth that belonged to it, must change its possessor. It was a plan of Mrs. Lennard and Pattenson to enjoy and to secure all they could now, and to be well assured of a very considerable legacy hereafter. But old Snelcraft had further hopes; and for that reason, though he had at first opposed as much as he could the reception of Orlando, and since expressed displeasure towards him, he of late had in his head floating visions of the probability there was that, if Orlando came to the estate, he might marry his favourite daughter, Miss Patty Snelcraft, who would have such a fine fortune, and was, as her father believed, the very extract of all beauty. Ridiculous and chimerical as such a project was,

the old man, in the dotage of his purse-proud vanity, believed it not only possible but probable; for, though he knew that Mrs. Rayland would have disinherited her own son for entertaining such an idea for a moment, yet he saw that Mr. Orlando had no pride at all; and he was pretty sure, from the arrangements that he believed were made as to money, that, great as the sum of ready money would perhaps be that Mrs. Rayland might leave behind her, none of it would be suffered to go to Mr. Orlando. Miss Patty Snelcraft was, as this precious plan got more entirely the possession of her father's imagination, taken from a boarding-school at a neighbouring town, and one luckless day brought to church in all the finery which she had there been accustomed to wear. But the effect was very far from that her parents intended, who expected that Madam would have sent for her to the Hall, as she used to do at breaking up, and have commended her beauty and elegance; instead of which, Mrs. Rayland no sooner arrived at home than she sent for Robin, as she still called her old servant, who now was seldom able to mount the box himself, and asked if it was possible that the tawdry thing she had seen with his wife was his daughter? He answered in all humility that it was his eldest daughter, who, as she had now finished her learning, he had taken home from boarding-school.

Finished her learning! exclaimed the old lady; and is that what she has learned, to dress herself out like a stage-player, like a mountebank's doxy? Upon my word, Robin, I am sorry for you. I thought you and your wife had more sense. What! is that a dress for a sober girl, who ought to be a help to her mother, and to take care of her father in his old age?

She does, Ma'am, do both, I'll assure you, answered Robin, terribly stung by this reproof, and is a very good and dutiful child. And as to her fineries, Ma'am, and such like, you are sensible that I'm not myself, no judge of them there things; and my wife I believe thought, that seeing how by your goodness and my long and faithful service we are well to pass, for our condition and circumstances and such like, there would not be no offence whatsumdever in dressing our poor girls, being we have but two, a little dessent and neat, just to shew that one is no beggar after having served in such a good family so many years.

The lady, a little softened by this speech, which was made in almost a crying tone of voice, replied, Well, well, good Robin, I know how to make allowances; but do you and your wife learn for the future to make a more modest use of the means you are blessed with, and never encourage your girls to vanity and extravagance. Here's Mary here, Lennard's niece, whom I gave leave to be in the house (Monimia stood waiting all this time with the chocolate, which the old lady always swallowed as soon as she came in from her devotions), she, I assure you, comes of parents that many people would call genteel; and yet you see, as it has pleased Providence to make her a dependant and a servant, I never suffer her to stick herself out in feathers and flowers like a May-day girl.

The lecture ended, and the old coachman withdrew, extremely discontent that his Patty had been compared to the house-keeper's niece, who was, as he muttered to himself, a mere pauper; and Monimia was not at all flattered by being brought forward as a comparison for Miss Snelcraft, whom the servants, and particularly Betty, had been turning into ridicule for her awkward finery and

airs of consequence—nor did the expression, that she was born of parents whom some people would call genteel, at all sweeten the bitterness of this comparison. Monimia, who had before in the course of the day received a severe mortification from her aunt, in being refused leave to go to church, now, as soon as her service in waiting on Mrs. Rayland with the chocolate was performed, withdrew to her own room, and indulged her tears. At length she recollected that, though all the rest of the world might despise and condemn her, the heart of Orlando was hers; she was secure of his affection; he would repeat it to her at night, when he had promised to fetch her to his room: and these reflections dried her eyes, and dissipated her sorrows: they even lent her force to bear, without betraying her impatience, the intrusion of Betty Richards, who soon after asked leave to come in. Oh, laud! my dear miss, cried she, as soon as she entered the room, how we be shut up in this here old place like two little singing-birds in a cage!—I've been trying to persuade old Jenny to let me take her turn this a'ternoon to go to church, and have promised to give her two turns for one; but the cross old witch says indeed she chooses to go herself—Oh lud lud! I'd give a little finger to go.

And why are you so eager to go to-day, Betty, more than any other afternoon?

Oh gad! replied the girl, for five hundred reasons:—first, because it's so early that I could get away to West Wolverton church with all the ease in the world, and 'tis such a sweet afternoon, and winter will be here now soon; besides that—but you must not tell for an hundred pounds—my good old fat sweetheart brought me home last night the most beautifullest bonnet, such as the millener told him

turning into ridicule for her unkind fancy and

was worn by the tip-top quality in Lonnon—and I die to wear it, and to go to West Wolverton church in it this very afternoon; for at ours, you know, I dares as well jump into the fire as put it on.

But why do your bonnet and your piety conspire to carry you so far just this very evening, Betty, said Monimia smiling, when both East Wolverton, and Bartonwick have an evening church, and are not much more than half as far?

Oh! thereby hangs a tale—What! you han't heard then, I suppose, of all the great doings at West Wolverton?

This was the name of the village in which was situated the house of Mr. Somerive.—Great doings! repeated Monimia, changing colour; no, I have heard of nothing.

Why then you must know, Miss, that Mr. Orlando, who was not here last night—

(Monimia knew it well, for they had agreed two nights before not to meet till the present evening)—

Mr. Orlando, I say, came over about an hour ago, just as my lady came from church, and after walking backwards and forwards in his melancholy fashion, with a book in his hand, upon the broad pavement in the chapel court, which really oft-times rives one's very heart to see him, he went away to his study. For my part, I was sitting in the window up stairs for a moment, for I had just been making up my lady's fire before she came from church—when all of a sudden I saw John Dickman, 'Squire Somerive's groom, come riding up; so down I went to speak to him. He gived me a letter, which I carried in to Orlando, who seemed monstrous surprised at it, as he was but that minute as 'twere come from home; and when I went back to the kitchen, John told me, he was ordered to wait for his

young master—for that Madam Somerive's brother, the London merchant, was come down, with some of his family, sons and daughters, and the gentleman from some part beyond sea, who was to marry the eldest Miss Somerive, for he had got his father's consent; and the wedding was to take place out of hand. And so, added Betty, who had almost talked herself out of breath, and so, as Mr. Phil. is out, gone as he always is upon a visit to they newcomers up at Castle, the 'Squire he ordered John to fetch *our* Orlando out of hand home to entertain all this grand company.

And he went! said Monimia in a faint voice, who had changed colour a dozen times during this narration.

Oh, Lord! yes, to be sure he went, replied Betty; yet somehow he looked to me as if he had rather of stay'd; and hung about for some time, as thof unwilling to go. Lord! sir, said I, as I went to shut up his windows before he lock'd the study door—Lord, how strange it is that you are not like other young men, and never cares nothing for company and such like! He only sighed, a sweet creature!—when I'm sure, if all the grand lords and dukes, and even the King, and the Prince of Wales, and the Archbishop of Osnabig, and all his majesty's court, were to be collected together, there's not one of them to be compared to young 'Squire Orlando—Lord! what would I give to see all these gentlefolks together at West Wolverton church, and that dear sweet Orlando out-shining them all.

And that was the reason, said Monimia in a still fainter voice, that you are satisfied with no church but West Wolverton? But after all, Betty, pray are you sure these ladies and gentlemen will be there?

As sure as five pence—for John Dickman told

me so. Oh! that I could but go!—for Orlando, you know, Miss, who is the sweetest temper'd good-natured sturtevant in all England, would never tell if he saw one ever so smartly drest:—No, egollys! he's more like to give one some trifle or other to help one out, than to blab to get one anger.

Has he ever given you any thing, Betty? said Monimia, in a voice, the tremor of which she could not disguise; for, mingled with numberless other sensations, something like a half-formed jealousy and suspicious apprehension now entered her heart—tell me, Betty, what has he ever given you?

Why, I assure you, replied the girl pertly, not above a month ago neither, after he had been here for almost a fortnight, he called me to him as I was a dusting of them there guns and arrows and what d'yecallums, as hangs over the chimney in that parlour as you goes through to get to his study—And so, says he, Betty, you've a good deal of trouble in cleaning of my room and making my fire, and perhaps your lady may not recollect it; and so may not make you a consideration for it; and therefore, Betty, I beg you'll accept this, and I wish I had it in my power to do better.—And if you'll believe me, Miss, it was a brand new crown, quite new, a crown piece they told me it was. I would have given any thing not to have changed it, but to have laid it up as a keepsake—but there!—I had not money enough without it to buy my new cotton gown, when Alexander Macgill the Scotchman called here; and so away went my poor dear crown, though I had leverer have parted with one of my fingers.

You did right, however, said Monimia coldly; the gown you wanted, and the crown, I dare say, Mr. Orlando meant you should use.

I suppose he did, a dear sweet creature!—Lord a

mercy!—what would I give to have a peep at his sweet face this afternoon! I'll tell you what, Miss, though you cannot go to church, nor I neither, we might ten to one see these gentlefolks ride by, if we could but steal up to the upper park, and so through the little common. 'Tis not much better than three miles, and we might not be miss'd.

No, said Monimia drily, I shall run no such risk indeed of making my aunt angry; and besides, what would Mr. Somerive, or Mr. Orlando, or any other of them think if they saw us there?

Hang their thoughts! replied Betty; what would it signify to us what any body thought, if we pleased ourselves? I'll go and see how the land lays, and if the two old girls have done their dinner, and are set down together to take their afternoon's dose.

Do not come back then, Betty, said Monimia; for I certainly will not go out without leave, and you know it's nonsense to ask it—therefore, if you like it, go; but I assure you I shall not.

Having thus released herself from her importunate visitor, Monimia sat down to consider all she had told her. That Orlando should quit the house without telling her, gave her at first extreme pain; yet a moment's reflection convinced her that, unless he had made a confidante of Betty, of which she now saw all the danger, there was no possible way of his conveying to her intelligence of the sudden summons he had received from his father; for Mrs. Lennard was at home, and had shut herself up in her own room to do twenty little services which she frequently chose to have performed on Sunday mornings. A thousand doubts now arose in the mind of Monimia, whether he would be able to call for her at night; a thousand apprehensions lest the people he was with, particularly his uncle's daughters, whom he had said were very pretty

women, should estrange his thoughts from her, and rob her of his affections. These fears were so acute, that she was trying to drive them from her, when Betty returned, and, finding the door of her room fastened, tapped softly at it, and cried Miss, Miss! who will refuse to go into the park now?

You have not surely got leave!

No, nor I have not asked it; but the old ladies are hard set in to their good things. Madam has had a gouty feel in her stomach all day, she says, and that's always a symptom for a double dose; and as to your aunt, she has been ailing too, and will not flinch her share, you know very well.

Monimia, alarmed at the loud whisper, had opened the door before the end of this speech, and let in her unwelcome companion, who now repeated, that every body was safely bestowed who could interrupt them; and that as it was still very early, they might have a good chance of seeing some of these comers, and above all Orlando, in their evening ride. But Monimia, who was displeased with the familiar way in which the girl named Orlando, and knew that he would object to her walking with her, assumed a virtue when she had it not; and though she believed they might safely go the way she proposed, and return before the hour when it was likely her aunt would want her! though she would have given half the world only for the chance of seeing Orlando at a distance, she positively refused—and had the resolution to see Betty set out by herself, with her new most beautifullest bonnet pinned under her petticoat, which she proposed putting on when she got clear of the house; and then Monimia, forcing her attention from what had the last few hours engaged it, sat down to the sort of lesson which Orlando had last marked for her, and which she had promised to make herself mis-

tress of before she saw him again ;—though, alas ! while she read, the idea of the superior advantages enjoyed by the Miss Woodfords, his cousins, their beauty, and the probability there was that one of them might be intended for him, too frequently distracted her thoughts, and impeded her good intentions.

CHAPTER VII.

THE day had been unusually warm ; but towards evening a thunder-storm came on, and, as it grew later, a tempest of wind, with heavy and continual rain.

Betty, sulky that Monimia refused, and still more sulky that she had got nothing by her long walk, but nearly spoiling all her finery, had not come to Monimia's room any more ; but she received, at the usual hour, the usual summons for tea. She thought both Mrs. Lennard and her aunt uncommonly peevish and tedious, and that the sermon one was reading, while the other fell asleep, was most unreasonably long. At length she was dismissed, and, retiring to her turret, began to listen to the wind that howled in tremendous gusts among the trees, and to the rain falling in torrents, the rushing of which was redoubled by the leaden pipes that from the roof of her turret threw the water in columns on the pavement below. Would Orlando come ? Through such a tempest it were hardly to be wished he should. Having been absent all day, there would be no fire in his room, he would be drenched with rain, and half-dead with cold. Monimia then could not desire he should come ; yet she felt, in despite of her reason, that she should be very un-

happy if he did not ; for though so many causes might combine to detain him, her humble ideas of herself, and the pictures she had made of the beauty and attractions of the Miss Woodfords, added another which rendered her wretched. Alas ! cried she, Orlando among them will be too happy to think of me ; and it is quite ridiculous to suppose that he will quit these ladies, to come through the storm almost five miles to poor Monimia. No, no ! Orlando will not come.

Still however she could not determine to go to bed, at least till the hour was past for which he had made the appointment. At the usual time her aunt, who now frequently omitted to come herself, sent Betty for her candle, and her door was locked as usual, for that was a ceremony which either in person or proxy was always performed. But Monimia now no longer passed the long interval between half after nine o'clock and the hour when Orlando usually called her, in darkness ; for he had furnished her with the means of procuring a light, and with small wax candles. One of these she now lit, and endeavoured to sit down to read—but the violence of the wind, which she fancied every moment increased, and the flashes of lightning which she saw through her narrow casement, to which there was no shutter, distracted her attention ; and she could only sit in miserable anxiety, listening to the various noises which in such a tempestuous night are heard around an old building, and especially such a part of it as she inhabited ; where, around the octagon tower or turret, the wind roared with violence from every point ; while, in the long passages which led from thence to her aunt's apartments, it seemed yet more enraged, from being confined. She now traversed her small room with fearful steps ; now sat down on her bed, near the

door, that she might the more readily hear Orlando if he should come; and now got on a chair, and opened her casement to observe if there seemed any probability of the storm's abating: but still, though the thunder had ceased, the clouds, driven against each other by violent and varying gusts of wind, produced vivid flashes of lightning, which suddenly illuminated the whole park. But Orlando came not, and it was now near an hour past his usual time, Again the poor anxious Monimia, now half despairing of his coming, and trying to persuade herself that she did not wish he should come, traversed her room—again went to her window. Another and another hour passed: amidst the heavy gusts and mournful howlings of the wind, she had counted the clock, that, with a more than usually hollow sound, told twelve, one, two—Orlando certainly did not mean to come—no! it was unreasonable to suppose he would; unreasonable to flatter herself that he would quit a cheerful circle of his relations, to traverse the extensive commons and lanes, and all the park, that lay between West Wolverton and the Hall in such a night, when no person would think of going out but on life and death. Yet, while she thus argued with herself, a few tears involuntarily stole from her eyes; and as she gave up all hopes of his coming, and lay down in her clothes on her bed (for she had not the resolution to undress herself), she sighed deeply, and said to herself: And yet, if it had been me who was expected, I do not believe any storm could have hindered me from trying to see Orlando! and I am sure no company would.—Yet he is quite in the right, I know, and I do not blame him.

She could not, however, fatigued and weary, close her eyes for some time. The clock at length

struck three; and soon after, wearied with watching and anxiety, she fell into unquiet repose.

Suddenly without being conscious how long she had indulged it, she started from her sleep, and fancied she heard the well-known signal: she listened a moment: it was repeated. Trembling with joy, yet equally agitated by fear, she arose and answered it: and removing the impediments that were between them, and again lighting her candle, Orlando stepped into the room.

His clothes and his hair were streaming with water, and he said hastily, as he came through the hangings, You had given me over, my Monimia, had you not?—Long ago, replied she, with an apprehensive countenance, which yet was lightened up with pleasure. And now I am come, Monimia, reassumed he, you must suffer me to remain here, for I cannot get into my own room: the chapel doors, you know, are fastened within side, and by the usual way at this hour of the night it is impossible. I can stay but a moment; but I could not bear to be so many hours without seeing you; and besides, I had no means of letting you know why I went so suddenly from hence, and I fear you have been unhappy.

I should have been unhappy indeed, if Betty, who heard it from the servant who came for you, had not told me as a piece of news, that company had arrived unexpectedly at West Wolverton.—And in such a night, Orlando, was it possible to expect you could leave them to come so far? How good it is of you!—And yet you will suffer, I fear, from your wet clothes. Good God! what can I do to prevent your suffering?

Be not uneasy about that, my angel friend, replied Orlando; such trifles I never attend to, and

never suffer from; if you will let me sit down here with you, I will take off my great coat, and my other clothes are not so very wet. At this hour there will surely be nothing to apprehend from my staying here.

I hope not, said Monimia, I hope not, if we speak low. The wind is so high, that any trifling noise could hardly be heard by my aunt if she were upon the watch, which I hope she is not. You are generous to indulge me, answered Orlando; and I must be a monster to dream of injuring such innocence and candour. But, Monimia, there are a thousand uneasy thoughts continually crowding upon me about you. This Betty Richards—I am afraid she is a bad girl; I am sure she is an artful one; and there is an alliance of some sort or other between her and the old butler: you will never trust her, Monimia?

Never indeed, replied Monimia; for though she is of late much thrown in my way since my aunt has become more indolent from her accident, I never willingly am with her; nor do I indeed like her so well as I used to do.

Continue to keep yourself then from much intimacy, Monimia; for the conversation of such a girl, to a mind pure and unsullied like yours, is to be dreaded. It is coarse, at least, if not vicious; and if it be not dangerous, is at all events improper. Discourage therefore her talking to you as much as you can, even about the tittle tattle of the house. Monimia most readily promised to obey him:—and then observing that he looked at her with a peculiar expression of uneasiness in his countenance, she said, But is that all, Orlando? Is there not something else that gives you concern? Yes, replied he; I will not conceal from you that there are many things. This wedding of my sister's, though I most

sincerely rejoice that she is likely to be happily settled, seems to teem with troubles for me.

Monimia turned pale, but only clasped her hands together as she sat by him, and did not interrupt him. He went on.

My uncle Woodford piques himself extremely upon having brought about this marriage; for the father of the young man (a merchant at Cork in very great business) for some time positively refused his consent, because of Philippa's want of fortune. My uncle, you know, or rather you do not know, is just the reverse of my mother, and is as bustling and spirited as she is mild and tranquil. Having got his money himself, he has no notion that any thing but money is worth thinking about, and that the money is best that is made in trade; and therefore, as he has only one son, who does not choose to take up his business, but is studying at the Temple, he has adopted a notion, that it would be much better for me to go with him to London, and learn his business of a wine merchant, to which I may succeed.

And marry one of your cousins, said Monimia in a faint voice, who are, you have told me, such pretty women? If that is part of his plan, answered Orlando, my Monimia, he has kept it to himself.—But I do not believe it is, as one of them is engaged, and the other would not think me either smart enough or rich enough. Whatever may be Mr. Woodford's plan, however, that part of it will certainly never take effect; nor indeed will any of it, for I feel a total disinclination to it.

Why then are you so distressed, Orlando, at the proposal?

Because I see it makes my father restless—not exactly the proposal, so much as the conversation my uncle has held with him.—He has been declaim-

ing against the folly of my dreaming away my time in waiting for a legacy from Mrs. Rayland ; which after all, said he, the whimsical old woman may not give him—and what if she does ? If she acts as she ought, the estate, you know, brother Somerive, ought to be your eldest son Phil's ; and if she gives the rest of your family three or four thousand pounds each, what will that do for your youngest son ? Why, not give him salt to his porridge.

Dear papa, said Maria, what an expression !— Well, well, child, answered my uncle, I can't stand to pick my words, when I am as anxious about a thing as I am about this—I say, and every man who knows the world will agree with me—I say, that a fine young fellow like my nephew here ought not to waste his life nailed to the gouty chair of a peevish old woman, who ten to one dies and bilks him at last. Let him be put into some way of doing for himself—every man who knows the world will agree with me—let him be put into some way of doing for himself ; and then, if Mrs. Rayland has a mind to be a friend to him, take my word for it she'll do it so much the sooner. I'm sure of it, for I've remarked it in my dealings among mankind, and every man who knows the world will agree with me, that people are always more ready to help those who are in a way of doing well, than those that hang about helpless. If Orlando here was in a way of getting forward in the world, why you'd see that the old girl would be twice as kind to him—or, if she was not, why he need not so much care.

I found, continued Orlando, that this discourse, though my father did not perfectly assent to the justice of all its arguments, made a deep impression on his mind, which had long been disturbed by the difficulty of finding for me some proper line of con-

duct for my future establishment : and the determination is, that Mrs. Rayland is to be applied to for her opinion as to my sister's marriage, by way of compliment ; and in regard to me, by way of sounding her intentions. It appears to me to be all very bad policy ; and I foresee nothing but vexation, perhaps my removal from hence.

Orlando paused a moment ; and Monimia, with a deep and tremulous sigh, repeated, From hence ! — Alas ! Orlando, I have foreseen that the happiness I have so little a while enjoyed of seeing you would not last long !

I know not, replied he, I may be too easily alarmed ; but, with the bustle and fuss my uncle makes about every thing he pursues, he seldom fails of carrying his point ; and he is now elated with his success over the prudent and worldly-minded Mr. Fitz-Owen, and believes his interposition would every where prove as infallible as it has done in hurrying up this marriage for Philippa.

Do you think it then too much hurried ? said Monimia.

I hardly know, replied he, how to think it otherwise. Mr. Fitz-Owen is a very young man : he only saw Philippa half a dozen times when she was in town last spring with my uncle ; and he has insisted upon this match with as much vehemence as he could have done had he known all her good qualities.

That, said Monimia, is a very grave reflection. If Philippa has the good qualities of which the gentleman is ignorant, the discovery that beauty is her least perfection will increase his happiness.

But what does she know of *him*, Monimia ? What opportunity can she have had to judge of a man with whom she is engaged to pass her life ?

Surely the acquaintance of a fortnight is very insufficient to form her judgment of a character on which the happiness of her whole life is to depend. Mr. Fitz-Owen may be a very good-tempered and worthy man; but, as he is the native of another country, it is impossible we should know whether he is or no. However, I keep all these reflections to myself; for the affair is settled, and my father seems pleased with it. Philippa too seems to become attached to Mr. Fitz-Owen. There is something very flattering to a young woman in the attention and perseverance he has shewn. He has a good person, and she really, I believe, likes him.

But you do not, Orlando?

I do not dislike him—I only wish I knew more of his temper; and I wish too that my bustling busy uncle had not contrived to connect my affairs with those of this wedding, and to hurry every thing with a precipitation that hardly gives one time to breathe. It was only on Thursday evening that Fitz-Owen arrived from Dublin with his father's consent: on Friday he delivered his credentials; and on Saturday the impetuous Mr. Woodford whirled him, with his own daughters and his officious self, down to us, where he pursues his plan with the same vehemence; for he has already settled with my father, that the letter to Mrs. Rayland is to be written to-morrow, and on Wednesday Philippa and Isabella, and, if Mrs. Rayland consents, I also, return with them to London, (Monimia shuddered, and checked an involuntary emotion she felt to implore Heaven aloud that Mrs. Rayland might be inexorably averse to this scheme), where, continued Orlando, the marriage is to take place as soon as the usual forms can be gone through.—Philippa is to set off to Ireland with her husband, and Isabella is to remain the winter with

the Woodfords; my uncle being sure, he says, of getting her married as well as he has done Philly.

Alas! Orlando, you will go then; for Mrs. Rayland, however she may dislike such a proposal, will not, I am afraid, oppose it; there is something so odd in her temper, that, though she is offended if her advice is not asked, she will seldom give it when it is, especially if she believes any other person has been consulted first.

I understand her perfectly, my Monimia, and I see nothing but vexation gathering for me in every quarter. Alas! it is not one of the least, that, while these people remain, my father expects me to stay at home; though, as my brother is so good as to promise to come hither to-morrow, I think I might be spared.

And has your brother, said Monimia, been consulted on this plan of your going into business with your uncle?

Oh, yes! It was opened to him after dinner, while I had left the room a moment to consider by what means I could get to you; and I found him eagerly promoting it for reasons which I heartily forgive, while I thank God I feel myself incapable of harbouring such sentiments towards him, could we change situations, I must follow my destiny, Monimia, whatever it may be; for I must not make my poor father, and still less my mother, unhappy. They have too many uneasy hours about Philip; and while the marriage of Philippa gives them some satisfaction, it shall not be embittered by any opposition of mine to what they may think right for me—and yet I own, Monimia, I own, that to go with Mr. Woodford, to be confined to that sort of business, would make me most completely wretched. He said this in a tone of voice so expressive of despondence, that Monimia, op-

pressed as she was before, could conceal the anguish she felt no longer. Still, however, she tried to check the excess of her sorrow, while he tenderly soothed her, assuring her that, whatever might be his fate, he should love her to the end of his life; and if he thought that the drudgery of a few years at any business, however irksome to him, would enable him to pass the rest of his life in moderate competence with her, he would submit to it, not only as a duty, but as a blessing. And now, my Monimia, let us consider how we can meet to-morrow night—by that time something may more decidedly be known. I will come then early in the morning, before this letter, of which I dread the event, is sent; and, under pretence of enquiring how Mrs. Rayland does, and then of going into the study for some of my clothes, which I often leave there, I can open the chapel door, and prepare every thing for our going to the study the next evening; for to live without seeing you, Monimia, is impossible, and I fear to meet here often might be too hazardous.

It would indeed, replied Monimia, and even now I have been in misery the whole time—Yet it was so late, Orlando, before you came!

It was two o'clock before I could leave the company; for my uncle is a man who loves to sit long over his wine, to tell what he thinks good stories, and call for toasts and songs, suffering nobody to quit the room as long as they can distinguish the glass from the candle. My father, very little used to this sort of conviviality, was tired, and left us to manage him as we could.—My brother would have remained with him till now, I dare say, most willingly; but he had promised to be at Stockton's, with whom he now almost entirely lives, to a great hunting party this morning; and he dashed through

the rain about one o'clock. Fitz-Owen got extremely drunk, and was extremely noisy; and I found there was no way for me to escape but by feigning to be in the same situation; by which stratagem I was at length released; and flew, Monimia, with impatience to thee, dear source of all the happiness I have, or ever hope to have, on earth!

It was now so near the dawn of day, that Monimia besought him to consider the danger there was, if he staid longer, of being observed in his departure by the labourers coming to their work. Orlando owned there was something to fear, yet felt unusually reluctant to go, and lingered till the break of day was very visible through the casement. He then tore himself away, and escaped from the turret without observation; but in crossing the park he was seen at a distance by the footman, who was up, on some scheme of his own. As great rewards were offered for the detection of poachers, and the fellow concluded Orlando to be one, he hastily called one of the grooms; and they went round together to another part of the park, by which they thought this intruder must pass; and, as Orlando was mounting the stile, he was amazed to find himself suddenly collared by one man, and rudely seized by the arm by another. His uncommon strength and activity enabled him to disengage himself instantly from both. They as instantly discovered their mistake, and with a thousand apologies returned to the house; but this unlucky rencounter was afterwards talked of in the family; and though the conjectures to which it gave rise were remote from the truth, they yet failed not to disturb the tranquillity of the young lovers.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. Somerive, after many debates with himself, and many consultations with his wife, at length, determined to write to Mrs. Rayland : it was indeed necessary to pay her the compliment of consulting her on the marriage of his daughter ; and he thought it not an improper opportunity to try what were her intentions in regard to Orlando, by hinting that an occasion now offered to establish him advantageously in trade.

The arguments of Mr. Woodford had not on this point so much influence as to prevent his fearing the experiment he was about to make ; but the conduct of his eldest son, which nothing could restrain, made him look forward with fear to the future. He found his own health very much injured, by the uneasiness he had lately undergone ; and he knew that should he die, the only dependence of his wife and his unmarried daughters must be on Orlando, and on the friendship of Woodford. To put his son therefore into business with his wife's brother was certainly a very desirable plan, if Mrs. Rayland did not intend better to provide for him ; and it was certainly time to know whether she had or had not any such intentions in his favour.

The letter then which Orlando so dreaded, was written, after great precautions in choosing the words. It requested her approbation of his eldest daughter's marriage with Mr. Fitz-Owen the only son of an eminent merchant at Cork ; and said, that as Orlando was now of an age in which it became necessary to think of his future establishment, thoughts were entertained of putting him into business with his uncle ; but that nothing

would be concluded upon without the entire approbation of Mrs. Rayland, to whose notice and protection he was so much obliged.

A servant was sent with this letter about noon. It was received and read in due form, and a verbal message returned, that Mrs. Rayland would at her leisure write an answer, and send one of her own servants with it.

On this occasion Mrs. Rayland talked to Lennard—not to consult her, for it was an affair in which she thought herself alone competent to judge—but to give vent to her spleen, and to express her dislike of all people in trade, and particularly of poor Mrs. Somerive. Those vulgar mundungus folks, said she, will not suffer the family to better by their chance connection with a gentleman—Let them marry their girls, if they will, to dealers and chapmen; I shall never interfere: they are all like the mother, and may make good tradesmen's wives; though, if Mr. Somerive had not, like his foolish father, had a low taste, his daughters might have married men of family, who would have been proud to be allied, though distantly, to ours. As it is, they must carry their cherry cheeks to a lower market—I shall never oppose it. But for Orlando, there was something of an air of good blood about him, that almost made me doubt at times his birth by his mother's side. However, if he gets these buying and selling notions in his head, and chooses his mother's low origin should continue to be remembered, I have done. I suppose he's got among them—a fine flashy set of trades-folks—and enters into their amusements and views; and if so, I shall never disturb him, let him go his own way; only I shall not choose to have a shopkeeper an inmate at Rayland Hall.

Monimia, who was called down a moment before

to assist in cutting out linen, was present during this harangue, for they considered her as a mere cypher. She found herself terribly affected by the opening of it; but when it proceeded to speak of Orlando, she measured four times instead of two, notched a piece of Irish linen in the wrong place, and was beginning to use her scissars the wrong way, when a severe look from Mrs. Lennard, who snatched it out of her hand, with, What are you about, mope? restored her to her recollection. She begged pardon; and another look from her aunt bade her beware that she did not offend a second time—when Mrs. Rayland thus went on:

After a taste for *such* company, this place must be very dull: drinking and jollity, I suppose, are soon learned. And so Mr. Orlando has not been here these two days! Mighty well: he is his own master—Lennard! he has not called this morning, has he?

Monimia, by a glance of her eye, saw him at that moment pensively and dejectedly crossing the park on foot. She dared not however say so; but finding herself quite unequal to the misery of being present at an interview, in which she foresaw that, in consequence of this fatal letter, he would be forbidden the house, and seeing that her aunt determined she *should* stay, she hung her foot as if by accident in the long roll of linen that was on the ground, and, in pretending to disengage it, fell with some violence against an old heavy gilt leather skreen that went across one side of the large room, and ran the sharp-pointed scissars with which she was cutting the linen into her arm a little above the wrist.

Her aunt, however, did not perceive it, till the blood streamed from her arm, round which, without any complaint, she wrapped her handkerchief. The paleness and faintness, which she could not disguise, were accounted for when Mrs. Lennard saw the

handkerchief bathed in blood. Monimia, who was actually sinking to the earth, though not from the wound, was then dismissed, while Betty was called to take care of the careless girl, and ordered to put some Friar's balsam to the cut; and she just tottered out of one door as Orlando, after sending up for permission, entered at the other. This was fortunate; for, had he beheld her in such a situation, and had she at that moment seen him, their intelligence could hardly have been concealed. The looks Mrs. Lennard had cast on her, when she first appeared confused, had impressed her with terror, and, she fancied, menaced all that was dreadful. With difficulty, and leaning on Betty's arm, she reached her turret; where, under pretence that the accident of having hurt her arm had turned her sick, she begged a glass of water, and lay down, being otherwise unable to conceal from Betty the agitation of her spirit, and the terror she was in for the reception of Orlando.

Mrs. Rayland, instead of the kindness she was used to shew him, now received him with the most cold and repulsive formality. Your servant, Mr. Orlando—please to take a chair, was all she said; and in the manner of her saying it, Orlando saw abundant cause to fear that his father's letter had undone him with Mrs. Rayland.

I find we are to lose you, Sir!—you are going to turn merchant, or shopkeeper!

Not, madam, replied Orlando, if you think my doing so a wrong measure.

Oh! Sir, I never pretend to dictate. Every one knows their own affairs best; and by all means *you* ought to follow your father's orders and your own inclinations.

Alas, dear Madam! replied Orlando, with a sort of spirited humility that well became him, my

father's orders would, I believe, in this case be given with reluctance; and though *I* should obey them, it would be with reluctance indeed!

What, Sir! (relaxing a little of her vinegar aspect) is it not your own desire then that you should be put apprentice or journeyman to this person, this brother of your mother's? I thought, for my part, that finding perhaps, like your brother and other gay young men, that the country was very dull, you chose probably to figure in London; for it is trades-people now that can best afford to shew away, as witness the new comers at poor Lord Carloraine's fine place—those what dy'e callums—they were trades-people—yet nobody can attempt to live as they do. If such things can be done by trade, no wonder young men are eager to begin. The Hall, Mr. Orlando, must be a dull place when once you have got these fine doings in your head.

Madam, said Orlando, trembling, for he now found that his fate depended on the event of this dialogue—Madam, I have always avoided the meanness of adulation, nor will I use it now; you ought to despise me if I did; and I know you have generosity enough to have bestowed all the favours I have received from you, without expecting me to sacrifice my integrity or my freedom.

Mrs. Rayland did not very clearly comprehend this sentence. It was partly complimentary, and therefore to her taste; but the words *sacrifice* and *freedom*, at the end, on which a strong emphasis was laid, sounded a little like rebellion. She therefore screwed up her visage to its former asperity, and answered: No indeed, Sir, *I* expect no sacrifices from any body; and as to freedom—every body is free to do as they like best in their own affairs, as I told you before.

You will not then, Madam, suspect me of mean-

ness unworthy equally of my respect for you and what I owe myself, if I declare to you, that I have no wish to enter into trade, for which I am very certain I have no talents; and that, though I must obey my father if he insists upon it, yet I shall be very unhappy, and had rather, infinitely rather, if you will have the goodness to permit it, remain at home, with the advantage of being allowed sometimes, in paying my respects to you, to have, as I have had for some months, the use of your library; where I hope I am qualifying myself for one of the liberal professions against the time when my father can find an opportunity to place me in one: and in the mean time, I call God to witness, that, to associate with such people as Mr. Stockton, or to emulate his splendour, is so far from being my wish, that to be compelled to do it would be the greatest punishment that could be inflicted upon me.

I believe, cousin Orlando, I believe—and I am pleased to see it—you have some understanding: and indeed, young man, I think too well of you to wish to see you a tradesman. Cousin Orlando, were, he well knew, words that always portended good-humour, and were never used but on days of high favour. They now sounded most soothingly in the ears of Orlando. Will you then, Madam, be so very good, when you take the trouble to answer my father's letter, to express your sentiments on this matter? and I am sure he will then press it no farther.

I shall tell him, child, replied she, that I think you may do better; and for the present, as you are not idle, that you may go on with your studies at the Hall.

Orlando, in raptures at having carried his point, thanked his venerable cousin a thousand times. He never thought her so reasonable before: she never

fancied him so much like her grandfather Sir Orlando; and so many civilities passed between them, that, before they parted, she gave him a bank-note of ten pounds, and he was admitted to the honour of kissing her hands. In this excellent humour, which Mrs. Lennard did not discourage, he left her, went into the study to secure his admittance in the evening, and to recover himself of the extreme perturbation he was in, before he returned to the party with whom he was to dine at home.

Mrs. Rayland then having called for her writing materials, which seldom saw the sun, and being placed in form at her rose-wood writing-box, lined with green velvet and mounted in silver, produced, at the end of four hours, the following letter, piquing herself on spelling as her father spelt, and disdaining those idle novelties by which a few superfluous letters are saved.

Raylande Hall, 12th day of
September, A. D. 1776.

Sir, my kinsman,

I have received youre letter, and am oblidge by your taking the troubbel to informe me of youre famely affairs, to the wich I am a sinceer goode wisher. In respecte to youre daughter Philippa must begge to be excused from giving my opinion, not having the pleasure to knowe the gentleman, and being from my retired life no judge of the personnes caractere, who are remote and in business, as I understande this personne is; wherefore I can onleye thereupon saie, that doubtlesse you, being as you are a goode and carefull father, will take due care and precaution that youre daughtere shall not, by her marriage, be exposed to the mischances of becoming reduced by bankruptcies and other accidents, whereby peopel in trade are oft times grate sufferers—But your care herein for your

daughter's securitye is not to be questionned. Furthermore, respecting youre youngest sonne, Mr. Orlando, he is very certainlye at youre disposal also, and you are, it may be, the most competent judge of that which is fitting to bee done for his future goode and advantage. I wish him very well; he seeming to me to be a sober, promising, and well conditioned youthe; and such a one as, were I his neerer relation, I shoulde thinke a pitye to put to a trade. I am at present alwaies glad of his companie at the Hall, and willinge to give anye littel encouragement to his desier of learninge in the liberal sciences fitting for a gentleman, the wich his entring on a shoppe or warehouse would destroye and put an ende to. However that may bee, I saie again, that you, being his father, are to be sure the properest personne to determine for him, and he is dutiefullie inclined, and willinge to obey you. Yet by the discourse I have had with him thereuponne, it doth not appeare that the youthe himself is inclined to become a dealer, as you purpose.

Heartilie recommending you in my prayers to the Disposer of all goode giftes, and hoping he will directe you in all thinges for the well-doing of your famely, I remaine,

Sir, my kinsman,
 youre well-wisher
 and humbel servant,
 GRACE RAYLANDE.

This letter was received at Wolverton while Mr. Somerive, his two sons, Mr. Woodford and Mr. Fitz-Owen were yet over their wine. The anxious father opened it with a palpitating heart, nor were the younger part of the audience less solicitous to know its contents. As there were none of them towards whom secrecy was absolutely necessary,

though it might have been more prudent, Mr. Somerive, at the request of his eldest son, put it across the table to him—who, with that thoughtless indiscretion which marked his character, read it aloud, with comments serving to turn into ridicule the writer, and the sentiments it contained. The description of Orlando—under that of a sober, promising, and well-conditioned youth—was read with a burst of laughter; while the slighting way in which trade was mentioned, and the contempt thrown on shopkeepers, under which Mrs. Rayland seemed to describe wine-merchants and every person in business, raised the indignation of Mr. Woodford and Mr. Fitz-Owen, who both agreed in declaring that the opinion of such an old crone was not worth consulting; that she was in a perfect dotage, as well from pride as old age; and that it was a condescension in Mr. Somerive to have consulted her at all. Orlando, however, saw all this with concern mingled with joy. He was pretty sure, from the countenance of his father, which he solicitously watched as he perused the letter, that the part of it which related to himself was kinder than he expected; that it had turned the fluctuating and undecided opinion of his father in his favour; and that he should not now, by being sent with his uncle Woodford, be condemned to the double misery of quitting Monimia, and associating with persons whose manners and ideas were so different from his own, that it was a perpetual punishment to him to be in their company. The displeasure of his brother at the partiality Mrs. Rayland expressed for him was easily accounted for; and Orlando had long accustomed himself to bear his rough jokes, and even his sarcastic reproaches, which he vented whenever they met, without much uneasiness.

As soon as Mr. Somerive could disengage himself

from his company, he withdrew to consult with his wife on the purport of Mrs. Rayland's letter, and made a sign to Orlando to follow him in a few moments.—He did so, and found his father and mother in consultation in the garden. The mother, whose heart was half broken at the idea of parting with her daughter so suddenly, was weeping with joy to find that Orlando would not yet leave her: flattering herself, from the purport of the letter, that the affluent fortune of Mrs. Rayland would at last centre with Orlando, and putting the most favourable construction on every expression that related to him, she agreed with Mr. Somerive, that nothing would be so imprudent as to think of removing him; and it was even determined, that Mr. Somerive should that evening write to her again, thanking her for her advice about his daughter, and leaving the future fate of Orlando wholly to her disposal; that Orlando should himself carry the letter, and ask leave to take his former apartments for some time—only returning once again to Wolverton to take leave of his eldest sister, whom he was to see no more before she went to Ireland—and of his second sister Isabella, who was to accompany her to London, and to pass some time with her uncle and aunt Woodford.

Never did Orlando obey his father with more alacrity than on this occasion; and on his return Mrs. Rayland never received him more kindly. He was now again invited to partake of her supper: without putting much force on himself, he shewed her exactly that sort of attention which was the most agreeable to her, and appeared grateful without being servile. At length he was dismissed; and, when the house was perfectly quiet, he flew to Monimia, who accompanied him to the study; and when he related how much more happily the events

of the day had passed than he had at its beginning expected, she shed tears of delight; and the sweet sensations of hope, which they now dared to indulge more than there ever yet appeared reason to indulge them, made this one of the happiest evenings they had ever passed together.

The following day Orlando returned to the house of his father, and found that, in regard to some parts of his family, a new arrangement had taken place. Mrs. Somerive, as the hour approached for her two eldest daughters to leave her—one to be separated from her perhaps for years, and to enter into another family—found herself so much affected, that her husband, who was very indulgent to her, agreed she should accompany the party to London, be present at the wedding of her daughter, and return in a fortnight, bringing Isabella back with her, if the idea of leaving her was at the end of that time uneasy to her. This being settled, Orlando took leave of his mother and sisters that evening: the former rejoicing that he would remain in the country; and the latter, but particularly the eldest, lamenting their separation with many tears: for Orlando, who was tenderly attentive to his sisters, was fondly beloved by them all; though to Selina, the third, who was a year younger than himself, he was more attached than to the rest.

Pensively he returned back to the hall after this melancholy parting: it was the first time the family had been thus separated; for, except the unhappy eccentricities of his eldest son, the union of Mr. Somerive's children, and the promise they all gave of excellence, had hitherto made him amends for much of the difficulty he found in supporting them. But Orlando saw that the hour was now come when his father felt equal pain for the fate of those who were about to be what is called esta-

blished in the world, and for those whom he knew not how to establish, or, in case of his death, to provide for. All that filial tenderness and good sense could suggest to his ingenuous and generous mind, he said to console his father; but with infinite concern he observed, that the wounds inflicted by the profligacy of his brother festered more deeply every day, and that all he could do had too little power to assuage the constant pain arising from this source; from which, though his father did not complain, Orlando thought it but too evident that his health was gradually impaired.

Against the uneasiness these observations gave him he found the only respite in his books, to which he assiduously applied himself—and in his evening conferences with Monimia, who every hour became more dear to him, and whose personal charms seemed every hour heightened by the progress of her understanding. As the nights became longer, and more obscure, they met earlier, and with less apprehension of detection; and as Mrs. Lennard seemed to become more and more remiss in her office of duenna, the opportunities they had of seeing each other in the course of the day (though they rarely ventured to hold any conversation) sweetened the tedious hours between their meetings.

Thus almost a fortnight passed after the departure of Mrs. Somerive and her daughters for London; Orlando remaining constantly at the Hall, except dining occasionally with his father, or riding over in a morning to enquire after him, Mrs. Rayland seeming every day more fond of his company; and every body about the house, even the old servants, who had hitherto had such an ascendancy, appearing to consider him as the future master of the domain, where he was now invested with powers he had never before enjoyed. The gamekeeper was

ordered to suffer no other person to have the liberty of shooting on the extensive manors, and Mrs. Rayland was pleased when the game that was brought to her table was killed by Orlando; while, whatever diminution of consequence the confidential servants might suffer by this growing fondness of their mistress for him, their was something in his manner so fascinating, that their jealousy and anger were insensibly converted into attachment; and all, even the austere Mrs. Lennard herself, seemed to wish him well; except Mr. Pattenson, who, in proportion as he became in favour with others, appeared to dislike him.—Orlando had some time before remarked his rudeness, and often fancied that he watched him, and had some suspicion of his evening conversations with Monimia—yet if he had, it was more likely he would speak of what he knew, than secretly resent what he had in fact nothing to do with: but some resentment he appeared to harbour; and, whenever he met Orlando, surveyed him with looks which expressed anger, scorn, and apprehension. Orlando, conscious of never having injured him, and fearful only in one point, endeavoured to guard against any mischief he could do by discovering his evening visits to the turret, or those of Monimia to the library; and, for the rest, despised his wrath too much to attempt appeasing or resenting it.

Mrs. Lennard, to whom the constant residence of Orlando at the Hall might be supposed to be disagreeable, was much more civil to him, now that he was a fine young man, than ever she had been during his childhood; to her he was always extremely obliging; and though he disdained to stoop to the meanness of flattering Mrs. Rayland, where money might be supposed to be his sole object, he did not think it equally unworthy to use a little art

to promote the interest of his love. Mrs. Lennard was remarkably open to two sorts of adulation—She loved to be thought a woman of sense, and to hear how fine her person must have been in her younger days. She was even now accustomed to say, that though not so well to *meet*, she was still well to *follow*; for she fancied her tall perpendicular figure exhibited still a great deal of dignity and grace. These foibles were so evident, and, whenever she was not with Mrs. Rayland, she took so little pains to conceal them, that Orlando, who thought it too probable that on her the future happiness of his life depended, believed it not wrong to take advantage of them to acquire her favour; and he succeeded so well by adroitly administering now and then a little well-timed flattery, that Mrs. Lennard not only held him in high esteem, but endeavoured to secure his, by cultivating the graces he had remarked. She entered on a new course of reading, and a little modernised her appearance. To have made too many and too rapid improvements in the latter respect, would have been attended with the hazard of displeasing Mrs. Rayland; her's therefore were confined to that sort of emendations which she was not likely to perceive.

It happened that, in the progress of these refinements, Mrs. Lennard had occasion for some articles which Betty Richards (who was a very great favourite, from the assiduity which she affected in her service particularly) was commissioned to buy. The place she was to go to was rather a large village than a town, and was about three miles and a half from the Hall; the way to it leading partly through the park, and partly through some hanging woods and coppices which belonged to Mrs. Rayland. Monimia happened to be in the room when Mrs. Lennard was giving Betty this commission for

the next morning; and as her aunt had promised her a few articles for herself, for which she had immediate occasion, she ventured to solicit leave to go with Betty to make these purchases. Dear Madam, said she, do indulge me this once. I have hardly been out of the park twice in my life; and though I have no desire to go any where when you disapprove of it, surely there can be no harm in my walking to such a place with Betty, just to buy what you are so good as to allow me. We shall not be gone above two hours and a half, for I will go as early as you please in the morning.

Mrs. Lennard, who happened to be in a better humour than usual when this request was made, agreed to it, under some restrictions. She said, that if Monimia *did* go, she must be back by nine o'clock at the very latest, and not go into any house but that of the universal dealer with whom her business was; that she must make no acquaintance, and enter into conversation with nobody. To all this Monimia most willingly agreed; and she believed that Orlando, whom she determined to consult in the evening, would not object to her going, on such an occasion, so little a way, whatever dislike he had to her associating much with Betty.

To Orlando, therefore, she communicated her design as soon as they met, who did not seem much pleased with it; but, to a matter apparently so trifling, he was ashamed of making any serious opposition, when she said that she really wanted the articles her aunt had given her leave to buy, which no other opportunity might afford her. He therefore, after expressing his hopes that she would continue upon her guard against Betty, whom he told her he saw more and more cause to mistrust and dislike, consented to the little expedition she me-

ditated, and directed her the nearest way through the woods and the preserved pheasant-grounds of Mrs. Rayland. I shall be out with my gun to-morrow, said he; but I suppose I must not venture to meet you as if it were by chance?

I think, answered Monimia, you had better not. Were we to meet, it would perhaps look like design; and as we could not venture to enter into conversation, it is hardly worth the risk of Betty's talking about it, since we should only just pass each other in the woods.

I believe, replied Orlando, it will be better not; especially as I told Mrs. Rayland at dinner yesterday, and while your aunt was present, that I should walk with my gun to my father's, and try round his lands for some game to send up to my mother and sister.

Mrs. Lennard had probably recollected this circumstance when she so easily gave Monimia the permission she asked, her walk lying quite on the opposite side of the country. It was agreed, therefore, that Orlando should not incur any suspicion of a correspondence between them, by changing his plan for the next day; and after that was settled, Orlando read to her a letter he had that day received from his mother. It related to the marriage of Phillipa, and her immediate departure for Ireland—described the state of her own mind on bidding adieu to her daughter—and said, that Mr. Woodford had insisted on her staying another week in town to recover her spirits; which however she should rather do to indulge Isabella, who had never been in town before, with the sight of the play-houses and other public places; for that *her own* spirits would be infinitely more relieved by collecting around her the rest of her children. But, added she, while a tear had blistered the paper where the

sentence was written, why do I thus fondly flatter myself, and forget that your brother, my Orlando, is almost a stranger to us, and is, I much fear, by his thoughtless conduct, slowly destroying the invaluable life of your dear father? Alas! while I remember this, I know not how I should support myself if I did not find comfort in thinking of you.

Orlando's tears, while he read this letter, fell where the paper was marked by those of this beloved parent. The delightful visions he had been indulging but the moment before, disappeared; and he hardly dare think of Monimia, if it must be at the expense of wounding the peace and destroying the hopes of his parents. One look, however, from her, the sound of her voice as she soothingly spoke of his mother, dissipated these mournful thoughts; and, as he led her to her turret, he fancied that, if his mother could see her, she would love her as much as he did, and be happy to add to the family she wished to collect around her, so amiable and interesting a creature.

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY on the following morning, Monimia, awaking from her short repose, prepared herself for her little journey, which, unused as she was to go farther than about the park, or in the walled gardens, was to her an event of some importance. The best dress she had was a white gown, which she put on to make her appearance in the village, with a little straw hat tied under her chin with blue ribband. Her fine hair, which she had never attempted to distort with irons, or change by powder, was arranged only by the hands of nature; and a black

gauze handkerchief, which her aunt had given her from her own wardrobe, was tied over her shoulders. Nothing could be more simple than her whole appearance; but nothing could conceal the beautiful symmetry of her figure, or lessen the grace which accompanied her motions. Her companion Betty, as eager as she was for the walk, entered her room before she was quite ready, dressed in all the finery she dared shew at home, while she reserved her most splendid ornaments to put on at the park-stile, and to be restored to her pocket at the same place on their return.

It was a clear morning in the middle of October when they set out. They happily executed their commissions; but Betty had so much to say, so many things to look at, and so many wishes for the pretty things she saw—and the man and his wife, who kept the shop, were so glad to see the *ladies*, as they called them both, and so willing to shew all the newest things from the next provincial town, as very fashionable, and pressed them so earnestly to go into their parlour, and eat some cake and drink some of their currant wine, that Betty had quite forgot Mrs. Lennard's injunction to return at nine o'clock: nor could the repeated remonstrances of Monimia prevail upon her to leave the house till the clock struck eleven. Monimia, very much alarmed, and fearing that her aunt would, in consequence of this disobedience, never allow her to go out again, then prevailed upon her companion to set out; and to save as much time as they could they walked as fast as possible up the path which led from the village, through a copse that clothed the steep acivity of a hill, which, at the end of about three quarters of a mile, led to Mrs. Rayland's woods. They passed with equal speed through the first of these woods, the path still ascending;

but when they came to the second, Monimia, from unusual exertion, from the heat (for the sun had yet great power and force), and the apprehensions of her aunt's anger, was quite exhausted, and begged Betty to let her rest a moment on the steps of the stile; to which she, who feared Mrs. Lennard's displeasure much less than Monimia, readily assented.

Lord, Miss, cried she, as they sat down, how frightened you be at nothing! Why, what can your aunt do, child? She can't kill you; and as for a few angry words, I've no notion of minding 'em, not I: 'tis hard indeed if one's to be always a slave, and never dares to stir ever so little;—one might as well be a negur.

I would not for the world, answered Monimia, offend my aunt when she is kind to me; and it was very good in her to give me money to buy these things, and to let me go for them.

I see no mighty matter of goodness in it, cried the other: who is to provide for you, if she does not, who is your own natural relation? Egollys! Miss, if I was you, I should be very apt to shew her the difference. Why, very often she uses you like a dog, and I'm sure she makes you work like a servant. There's Mr. Pattenson always a-telling me that handsome girls have no occasion to be drudges as I be, or as I have been; for that in London they may make their fortunes, and live like the finest ladies of the land.—Thus she ran on, while Monimia, hardly hearing, and not at all attending to her conversation, sat silent, considering how extraordinary Orlando would think it, if by any accident he should know she was out so long—and trying to recover her breath that they might proceed—when suddenly several spaniels ran out of the wood, a pheasant flew up near them, and the report of two guns was heard so near that Monimia started in some