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# LOUISE DE LA VALLIERE.

## A TALE

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### LOUISE DE LA VALLIERE.

#### CHAPTER I.

"Woman, in fashion's giddy round,
Or in the cloister'd grove,
Still changeful and capricious found,
Yet ever ruled by love."—Anon.

THE inconsistencies of woman! What a fruitful theme has this proved to the playwright, the novelist, the activit. Under all changes of climate, government, religion, she is represented as constant only to her inconstancy. In the sunny South, under the sway of the refined, luxurious, yet despotic Augustus, and while the tasteful mythology of Greece still bound earth's cloicest spirits in its witchery, the poet exclaims, "Varium et mutabile semper femins," and in the frozen North, among the free and sturdy Scox, and under the influence of the strictest of all Christian sects, as a trist at one faithful and chivalric, depicts her as

> 'Uncertain, coy, and hard to please, And variable as the shade By the light, quiv'ring aspen made."

But have the authors of these portraitures investigated the philosophy of the subject they were illustrating ! Have they discovered from what sun the picture caught its dazzling lights—from what clouds its dark shadows! The wind, the wave, the cloud, capricious as seem their changes, more obedient to law. Is it not possible that even woman's fiful moods are not without a governing principle; and may not this principle be detected by noting her varying aspects, and the influences under which they have been exhibited? Removing, as it were, fold by fold the wrappings with which conventional forms have concealed her heart too often even from herself, let us lay bare its sources of thought and feeling. In these pristine elements of being we may perchance, find harmony, consistency, unity; one spirit pursuing one aim, yet, like the "delicate Arie!" by means changing with the characters to be addressed, the impression to be created, or the resistance to be overcome.

To those who remember the constraint in form, the liberty, nay, the licentionness in principle, which marked the society of the capital of France when luxury and sensuality on the one hand, and grinding oppression and poverty on the other, had reached their accept when the throne and the altar alike toppled to their fall, upheld for a brief space by those heartless ceremonies which ill supplied the support they had hitherto found in loyalty and devotion, it will appear that, in taking our first view of woman as acted on by such influencies, we have given a fair field for the display of all which is mutable, enigmatical, inconsistent, or even contradictory in her nature; and perhaps we could have selected none on whom these influences seemed to have produced their legitimate effects more fully than on the heroine of our present tale—Louise de la Yalliere.

The summer's sun was yet a full hour high, and its beams were cultivating the still garden walks, and giving something of lightness even to the dull gray walls of an old convent in the south of France. From one of the rooms appropriated to pensioners within that convent, these beams were carefully excluded, the half-closed shutters scarce admitting light sufficient to render visible its only occupant, a female reclining on a couch. The display of medicines on a table beside her, gave token that she was suffering from some one of

those "thousand ills which flesh is heir to," even before you had read its ravages in her pale face and attenuated form. To an observant eye, the ministerings of sympathy and tenderness were likewise perceptible in the neat arrangement of her apartment, and in the basket of choice fruit and vase of flowers which were placed near her.

The face of the invalid brightened as a light step was heard approaching the door; and as the latch was gently turned, half raising her head from the pillow on which it reclined, she said, in eager, yet feeble tones, "Is that you, Louiset"

"Yes, dear Maman," said a young girl, apparently about seventeen, springing into the room and kissing the cheek of the invalid as she kneeled beside the couch, "and our good mother has given me permission to remain with you all this aftermoon and evening, and to give Marguerite one night of unbroken rest by taking her place beside you to-night."

"Dear child! Marguerite can better bear many nights of watching than you can one. I could not bear to see your cheek pale, and your eyes dim with the cares of a nurse."

"Hush, hush! do not refuse to let me watch one night by you, who have watched so many by me. Who but you cared for the poor, sick, feeble child, sent by her own parents to a convent to be out of the way, and destined, but for your compassionate tenderness, to a yet safer and less expensive prison—an early grave!" This was said with passionate carnestness, the face flushed even to the brow, the eyes wet with tears, and the lip quivering.

The invalid listened with surprise, and raising her feeblo hand, she put back the dark curls from the fair young brow, and asked, "What means this, Louise! What mean such bitter thoughts in you, whose life has seemed for years but a succession of glad feelings?

Louise caught the hand pressed upon her brow, and dropping her face upon it, sobbed aloud. The lady made no attempt to soothe her by words, but she laid her other hand affectionalely on her head, and when her sobs had died away, she spoke. "Now, Louise, look up and tell me what has grieved you."

Louise raised her head from the couch, but she seemed unable to obey the command to look up, for her eyes remained voiled by their long lashes, while she said hesitating ly, "You know my cousin, Henriette Valancour, is about to be married. Her brother, Auguste, has been here this afternoon to make arrangements for her leaving the convent tomorrow, and I hoped he would bring some message for me, but he brought none."

"Poor child! You hoped to go with Henriette—I am sorry-"

"Indeed, indeed, you wrong me," said Louise, now looking up into the lady's face and speaking rapidly; "I would not have gone for worlds, and left you ill; but I thought they would propose my going, would urge it, and then I could have shown them that the poor, neglected Louise has a heart, and would not exchange the pleasure of ministering to your comfort for all the display of which they think so much. But they never thought of me, it seems, till Auguste himself saked if I should accompany Henriette; and then my father said, 'No, it would be a pity to give me a taste of the world, since I would probably have to go back to the convent."

"And is not your father so far right, dear Louise, that if you must at last be here, it would be a puty to give you a taste for wordly galeties! Come, banish that sad face. I do believe you that you would rather be with me than go to Paras, and I will obtain permission from the abbess for you to spend the next week wholly with me; a week of your care will surely make me quite well, and now you shall begin at once the offices of a nurse. Open the window opposite, that I may see the garden. I love it best at this hour, when the sisters are walking in it. Draw th: foctosto to the side of the couch. Now seat yourself and sing me the little song I love so much."

Louise rose to obey the lady with a countenance to which its usual joyous expression was fully restored, though softened, perhaps, by something more than its usual tenderness; and when seated, she warbled in sweet, but low tones, to a simple air, a song, of which the following translation preserves both the measure and thought:

> On the monntain torrent dashing From rock to rock away, Like diamonds bright and gay, Sparkle the foam and spray, In the radiant sunbeams flashing.

And the river gently flowing,
Down yon secluded glade,
Where, 'neath the hewthorn's shade,
Ungather'd violets fade,
In the same golden light is glowing.

So, till the Sun of Love declineth,
Whether it wildly sweep
O'er rock and craggy steep,
Or in the valley sleep,
The stream of Life still brightly shineth.

As the last note died away, a step was heard in the antechamber, and Marguerite, throwing open the ôoor which communicated with it, announced the Marquis of Montreed, whose introduction to the reader we will defer only till we have made him more fully acquainted with the characters already presented to his notice.

#### CHAPTER II

"Herey is twice bless'd:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."—SHARSPEARE.

MADAME DE ST. LAURENT, the orphan and only daughter of a noble house, had been permitted to exercise a freedom of choice, in the most important circumstance of her life, seldom enjoyed by her sex in France. Her marriage had

been one of affection, and for a few quickly fleeting months such happiness had been hers as only a union of hearts can produce. It was terminated by that worst of earthly woes, early widowhood; and Madame de St. Laurent, with a heart from which life and hope seemed crushed, retired from a world that had lost its charm, to a convent. There she expected to find no blessing save seclusion; but the little Louise de la Valliere first excited her pity by her feeble and neglected state, and then won her affection by the gratitude she evinced for what seemed to Madame de St. Laurent but ordinary kindness. It was the first time Louise had been permitted to love, and her warm affections gave themselves out so lavishly that the feeling with which she regarded Madame de St. Laurent was little short of idolatry. Thenceforth the timid and almost melancholy child was a new creature. Soon her beaming eye and laughing lip told of a joyous spirit, and the influence of the mental on the physical condition was marked by the healthy glow and bounding movement which replaced her formerly sallow hue and languid step. Nor was Madame de St. Laurent unrewarded for the good thus done. The ardour of Louise rekindled affections which had seemed utterly dead, and again earth looked fair and life attractive under the beams of the Sun of Love. All the powers of her highly-cultivated mind, all those feminine accomplishments which had of late been laid aside as useless, were now called into exercise for the benefit of her protegee. who spent as much time with her at was permitted by the rules of the convent. Here Louise had been placed ostensibly for her education, but with an understanding between the superior and her parents that at a proper age she would assume the veil. In this arrangement, the Duc and Duchesse de la Valliere, whose slender fortune was ill proportioned to their high rank, and whose wordly minds would have considered the gratefil tenderness of their child but poor repayment for any sacrifice of splendour, thought only of the least expensive mode of disposing of an unwelcome burden. An advantageous matrimonial alliance might open

for Louise her prison doors; but this was scarcely to be expected by one who, it was well known, would not inherit even the wasted patrimony of her father, which would deseend, with the title, to the next heir male, the Auguste Valancour named in the last chapter.

Seventeen, however, is not the age of very profound reflection, and hithert no shadow from the future had darkened the present to Louise. Within the convent, she was tenderly regarded; without its walls, her name was probably never spoken, or, if it was, it fell on unheoding ears, linked with no dear remembrance, wakening no joyful emotion; who will doubt that the convent was her loved and chosen home! Happy for her that she saw not what was hidden from no other eyes—the approaching desolation of that home by the rentoval, to a world more congenial to her pure spirit, of her who had been the good angel of her life.

But one is watting our introduction to the reader who is little accustomed to so tarly a reception—the only brother of Madame de St. Laurent—Henri Marquis de Montrevel. White the timidity induced by her convent life, Louise, as he was announced by Marguerite, arose hastily, and withdrew from the apartment with crimsoned cheek and downcast evea. Hastily as she went, she was not unobserved. The Marquis followed her with his eyes until the door had closed upon her, and then, even before he turned to greet his long unseen sister, exclaimed with animation, "Quelle belle demoiselle!"

Madame de St. Laurent, who had earnestly regarded him from the moment of his entrance, seeming to have thought or perception for no other object, attempted to rise as he approached her; but too feeble for that, could only extend her hands to him, ejaculating, in earnest tones, "Henri," dear Henri."

"Ah, Gabrielle!" he exclaimed, as, taking her hands, he saluted her on each cheek: "beautiful still, in spite of illness, which I am grieved to learn has been so severe: but you are better now. I hone." "I shall soon be well, dear Henri, for I shall soon be where neither sickness nor sorrow comes."

"Talk not so sadly, I pray you; and yet how can you do otherwise in this sombre place! Already I feel its influence: could I but have you in Paris, you would soon recover."

"Ah, Henril ten years make strange alterations in our tastes, but none," she added, tenderly, "in our affections. The gatties of Paris could do little for me, nay, they would be to me an intolerable burden; but it is indeed refreshing once more to see my brother: it makes me a child again, carrying me back to that time when all places were alike to us, for all brought enjoyment."

"I wish it were so with me now, Gabrielle: yet," continued the Marquis, after a short pause, "I have no cause to complain of fortune; the worst I can say of her is, that like a weakly-fond mother she has lavished her bon-bone on me till I am sick of them. Ennui, that sickness of the soul, is the curse of my existence. Would I could discover a new pleasure. But pardon my egotism, and tell me what I can do for you."

"You have done much in obeying my summons so promptly."

"Could you doubt I would! The world may have made me selfish and indolent, may I fear it has, or I should not have wated your summons; but I trust it can never make me heartless. Tell me now, dear Gabrielle, in what I may give you pleasure, and .et me atone, in some degree, for past thourhlessness."

"I have a favour to ask of you, dear Henri, in behalf of one I fondly lowe—the young girl who was with me when you entered. She is the daughter of the Duc de la Valliere, doomed from her birth to a convent. God forgive me," she exclaimed, "if I am wrong in wishing to prevent the consecration on his altar of so pure and lovely a being; but no, I am not wrong. He desires only a willing sacrifice, and happy as this sweet girl is now in my tenderness, were that taken away she would, I know, shrink from the unloved and unloving life that awaits her, and long to go forth into a world that seems, to her young imagination, all delight.

- "She is very beautiful," said the Marquis, thoughtfully.
- "Yes; and doubtless, if exhibited in the city, this beauty would win for her a matrimonial alliance; but I would be loth indeed to have her degraded by such an exhibition, or contaminated by a union formed from such an incentive alone."

The Marquis coloured slightly, and thought, "Poor Gabrielle! Living so long in a convent, it is no wonder that she has to title un peu exultie;" but he did not speak, and his sister proceeded.

"Proposals of marriage in her present situation are out of the question, impoverished as the Duc is well known to be, and—"

"Well, Gabrielle, excuse me for interrupting you, but I see her position perfectly; now what do you want me to do—to marry her?"

"Marry her!" repeated Madame de St. Laurent, raising her head and gazing on her brother in astonishment : "nay, iest not. Henri, for this is to me a very grave subject. I will speak my wishes in a few words. I would leave to Louise such a portion of my property as will make it her father's interest to take her home, and will enable him to purchase his freedom from his engagements here, by endowing the convent more largely than he would do on her taking the veil. Nay, nay," she exclaimed, seeing her brother about to speak, " I know what you would say; you are too wealthy to need, too liberal to desire, that I should hesitate in alienating from you a part of my fortune." The Marquis bowed smilingly, and she continued: " But I am going to make a request that will touch the indolence of which you spoke just now. Louise will be many years a minor. I do not think the entire disposal of her fortune should be confided to her selfish parents, and I would leave it in trust to you, the income only to be paid to herself, or whomsoever she may appoint to receive it. Will you accent the trust ?"

"Cheerfully; but depend upon it, Gabrielle, my proposition is the best—will be by far the least troublesome—you had better let me marry her."

Madame de St. Laurent looked steadily on her brother's smiling face, and then said, "Henri, I have lived so long out of the world that I can scarce recognise badinage."

"I assure you, Gabrielle, that though I might have been jesting at first, I am getting quite serious in my proposal. I have always designed one day to marry, and thirty is certainly not too early an age for fulfilling the design. Here, without any trouble of mine in seeking her, a young gril presents herself, endowed with all which I deour requisite in a wife; good birth, beanty enough to do credit to my taske, and good temper enough not to interfere with my pursuits; for this last quality the affection she has won from you is my guarantee—why should I not avail myself of such an opportunity! My alliance will not, I know, be refused by her father. What think you of it, Gabrielle 1.

"That I would not think at all about it, Henri, were I not sure that under all this lightness you hide a heart, and that you would not marry this dear girl unless you could regard her with the tenderness necessary to her happiness."

"As to that, Gabrielle, I must not deceive you. I am not what I was—my romance vanished with my early youth. I am now a man of the world, become, I fear, as I have already said, both selfish and indolent, from uninterrupted good fortune. Yet mine is not an unkind nature, and I candidly think your favourite's prospect of happiness quite as good with me as in any marriage which her father would be likely to form for her. Do not answer me now, Gabrielle. I shall remain to-night at a hotel in the neighbouring village; when I call in the morning, keep the pretty Louise in the room—I will endeavour to attract her attention, and after I am gone you may hint my design to her. Should she evince any repugnance to it, let me know, and I will rollionish it. This is giving her more liberty than any de-

moiselle excepting your indulged self ever had. But you seem faint, I have wearied you. Do not speak—I will ring for Marguerite, and then not another word but good night, dear Gahrielle."

The Marquis rang a bell which stood on the table beside Mandan de St. Laurent, and Marquerite, appearing instantly, conducted him to the convent gate, and returned to administer some reviving drops to her lady, whose feebleness made even long-continued attention to conversation exhausting to her.

The night passed with much thought and little sleep to Madame de St. Laurent, who became every hour more reconciled to her brother's proposal, which, strangely abrupt as it may seem to our readers, had nothing in it to startle a French woman of the eighteenth century. Whatever had been Madame de St. Laurent's freedom of action, she was aware that such alliances were generally arranged on the basis of convenience, without the slightest reference to the choice of the female party to the contract. Here, one of the best offers in France awaited her proteges, with the unusual power of declining it. Sometimes the thought obtunded itself, How could Louise judge—with whom could she compare the Marquist But to this affection replied, Had slie seen the entire world, where could she find a rival to

It would have been indeed difficult to find one who could compete with the Marquis de Montrevel in the graceful elegance of his form, the noble contour of his head, the chiselided beauty of his features, or the courteous and highlypolished manner which seemed the proper accompaniment to such an exterior; yet in his fastidious smile and somewhat discontented air, a skillful physiognomist might have read the history of one who, like the Jowish voluptanzy, had compassed the circle of earthly pleasures, and found their sum "vantity and vexation of spirit."

The next morning, Madame de St. Laurent requested Louise to copy for her a very beautiful flower which had been sent to her by the gardener at the convent. This, as she declared she could not loss sight of it for a moment, could only be done in her own apartment. Pencils and paints were soon brought, and Louise had commenced her drawing, when the Marquis was announced. She would have risen, but Madame de St. Laurent said, "Sit still, my love; Hemi need not interfer with your employment."

The painting was pursued with such apparent absorption. that by many the artist would have been deemed unconscious of aught else; but to the Marquis the flushed cheeks and determinately downcast eyes proved that neither his presence nor his observation was unheeded. Some slight remark on her performance, the suggestion of an improvement, the correction of a hasty touch, and his object was attained. Louise forgot herself in her drawing, and without apprehension looked at and listened to one who seemed so kindly interested in its progress. Few persons understood the art of pleasing better than the Marquis de Montrevel. few evinced more tact in adapting their conversation to the taste and capacity of the listener, when he could be excited to the exercise of his powers-a circumstance of rare occurrence to the blase man of ton. Now, from the painting of Louise, he took occasion to speak of painting in general; of sculpture-described the most beautiful specimens in either line which he had seen-spoke of some celebrated artists with whom he had been acquainted—now moving his hearers to smiles by as, amusing anecdote, and now to tears by a noble trait or a touching incident—the expressions of opinion or feeling which he dexterously drew, sometimes even from the timid Louise, but more frequently from Madame de St. Laurent, preventing his appearing to be the only talker. Two hours thus passed rapidly away, and de Montrevel rose, saving to his sister that he would see her again in the evening, as he should not set off on his return to Paris till the next day. Retaining his hand for a moment at parting, Madame de St. Laurent, with a glance at the unconscious Louise, asked, " Is your design unchanged ?"

"Strengthened," was the reply. "I shall await your communication this evening with some solicitude."

"Come, ma mignonne," said Madame de St. Laurent to Louise, when they were again alone. "Come, rest your fingers, and talk to me a little."

In an instant Louise was beside the couch, and taking her friend's hand, asked, "Of what shall we talk?"

"Of Henri, to be sure. I can just now talk of nothing else. What do you think of him? Is he like me?"

"Very like you, both in looks, and in kind and gentle manners."

"Yes, Henri was ever kind and gentle," said Madame de St. Laurent; then added, as if communing with herself, "and, as a brother, most tender, most generous!"

"How I should have loved such a brother!" exclaimed Louise.

Well, shall I propose to him to adopt you for his sister; or what say you to becoming his wife! Would you be willing to exchange the society of the abbess and nuns for his? The playful tone which Madame de St. Laurent strove to assume was contradicted by the carnest expression with which she gazed into the face of her unsuspecting companion.

Little as the heart could be interested in such a proposal, made under such circumstances, it may, nevertheless, be supposed that it could not be heard without some manifestation of emotion. Timidity will flush the cheek, gratified vanity will sparkle in the eye, while even the fancy remains untouched. But our heroine, it must be recollected, was the creature of very different social institutions from those which exist among us. Of marriage she had heard only in the speculations of her young companions, and to them it was simply une affaire de concenance, desired as a means of introduction to the world, but presenting no thought of mar's chivalric homage, of woman's self-forgetting devotion. It was therefore with an unembarrassed countenance, and in a quiet tone, that she replied to her friend's question, "He is,"

doubtless, much more agreeable than they, and if you go with me, I shall think your proposition very pleasant; but if you stay with the abbess and nuns, so will I."

A shade passed over Madame de St. Laurent's brow, as she thought how soon that young heart must mourn over the severing of a tie so tender. "We will never part, love, till death shall part us," she said earnestly; then, after a moment's pause, added in a lighter tone, "Finish your drawing now, and I will rest."

Madame de St. Laurent received her brother alone in the evening. Their interview was tender, for her feebleness and her affection touched his heart, and awakened to active manifestation the love which, though absence had chilled, it had not destroyed. On her part, sad presentiments added to the pain of parting. She communicated to him her conversation with Louise. He was satisfied that Louise felt no repugnance to him. He doubted not, he said, that he could make her very happy, and since Gabrielle had promised to accompany her, he felt quite impatient to conclude the arrangement, which he would propose to the Duc de la Valière immediately on his arrival at Paris.

#### CHAPTER III

"Admire-exult-despise-laugh-weep-for here There is such matter for all feeling,"-Byrox.

THE glow of summer had departed; the foliage around the convent had been first reddened by the chill nights, then stripped away by the rough winds of autumn; for it was now the middle of November, and even in the sunny South, winter comes not so near without giving some notice of his approach.

None of these changes were remarked by the Marquis de Montrevel, as, at dusky eye, he was drawn by horses foaming and jaded, yet still driven at their utmost speed, to the gates of the convent. As the carriage stopped, he hastily lowered the window, looked out for an instant, then quickly withdrawing his head, exclaimed in a tone of agony, "Too late." The door was opened by one of his attendants: ho seemed not to hear it; the step was lowered; he did not stir. At length a monk drwn ear, and after remaining a moment unnoticed, touched him, saying, "Monsieur." He started as if a cannon had sounded at his ear, and looking fixedly at the good father, repeated, "I am too late."

"Not too late, my son, to join in those offices of our holy religion, in which alone we can now hold communion with tho departed."

Rousing himself, the Marquis descended at once from the carriage, and accepting the arm proffered to him by the sympathizing monk, advanced with a slow step and bewildered air towards the chapel, whose brilliant illumination had first betokened to him that the blow he dreaded had already fallen. Having entered it, he saw not its massive candles, its golden chandeliers, its funereal hangings; he heard not the pealing organ, or the chanting pricets; he saw but the low bier on which rested an open coffin; he heard but the convulsive sobs of the young girl who knelt beside it in all the abandonment of her first deep grief. Relinquishing the arm of the monk, he advanced up the aisle and knelt on the other side of the coffin. And now, as he gazed on those unmoving features, that calm, still face, which wore an expression of peacefulness indeed, yet of a peacefulness mingled with that mysterious awe which we may well suppose the parting spirit to feel at the moment when the angel of death draws aside the dark curtain that has shut from its eager gaze its future home, he felt for the first time that the playmate of his childhood, the friend of his youth, the sister, whose sympathy had been his ere it was asked, whose affection no absence could alienate, no neglect could chill, was dead; that she was, in truth, separated from him, for she had crossed that boundary beyond which those phantoms that

make the weal or woe of earth, whose pursuit constitutes alike its business and its pleasure, have no influence. To the sadness arising from such thoughts was added something of the bitterness of self-reproach.

The Marquis de Montrevel had well described himself in saving that prosperity had made him selfish and indolent, but not heartless. Since his last visit to the convent, he had received several letters from Madame de St. Laurent, some of which gently intimated that if he would see her again, he must come quickly, as she felt herself fading with the fleeting year. Unwilling to admit a painful thought, he had still persuaded himself that Gabrielle was rather dejected than ill. Hoping everything from her return to cheerful society. these letters only served to hasten him in the completion of the arrangements for his marriage with Louise, to which the Duc de la Valliere had given a glad and prompt consent. A letter more than usually urgent and tender startled him, and hurrying over his remaining preparations, he had already despatched a courier announcing his speedy arrival at the convent with all the pomp of equipage and retinue intended to introduce to the world, as the Marquis de Montrevel, her who, as Louise de la Valliere, would have been shut from its humblest sympathies, when he received a few lines, of which the words of love were hers, whose feeble hand had only traced the almost illegible "Gabrielle." All pomp forgotten, all indolence conquered, he but wrote a hasty apology to the Duc de la Vallierc, who was to accompany him, and in less than an hour was on the road, with no companion but his own sad thoughts.

The prayers were offered, the requiem chanted, and, as the solemn service ended, some of the fathers approached the bier. With a hasty gesture, the Marquis put back the hand of one who was about to shut that face for ever from the eyes yet resting on it with lingering fondness; then recollecting himself, ere remonstrance could be offered, ho pressed one long kiss on the cold brow, and, motioning the attendant monks to proceed, turned silently away. He would have

passed from the chapel forgetful of all save his own feelings, had not his statention been arrested by a stiffed ory, tutered by Louise as they attempted to withdraw her from the coffin. Turning quickly towards her, he saw that she had fainted, and taking her from the nun who supported her, he bore her, attended by several of the sisters, to the convent parlour. Laid on a couch, Louise soon revived, and the Marquis waited only till the quivering cyclid and heaving bosom told that consciousness had returned before he took his leave. In doing so, he pressed her hand to his lips, and in gentle, soothing tones, entreated her to seek the rest she so much needed, adding that he would see her early on the morrow. The artless girl, touched by his kindness, and too exhausted to speak her thanks, clasped his hand in both of hers, as she faltered forth a low "good-night."

Louise slept the heavy sleep of fatigue and mental exhaustion, and she awoke. Oh, that first fearful waking after bereavement! Here, at least, the simple girl and the man of the world felt alike. The first thought of each was that a blessing and a charm had passed away from earth. To Louise, it was the only blessing and the only charm her young life had known; and to the Marquis de Montrevel, it was all that remained of that early world over whose pure, fresh feelings, the hollow forms, the chilling associations, and selfish passions of life had swept as a destroying deluge. But youth, buoyant youth, rests not long upon the present: hope ever lures it forward; and Louise soon remembered the interview with her affianced husband, for which she was this morning to prepare. With this remembrance came thought of his gentleness last night, and recollection of the many traits of feeling, tender and noble; the courage and generosity, the devotion in friendship and steady adherence to truth, which Madame de St. Laurent had represented as his prominent developments in youth. As she contemplated these attributes clothed with his elegance of form and fascination of manner, the kindling eye and flushing cheek told that the fluttering heart waited but one wooing word to yield itself a willing captive. Then came the timid apprchensiveness of a sensitive nature, and the thought was almost spoken, "Can be love me, an untaught, unfashioned girl?"

Her father, in his letter communicating the proposal of the Marquis and its acceptance, had said much of his commendation of her beauty, and she now turned to her mirror with more of interest than she had ever before felt in consulting it. Her simple dress admitted but little display of taste, but her clustering curls were dressed and disposed with more than usual care, though, as she completed the task, the slight flush of gratified vanity faded, and hitter tears gushed forth at the thought that she, for whom such efforts had been made, could never see her more.

We have said that the first thought of Louise and of the Marquis de Montrevel had been tho same. With him, too, this thought had been displaced by a remembrance of the morning's promised interview, but far different from hers were the feelings with which he regarded that interview. Hitherto he had almost unconsciously associated Louisc with Gabrielle. In the beauty and good temper, which he regarded as the chief, if not the only charms of Louise; in the fine intellect, the quick sympathies, and polished manners of Gabrielle, he had anticipated attractions which would make his home all that his dreams had given him, and his observation taught him was unattainablo. "True," he would sometimes say to himself, "Louise knows nothing of tho world in which she is about to occupy so prominent a position; but what of that? Gabriello will be with her, and under such guidance her happiness and my honour are secure." But now his future presented a far different prospect. A convent recluse, necessarily ignorant of the simplest forms of society, the transparent purity of whose mind vice hade not dimmed with even the shadow of a shade, he was about to introduce as his wife to the observation of the most polished, to the influence of the most corrupt circle in the world. He must become her tutor and her guardian, and, with habitual indolence, he shrank from the task. But the

Marquis de Montrevel was not wont to dwell long on an unpleasing thought, and very soon a consolatory idea saggested itself. The Duc de la Valliere, whom he had requested to follow him, would probably arrive in a few hours. To him Louise would be consigned, as six months must now clapse before their marriage could with any propriety be celebrated. During this period of mourning for Gabrielle, he would not return to Paris; he would spend it on her estates and his own; his peasantry had been too long neglected. Louise, in the mean time, under her mother's care, would be acquiring some knowledge of the usages of society: her manners would thus be formed without trouble to him. As to her conduct—but here he had reached the gates of the convent, and must postope call further thought for the present.

. He was conducted, on inquiring for Louise, to the parlour where he had formerly seen Madame de St. Laurent. He entered unannounced, having dismissed his conductor at the door. Louise rose from a table, at which writing materials were arranged, to meet him. Her movements were hesitating and embarrassed, and her eve avoided his; vet her hand was extended, and her simple greeting was uttered in a tone which sorrow seemed to have made more soft and musical. How involuntarily, often how unconsciously, the thoughts and feelings of the moment give their hue to the manners! The Marquis de Montrevel had been, last evening, gentle-nay, almost tender-to this young girl. She surely now presented no less claim to his interest; yet her hand was touched so lightly, and his "Good-day, mademoiselle," was uttered in a tone so cold, that Louisc, her girlish embarrassment overcome by a deeper feeling, looked up inquiringly into his face. Its expression did not probably reassure her, for it was with an air of yet deeper sadness that she seated herself on the couch beside which she had been standing.

Pained by the remembrance of his last visit to that room, Do Montrevel turned to a window to recover himself. When he looked again at Louise, the glow, which his cntrance had brought into her cheeks, had faded, and her drooping attitude and the tears which fell slowly and unheeded from her downcast eyes, were expressive of an unresisting hopelessness, which in the very young affects us more painfully than the most passionate grief. He approached, and, seating himself beside her, addressed her in a tone kinder, if not less grave.

"The contrast between this meeting and that which I lad anticipated for us, oppresses me." She remained silent, and he continued, "We both mourn a very dear friend Louise."

"Ah! she was my only one," said Louise, in a tone so sad that—touched to the heart, his selfais worldlines for the time, thoroughly rebuked—De Montrevel passed his arm around her, and, drawing her gently to him, said, with deep feeling, "Not so, Louise; no your only friend; there is one beside you, on whose tenderness you have the strongest claim. Can you love him, Louise? (an you give him that place in your heart from which death has removed one far worthier?"

The form he clasped yielded unresistingly to his embrace: the face was hidden on his bosom, and to his questions no answer was returned. He raised the overhanging curls, and touched with his lips the now crimsoned brow; then pressing back the head, looked into the face and read his answer —not in the eyes, for they were closed—but in the changing cheek, and the soft, tender smile which just parted the beautiful lips.

De Montrevel had passed most of his life among the artificial, and this lovely child of nature was to him a new study. The deep, fervent, yet pure feeling depicted in her face.

> "Mingling the meek and vestal fires Of other worlds with all the bliss, The fond, weak tenderness of this,"

was to him as a revelation from a holier sphere, and there was no hypocrisy in the words of soft endearment which he uttered in the deep, low tones of passion. For the moment

the crust which had been gathering around his heart for years was picreed, and its pluses stirred into fuller and healthier action. Did he love? Ay, but it was as a selfish man of the world loves, with a feeling all unlike to that of the confiding grif whose heart reposed itself on his, even as the weary bird folds its wing within its quiet nest at evening hour.

Madame de St. Laurent believed that a wife's best talisman for the preservation of peace and purity lay in her devotion to her husband. In accordance with this belief, she had striven, on learning the Duc de la Valliere's acceptance of her brother's proposal, to excite the admiration of Louisc for his fine qualities, and thus to prepare her heart for bestowing on him the rich store of tenderness which lay treasured there. She spoke to her, too, of wedded life-of the perfect sympathy existing between two congenial spirits, united by a bond which so linked their destinies, that their objects of joy and sorrow, of hope, and fear, and affection, were identical, till marriage became to Louise a word significant of all which could gratify the heart's purest, deepest, and most fervent desires. The convent was no longer regarded by her as the home of peace-it was a dull prison. shutting its inmates from the hope and joy which gladdened all the rest of the earth. A new soul scemed infused into her, which shed over her face more spiritual beauty. As sho sat silent at her work, Madame de St. Laurent watching her countenance, now pensive, now joyous, and listening to her quivering sigh, knew well that her thoughts were busy weaving the web of the future, and stamping it with dyes brighter and deeper than those which marked the present or the past. Impulses of which she had hitherto been unconscious-sentiments which would have slumbered for ever, had no influence from the outward world penetrated the convent's seclusion, were awake, never to sleep again.

In the impassioned tenderness of De Montrevel, these impulses had now found their appropriate object—these sentiments, the sympathy they craved, and the sketches of fancy, the pictures of hope, which she feared were too bright and beautiful for earth, had become to her living realities, beside which, all else in life was too tame and spiritless to excite a wish or arouse a fear. In them thenceforth lay her "being's aim or its extinction." The good and evil of her character, as well as of her destiny, might, nay, must thenceforth be deeply influenced by De Montrevel. It depended on him whether this should be a conscious, intelligent, moral influence, or a blind unconscious agency. Unhappily for him, he knew not his own power; more unhappily for her he recognised not his responsibilities. Is not this ignorance, this unconsciousness, the "root of bitterness," from which springs much of man's sin and woman's misery? Gifted with creative power, he exercises it in sport-speaks into being affections, hopes, desires-places them in the peaceful Eden of woman's heart-then leaves them with cold neglect to wither and die, or, maddened by the serpent sting of pride, to spread desolation and anguish through their fair dwelling-place.

Louise almost repreached herself in after times for the perfect happiness of the hour succeeding the interview we have described. It seemed a sin searce pardonable against her who had been held as best and dearest, that another's voice could so soon woo her heart from her grave back to the world—ay, could elothe the world in even lovelier hues than those in which her tenderness had invested it.

The Marquis de Montrevel was arrested in his brief forgetfulness of the despotism which would enchain the very spirits of those who acknowledge its power by the appearrance of one of its most submissive subjects, the Duc de la Valliere. His arrival was announced by one of the sisters, and the marquis had scarce time to whisper a few words of encouragement to the trembling Louise, when he was heard approaching the little parlour where they say.

Louise had left her parents so young that her memory retained no impress of their forms. Their conduct to her had not been such as to awaken the grateful enthusiasm by which the bonds of habit might have been supplied. Still, her loving heart could not be wholly unmindful of those who had given her being, and Madame de St. Laurent had taught her that father, mother, were sacred names. They were names associated with her morning and evening prayer from childhood. Often had imagination presented her parents to her, and painted, in her own brilliant colours, the scene of their first meeting. She had persuaded herself that, though forgotten in the crowded interests and varying pleasures of life, they could not see her, their child-their only childunmoved. That her looks, pleading to them for love-her voice, syllabling father-mother-would be to the scaled fountain of parental tenderness in their bosoms even as the warm beams and soft breath of spring to the frozen brook. It was therefore with a glad feeling that, on hearing her father speaking to an attendant at the door, she started even from the encircling arm of De Montrevel, to meet and welcome him

Do Montrevel gazed on her with a smile half wondering, half compassionate, as he saw her, after advancting a step or two, stand with eyes fixed on the door, heightened colour, and hands clapsed over the heart whose throbbings were distinctly visible. He wondered at the enthusiate imagination which could invest one whose conduct had been so coldly selfish with attributes worthy of reverence or love; he compassionated the disappointment which he knew awaited such imaginings.

As the Duc de la Valliere entered, Louise fixed her eyes carnestly, besechingly on his face. How unlike was this face to that which had often presented itself as his to her mental vision! The features were well formed, the eyes were animatel, but no ray from them reached the heart of the gazer. A bland smile, seldom displaced, told his selfcomplacency, while the minute attention visible in his dress and manner wore somewhat the air of foppery in one who could not have numbered less than fifty years. Nothing of all this, however, was noted by Louise.

"M" father" she murmured, in a tone so low and agitated,

that the Duc heard it not; at least, it did not interrupt the greeting which, without apparently observing Louise, he was addressing to the Marquis de Montrevel. "Ah! De Montrevel. I sincerely condole with you on the

"Ah! De Montrevel, I sincerely condole with you on the late melancholy event, yet I am most happy to see you looking so well."

From heartless condolences the true mourner shrinks, and De Montrevel noticed those of the Duc only by a bow, as he replied, "And I, monsieur, am most happy in presenting to you your daughter." He advanced, as he spoke, to the side of Louise, and ted her to the Duc.

Taking her hand, and coldly saluting her, the Duc said, "So this is an patite Louises—patie no longer, however. Why, Mademoisselle de la Valliere, I am more than half inclined to leave you at the convent till you can enter the world with another name. With such a daughter by my side, I shall never be able to persuade myself, or others, that I am not a very respectable, elderly gentleman."

"Ah, my father! I would still be a child to you," said Louise, pressing the hand she continued to clasp.

"At least, I cannot dispute you are my child. Indeed, I

think you are quite like me. Is she not, Marquis?"

The Marquis smiled faintly, but did not reply. He saw
no resemblance, and would have been sorry to see any.

"Will you not be seated, sir?" asked Louise, timidly.

"For a few minutes," he replied, handing her to a chair and taking another himself, "while I learn from De Montrevel where I am to bestow myself and my attendants."

"You will find ample and comfortable accommodation at the hotel where I am staying. How long will you remain?"

"No longer than you are desirous to do; you will return with us. I presume?"

De Montrevel appeared to be slightly embarrassed, as this observation recalled the train of thought, which had led to his decision to spend the period of mourning for his sister on his estates rather than in Paris, and in the society of Louise. He glanced at her, and as he caught her ver fixed upon him with an earnest and anxious expression, he wavered; but old habits of thought and feeling were yet stronger than those which Louise had awakened, and they prevailed.

"Business," he replied, "will compel me to delay my return to Paris." He spoke hurriedly, and immediately added, in a more quiet manner, "We will speak of all necessary arrangements elsewhere, for Mademoiselle de la Valliere seems exhausted." She, at least, seemed depressed, for his answer lad disappointed her, and with the quivering sigh, which, low as it was, reached the ear of the conscious De Montrevel, vanished many a bright vision of enjoyment on the journey and in Paris.

The Due fixed his eyes on De Montrevel for a moment, as if he would read his meaning more fully in his face; but acquiescing in his desire not to continue their conversation there, he rose, saying, "Well, Louise, you must be on the alert if you go with me, for I shall be on the road to Paris to-morrow; the air of the country makes me ill. You have no attendant, I hope, for I have only one carriage." Without waiting for a reply, he bade her "good-day," and turning to the Marquis, asked how he came there, as he did not see his carriage in waiting.

"I walked."

"Then, will you take a seat in my carriage? We shall

need a guide to our night's quarters."

"With pleasure," said De Montrevel: "I will follow you

instantly."

The Duc left the room, and De Montrevel, returning to the side of Louise, said, \* You seem so much wearied that I will not ask to see you this evening, as I had intended; but tell me if your father's movements are to rapid for you; if they are, I can, I doubt not, induce him to delay."

"No: I have no preparations to make, and can go at any moment he desires, if I go at all; but I think my father would prefer returning alone; and I have no objection now to remain at the convent."

"Now-may I flatter myself that this now bears any refer-

ence to my movements?" Louise blushed, and was silent.
"Are you displeased, Louise, that I do not accompany you?"
"Displeased at your doing what you cannot help? Busi-

"Displeased at your doing what you cannot help? Business, I know, must be attended to, but—"She paused, tears rushed to her eyes, and the convulsive movement of the muscles of the throat showed that she was endeavouring to drive back to her heart a gush of sorrow.

"But what? Speak out, Louise."

"I shall be very lonely with no one near me who know and loved her—far more lonely among the crowds of Paris than here in my convent home, surrounded by familiar objects, each of which tells to my heart some tale of past love and joy. I hoped Marguerite could go with me, but my father said—"

"Never mind what your father said; Marguerite shall go with you."

"Thank you—thank you," said Louise, joyfully: "you are very kind."

"Then you will not refuse my reward," said De Montrevel, as, drawing her to him, he imprinted a kiss on the lips to which his promise had restored their wonted smile. Another moment, and he was gone.

Louise felt that this was intended by De Montrevel as his farwell—that he did not design to see her again before she left the convent. Spite of herself, her heart murmured at his decision not to accompany her to Paris. "Surely," it suggested, "the business must be very important which could not be postponed for a few days—a week—a fortnight. By that time I should have been acquainted with my new home and its immates—acquainted with my mother! How will she meet met! Will she complain, as my father does, that twelvo years have added something to my stature? Alt met! I fear the world is not all so bright as my fancy painted it." Such were the seemingly unconnected, but, in truth, closely-linked thoughts which chased each other through the mind of Louise, when left alone by the departure of De Montrevel.

#### CHAPTER IV

"Who loves, raves; 'tis youth's phrensy, but the cure
Is bitterer still."—Byrox.

The next morning's sun rose in an unclouded sky. Louise

and the good Marguerite were carly astir. Marguerite's most earnest wish, now that her own kind lady was removed beyond the reach of her grateful attentions, was to remain with Louise, whom her cares, under the judicious direction of Madame de St. Laurent, had nursed into health, and whom she had therefore always regarded as a foster-child. She had the preceding night administered to her a composing draught, and watched beside her with motherly tenderness till her broken and feverish slumbers settled into calm, refreshing sleep. Now she insisted on making all the arrangements necessary for their journey, leaving Louise free to wander at will through scenes linked with sweet though mournful memories-to weep in the chamber of death-to pray in the chapel for the repose of her soul whose mortal remains rested beneath-to visit the garden walks which she had most loved-and, last of all, taking her accustomed seat on a footstool beside the couch in her friend's favourite sitting-room, to recall the tenderness with which she had soothed her griefs and ministered to her pleasures, the judgment with which she had counselled and guided, and the patience with which she had instructed her-till, oppressed with a sense of her irreparable loss, she dropped her head upon the cushions, and gave vent to her sorrow in tears and sobs.

Absorbed in such agitating emotions, she heard not or heeded not approaching steps, till the door was thrown open, and the voice of a nun was heard exclaiming, "Ah! here is Mademoiselle Louise."

Rising hastily, and turning to the door, Louisc beheld her

father. His air was hurried, and, scarcely noticing her salutation, he exclaimed, with an air of chagrin, "You have been weeping till your eyes are red and swollen. It hope you are not given to tears, for they are always disfiguring. You't dress, too, is disordered. I hope you will not appear quite so much as dishabilit when the Marquis comes."

"The Marquis!" said Louise, with surprise; "will he be

"Yes; I had forgotten you did not know it. He is coming to sign the contract before we leave."

"The contract! What contract!"

"What contract! why, the contract of marriage between Henri Marquis de Montrevel and Louise de la Valliere, who looks at present much more like the inhabitant of a gloomy convent than like the fances of one of our noblest and wealthiest seigneurs."

"But, my father, why such haste! I cannot at present, as you yourself observe, make an appearance suited to such a ceremony; besides"—tears again rushing to her eyes—"it seems strangely out of keeping with the occasion which brought the Marquis here, and the feelings—"

The Duc interrupted her with an impatient gesture and a haughty erection of his figure, evidently intended to be dignified. "You seem, Mademoiselle de la Valliere, for so young a lady, strangely confident in your own opinion, and quite disposed to censure your father. May I hope that you will have more courtesy than to repeat to the Marquis de Montrevel an observation which would convey a somewhat in-delicate reflection upon his propriety of feeling and conduct?

The coldly supercitious tone in which this was said pained Louise yet more than the reproach it conveyed. Perhaps it was as much mortified pride as wounded tenderness which sent the blood rushing to her neek, cheek, and brow. But hers was a gentle nature, and softer impulses prevailed. When she spoke, it was in a deprecating tone. "Pardon me, my father. I meant not to say aught that could offend; but..."

"Well, well," again interrupting her, "we have no time for conversation. You may trust to my knowledge of the world to secure you from being required to do anything which is not perfectly comme if faut. Let me now advise your withdrawing till you have arranged your dress, and effiaced the traces of tears. I should be sorry De Montrevel should see you looking so dismally. Take my word for it, whatever poets and romancers may say, men of the world seldom admire a weeping beauty."

Her father's badinage was scarcely heard by Louise as she withdrew from his presence, trembling and agitated. She was glad, on reaching her room, to find that Marguerite was no longer there. She needed to be alone, that she might arrange, not the dress, about which her father was solicitous, but the thoughts which whirled with bewildering rapidity through ber mind, and the strangely-mingled emotions which filled her heart. But vesterday a mourner beside the grave of her only friend, turning with a sick shudder from the cold, and dark, and lonely pilgrimage which life presented to her: to-day a bride, the bride of De Montrevel-of De Montrevel, the noble, the generous, the true-of De Montrevel, who had taken her, desolate and lonely as she was, to his heart-at the remembrance of whose lightest caress her nerves yet thrilled, while each treasured tone of those dear words with which he claimed her as his own, awoke an echo in her heart, full, and soft, and deep, like the unearthly music of which men have dreamed, and whose memory has haunted them ever after, marring all other melody.

She sat thus absorbed in reverio, till aroused by the entrance of Marguerite, and her hurried exclamation, "Why, Mademoiselle Louise, here you sit as quietly as if you had nothing to do, and Monsieur le Due waiting, as he bade me tell you, to lead you into the parlour, where Monsieur de Montrevel has just entered with a notary."

As Louise raised her eyes, they rested on a mirror before her, and the reflection it presented reminded her of the object for which she had left her father. All trace of tears had vanished, and the joyous expression of her countenance, lighted up as it was by happy thoughts, might have satisfied oven such an inveterate opponent of melancholy as the Due de la Valliere; but her hair was still sadly disordered, and her dress would certainly not have been pronounced by him comme il faut. Hastily taking out a comb with which she had confined her hair in preparing for her journey, she saids as she began to a rarnege; it. "Hasten, my good Marguerite, to my father; ask him to have patience with me for half an hour, when I will be ready to join him; then go to our kind mother, the abbess—but stay—who knocks?"

Marguerite, opening the door, stood reverently aside to green transe to a lady of gentle and pleasing though grave countenance, and dignified demeanour. Louise advanced to meet her, and bending her head reverently, pressed to her lips the hand she presented to her, saying, "Your blessing, holy mother." "It is thine, my daughter," said the abbess, as she laid her hand affectionately on her head.

"I was just sonding my good nurse to ask an interview with you that I might present yet another petition to you." Louise seemed embarrassed, and spoke with hesitation. The abbess replied, with a slight smile, "And I have come to offer what you were probably about to ask—that I would attend you to the pariour, and witness your betrothment to the Marquis de Montrevel. You seem surprised. My knowledge is no mystery. I have just seen the Marquis, who informed me himself of his reason for coming accompanied by a notary. But scat yourself, my daughter; you tremble, and trembling fingers are ill fitted to perform the friseur's task. Let Marquiorite assist you."

The pleased Marguerite, who had returned from her errand to the Duc, advanced, and Louise seated herself, saying as she did so, "How shall I thank you, my kind mother, for your anticipation of a request I almost feared to make!"

"And why did you fear, Louise? Did you suppose that, in assuming the habit of the religibuse, I had forgotten the feelings or laid aside the symmathics of the woman?"

Louise, agitated, yet happy, paid but little attention to the proceedings of Marguerite, whose delight it had ever been to adorn her young favourite for those religious festivals whose recurrence forms the only interruption to the monotony of conventual life. The dress which the taste of Madame de St. Laurent had arranged for Louise on the last of these occasions had been considered more than usually becoming, and this, Marguerite had decided, should be worn to-day. She had, accordingly, decorated the tresses which she was arranging with a riband of the palest rose colour; and she now produced from the garde-robe beside her a dress of that beautiful muslin which is woven only in the looms of India, lined with silk of the same delicate hue. Louise put it quickly aside, saying, "Ah, no! Marguerite, I cannot lay aside this," touching, as she spoke, the black dress which, having also been made for the celebration of some religious solemnity, had been worn by her ever since her friend's death.

"Surely, mademoiselle," said Marguerite, "you would not sign your marriage contract in mourning—it would be an ill omen."

The ready tear had already risen to the eve of Louise as

she replied, "Marguerite, would you have me so soon seem forgetful of my great cause for mourning?"

"Nay, my child," said the abbess, kindly, taking her hand,
"Marguerite is right. You must not appear at your betrothment in a dress consecrated to sad occasions; not from
superstitious motives, but because it would be considered
disrespectful to him to whom you are about to be contracted?"

This was an all-powerful motive with Louise, and without farther remonstrance, she suffered herself to be attired. The style of her dress was at once picturesque and becoming, and we well believe no lovelier personification of the budding hopes and freshespringing joys of youth wer appeared to luman vision, than she presented, as, leaning on her father's arm, precoded by the abbess and attended by Margueritos.

she entered the apartment already the scene of so many agitating events, where the Marquis de Montrevel, with the notary, awaited her. Her eyes were veiled by their dark, silken lashes, which almost rested on her glowing cheeks; but to her mental vision a picture was presented, beneath whose influence her heart throbbed visibly, and the "eloquent blood," by its rapid ebb and flow, told a tale of timid joy and maiden consciousness. As she presented herself, the Marquis de Montrevel, who had hitherto worn an air of almost haughty coldness and reserve, stepped rapidly forward to greet her, but arresting himself ere he had reached her, awaited her approach at the table, at which the notary was already standing, parchment in hand. The Duc led Louise to his side, and made a sign to the notary to procoed. The notary at once commenced reading what he said was a contract of marriage between Henri Marquis de Montrevel on the one hand, and Louise, only daughter of the Duc de la Valliere, on the other. Without this fact having been previously ascertained, his rapid enunciation and frequent abbreviations, which soon brought him to the conclusion of the instrument, would probably have baffled the curiosity of the most interested listener. A pen was placed in the trembling fingers of Louise, and the notary pointed out to her where she should affix her name. Her agitation made her first effort to do so unsuccessful; the pen fell from her hand. De Montrevel, who had hitherto stood a motionless statue by her side, seemed suddenly restored to life. He replaced the pen in her hand, spoke to her soothingly, encouragingly; she tried again, and succeeded. He took the pen from her and rapidly affixed his own signature. Before he had laid aside the pen, the notary presented to him another paper. "Read, sir," said De Montrevel, in a quick, sharp tone. The notary glanced towards the Duc, whose manner evinced even more than its usual self-complacency, as, with the blandest possiblo expression, he said, "Nay, Marquis, it is scarce worth while to detain our friends here with that form. We know the contents of the paper, and they will witness our signatures."

Do Montrevel wrote his name rapidly without replying, but those who observed him as he did so must have seen with surprise, the cold and bitter sneer upon his lip. The Duc de la Valliere, after signing the second paper, said courteously, "I assure you, De Montrevel, this alliance gives me great pleasure."

"I hope you are satisfied, monsieur," was the singular reply.

Louise, absorbed in happy dreams, had heard little, and comprehended less of what was passing around her, till now that something in the tone of De Montrevel caused her to raise her eyes to his face. It was unusually pale—pale with painfully suppressed emotion—and its severe expression childed her to the heart. With a species of fascination she continued to graze upon him, while her checks grew almost as colourless as his own, till her abstraction was dispelled by an unusually loud call from her father. Turning, she saw the abbess waiting to take leave of her.

"God bless you, my daughter! You will think of us sometimes, and though I hope your future will be too happy to allow regret to mingle with the memory, it may be otherwise. I would not andsten you, dear child, by gloomy foreboding, but I cannot part with you without asying that, should the world disappoint you, you will find here ever the same tranquility which has marked your past life. Adien?

Louise would have knelt to receive her blessing, but clasping her in her arms, she affectionately kissed her cheek, then, bending her head to the others present, passed directly from the room.

The witnesses of the brief ceremony had all departed. Even the Marquis de Montrevel had withdrawn. He had gone with the notary, saying something as he went of directions which it was necessary to give him respecting certain papers having reference to his sister's estates. The Duc had returned to his hotel, whence he intended setting out on his return to Paris, after an early dinner. Here Louise was directed to join him, before the hour of departure, in the earriage of De Montrevel, which was to be sent back to Paris, in order to obviate her father's objection to the attendance of Marguerite.

As the Duc, who had been the last to depart, closed the door after him, Louise drew her breath deep and long, as we all do when we feel ourselves relieved from great oppression, either mental or physical. Poor victim I she had already entered the charmed eirele of society—its fetters were upon feer. She had already learned to blush for a natural and pure emotion, and, with a strength born with the occasion, to chain it down in the depth of her heart; and even while agonized by its wild struggles for deliverance, to look, and speak, and move as if all were at peace within. She had become a WOMAN.

The smile with which to the last she had listened to her father's arrangements for the journey, vanished as he closed the door; and turning away, she walked slowly to the window looking into the convent garden, in which she knew there would, at this hour of the day, be no observers. Her thoughts now recurred to the first day on which she had seen De Montrevel. She recalled the indifference with which she had seen his arrival and heard of his departure-the surprise with which she had learned his designs regarding herselfthe gentleness with which he had soothed her grief-the passionate admiration and tender promises of vesterdaythis morning's brilliant hopes-and that stern, gloomy brow, whose shadow had chilled her heart and darkened the future, which had seemed but a few hours ago so dazzling. We speak much of the hopes, the joys, the transports of youth: but is there not to this picture, as to every other, a reverse? Is there any bitterness like that of the young heart when it first learns to distrust, especially when the painful lesson has been taught by the object to whose truth and tenderness it gave its illimitable confidence?

As Louise leaned her head against the easement and closed her eyes, as if to shut out a world so delusive in its promises of good, she wished, and almost prayed, that death would so his seal upon them; that she might find shelter from sorrow to come at the side of her who had been her first, and would, she feared, prove her last consistent friend. Thus would every unchastened spirit fice at its first step into the precincts of sorrow.

"Louise," was pronounced at her side almost in a whisper, but in a voice whose lightest tone found an echo in her heart. She turned, and beheld De Montrovel gazing on her, no longer with coldness and gloom, but with undisquised interest and admiration. Recollection of the subject of her late reverio sent a quick flush to her cheeks, though she endeavoured to speak with calmness, "I thought you had left the convent, monsicur!"

"And did you not suppose I would return to say farewell?"
Louise mised her eyes to his for a moment, her lips parted
as if she would speak, but no sound issued from them, and
with a sudden movement she averted her head.

"I understand and feel that mute reproach, Louise; but though I can scarce forgive myself for suffering any feeling to make me seem regardless of you at such a time, I believe your gentle heart would readily accord my pardon, could you know the circumstances which had wounded and chilled me."

Louise, though her face was again turned to him, remained silent, with downcast eyes, as if awaiting his farther explanation.

"These circumstances were—were"—Do Montroval hasitated, acemed embarrassed, but the next moment appearing to have decided on his course, proceeded rapidly, "were of such a nature, that I fear their recital would give you pain; I would therefore avoid it, unless I may hope in no other way to win back your confidence. But, Louise, can you trust mel Will you not believe my assurance that, even when I seemed coldest, there was no coldness in my heart— —that I value as deeply as man can do the privilege which this morning has conferred on me, of calling you my own, my affianced one! Do you not believe me, Louise! Will you not give me one look of faith?" Again her eyes were raised to his, but how different was the glance! They were full of tears, yet they spoke neither reproach nor sorrow. He saw them but for one instant; the next they were hidden upon his shoulder, while he murmured in her ear a thousand protestations of love.

In her ear a thousand protestations of 19ve.

Their interview was interrupted by the entrance of Marguerite with refreshments. Louise soon afterwards retired to resume her travelling-dress. De Montrevel accompanied her to the hotel, at which the Duc awaited her. Before they parted, he said, "I cannot now go with you to Paris, but you must not be surprised if you see me there very soon. I shall doubtless have many competitors for your smiles, for all will think their homage licensed while our contract remains, as it must be for some months to come, a sceret. How long, with these adorers present, may I trust your memory of the absent!"

Louise smiled faintly as she replied, "I see your kind design through your badinage, yet, in spite of all your efforts to reassure me, I shrink from encountering the gay crowd of Paris, and long already to creep back to shelter in the couvent; I am so unfit for the world, so ignorant of its ways."

"Nay, may, you do not desire, I flatter myself, to live always at the convent. To acquire knowledge of the world's ways, we must might with the world; but in this as in other things, 'Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,' and you carry a charm in your face which, by winning all hearts, will make even this premier pas easy. I am impatient to see the homoge paid you, for your triumph will now be mine."

Thus does man live for the world, and by the world, dependant on its opinion even in the exercise of his affections, for that gem is little valued which has not received the stamp of its approbation. Not so is it with woman. The object of her love receives no added laster from outward things, but is himself the sun from which they derive all light. Is he a monarch! He dignifies his office, not his office him. Does he pass through the world unnoticed and unknown! She pities the rest of earth, that to them the vell overring the glories of that heart and mind has not been lifted. Is his name cast out as evil—does he move through life the object of contunely and reproach? She is the sun that gilds the dark clouds in his sky, the flower that sheds its perfume in his path, the stream that gildes beside him through the desert; and when he approaches the valley of the shadow of death, through which monarch and contemmed outeast must alike pass, in the arms of her undying love and pure faith he is supported, and, checred by her voice and smile, he enters that dark and narrow time-portal from which we shrink only when we see not its glorious issue into terruity.

## CHAPTER V.

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world—if he could get her good-will.—Much ado about Nothing.

THE meridian sun was shining brightly on the busy crowds of Paris, though many in that eity, where the highest burny, and the deepest and most degrading poverty dwell side by side, had not yet looked upon its beams. The male idler was still lounging in the dressing-room where his coffee had been served, journal in hand, while the belle, at whose shirine he had bowed the last evening, was arranging the elegant dehabitle in which she would receive his morning devoirs.

By none was this important task performed with more care than by Henriette Chalonet, the cousin of Louise, whose removal from the convent, preparatory to her marriage, took place on the day succeeding her introduction to the reader. The child of kind, but thoughtless parents, Honriette had from her birth been reared for the position she now occupied in society. To amuso herself, she had been taught to think the great end of life—to attain a situation where this could most successfully be done, its chief aim.

Early contracted to the Sieur Chalonet, whose immense wealth and apparently easy temper counterbalanced, in the opinion of her father and herself, the difference in their ages—he was fifty, sho eighteen at their marriage—she had anticipated the period of their union as that of her emanelpation from the restraints which the structure of French society compelled her to endure in girlhood. Now she was mistress of a sumptuous hotel, surrounded by all the elegances which gold can purchase, and completely mistress of their married life, her husband had seldom intraded on the first, or attempted to direct the last. Yet, in the midst of her smiles and gaiety, there lurked a secret discontent, witness of the immortal spirit within her, which could not satisfy its thirst at the shallow fountains hitherto opened to it.

satisfy its times at the samely contains interest operate of it.

Her femme de clambre was giving an air of more graceful
negligence to the ringlets escaping with apparent carclessness from her elegant morning-cap, when a tap at the door
of her dressing-room announced a visiter. At her "entrez!"
a young man of highly fashionable air presented himself.
"Ah, ma belie saur," he occlaimed, on seeing her, "already
prepared for conquest. Well, I am glad your toilet is
made, for I want to see you alone before your attendant
beaux arrives.

"I hope, Auguste, you have no more perplexities, either pecuniary or amatory, to confide."

"No, no, I have nothing to ask but advice, which everybody is willing to give, and for that I will pay with news, which everybody, in this novelty-loving world, is ready to receive; so send Annette for some coffee, or bombons, or wintever your please, before visiters arrive."

At a sign from Henrictte, the scrvant left the apartment.

"Well, now that Annette has gone, what is your news?"
"Why, the Due de la Valliere arrived last night." Augusto

"Why, the Duc de la Valliere arrived last night." Augusto paused for a moment. "The Duc de la Valliere arrived last night," repeated Henriette, in an impatient tone. "Is this your important news?"

"Do not be so impatient, Henriette-the Duc has brought his daughter with him."

"Brought Louise with him? Why, where is De Mon-

trevel? Is she not married?"
"No-Madame de St. Laurent is dead; this has, of course,

caused the marriago to be postponed, and so here is Louiso without her Marquis, whom Heaven keep safely away!"

"Why," said Henrictte, colouring, "what interest have

you in his absence?"

"Ah! now comes the confidential part of my story—but first, will you promise to aid me in my designs?"

"In what designs, Auguste! You are very tiresome with your secret, which is, after all, no secret to me. I doubt not you have seen this baby-face, and fallen in love with her, as you have done with twenty others."

"You are altogether wrong, Henriette, for though she is no hobby-face, but a bewitchingly beautiful girl, with more soul in one glance of her eye than could be furnished by all those 'twenty others,' I am not fool enough to fall in love with one who would not understand fiiration, unless there was something more substantial than beauty to feed my passion. Do not interrupt me, or I shall never bring my stery to an end. I have seen the Duc this morning. Ho is full of mysterious insendos, and enigmatical enough for a Greeian oracle; still, I have been ablo to read some of his dark sayings pretty clearly, and from them I make out that Madame do St. Laurent has left all her fortune, which I have heard was immense, to Louise, and that from some whim of De Montrevel, this will is to be kept secret even from her-solf, till she is his marquise.'

"A very improbable fancy for one so wealthy and so careless as De Montrevel is reported to be," said Henriette.

"Not so improbable, if you will think a moment. He is at once one of the proudest and the most indolent of men, and would therefore shrink from the rivalry he would undoubtedly encounter, should Louise unite the reputation of wealth to the possession of beauty."

"True-true-you are right," said Henriette: "and your plan-"

"May now be read by one far less discerning than yourself. It is to woo the beauty and win the heiress, while my disinterestedness shall charm her and astonish the world."

"Feasible enough, if your rival were any other than De Montrevel."

"She has seen too little of him to have formed any attachment for him. You shake your head. Well, if she loves him, pique at his neclect shall throw her but the more surely into my arms." "And what am I to do for you?"

"Ingratiate yourself with Louise, that intimacy with the sister may induce confidence in the brother. Intimate as I am there. I shall have a thousand opportunities which would be denied to any other. You might serve me in another way-a way I do not think you would find at all unpleasing -to exert all your attractions to bring De Montrevel within the circle of your admirers,"

"Do you suppose Louise so insensible as not to perceive, or so tame-spirited as not to resent my efforts to supplant her!"

"From her face, I should neither think her insensible nor tame-spirited; but, as Balzae says, you ought to be appointed Grand Mistress of the Order of Coquettes, I may surely trust to your skill to make one so little acquainted with the world and its ways as Louise, feel your influence without even dreaming of your agency."

"She is the most credulous of mortals-an easy subject. I acknowledge, for the exercise of my powers."

"Well, how do you like your role in my petite comedie?" "Vastly: De Montrevel is a king among men, and it would be a triumph to see him at my feet." Henriette spoke with a flushed cheek and sparkling eyes. Auguste smiled. "So it seems we are playing into each other's hands. Well, if you will so ceeupy his time as to preven this observation of my proceedings, or his disputing the prize in person with me, I will do all I can to aid you in securing the triumph. What say you F.

"So be it."

"Then, our plans being arranged, let us commence the campaign at once. Can you not call to see Louise this morning, and take me with you?"

"Willingly-order my earriage while I dress."

The Duchesse de la Valliere had been just about to step into her carriage for the opera, when the arrival of the Duc and her daughter was announced. With an unusual manifestation of interest, she returned to the house and delayed her departure for full five minutes, in order to velcome her long-estranged child. Her greeting was kind, even affectionate; and if it full below the earlier visions of Louise, it as far exceeded all the expectations she had formed since her first interview with her father. Kissing, Louise repeatedly, she called her "Dear child?" praised her beauty, more than once saying to the Duc, as she gazed on her, "Is she not beautiful?"

Louise could only ejaculate "Dear mother!"

"Mother!" she repeated, smiling; "I am not quite sure I like that word—let me hear it again."

Louise laughed, yet in her softest and tenderest tones said again, "My mother."

"Yes, it is very sweet; and your voice—do you sing?" "Yes."

"A little, I suppose; like all young ladies."

"No—a great deal; the dear friend who taught me loved to hear me sing."

"I doubt not I, too, shall love to hear you sing; but now I
must go to hear some other people sing, about whom all
Paris has gone mad. I will give you into the care of my
maid for to-nicht."

She rang the bell as she spoke, and the summons was

answered by the entrance of a girl whom she addressed as Lucille, directing her to show Mademoisellc and her attendant to the apartments prepared for her, and to see that she had all she wanted. "And now," she continued, turning to Louise, "good night, ma belle. Sleep soundly, dream pleasantly, and look your loveliest to-morrow."

She kissed her, and left the saloon quickly, while Lucillo led the way through an opposite door to the sleeping apartment of Louise.

This was large and handsome, but looked cheerless by the dim light carried by Lucille, and felt chill and damp, as it had been long unoccupied, and there was no fire in the chimney. Louise could not suppress a sigh as she thought of her cheerful room at the convent, and felt the absence of those little attentions to which she had been accustomed from Madame de St. Laurent, and on which, though we take scarcely any note of them save by their loss, so much of our enjoyment depends. We are accustomed to hear it said that external circumstances have little influence over the happiness of a faithful loving heart. True, it matters not to such a heart whether its dwelling be in a lofty palace or a lowly cottage, its nightly slumbers on a couch of down or a pallet of straw; but let the palace or the cottage, the down couch or the straw pallet, bear the visible impress of affection-let us read in their arrangements the tender thoughts towards us of some other heart, and their influence on our happiness is no longer little, for material things become thus the conductors from heart to heart of that moral electricity which we term sympathy.

In less time than we have taken to note down these passing thoughts on the passing depression of Louise, the kind Marquerite and active Lucille had kindled a blazing fire, wheeled a table before it, and spread on it such refreshments as might have tempted the most fastidious apportite. The effect of their attentions illustrated the truth of our remarks, and Louise retired to rest with a heart full of grateful foy, her only regret being that the bloved Madame.

de St. Laurent could not witness the kindness of her mother, the tenderness of De Montrevel, and her happiness.

Awaking the following morning at what seemed to her a late hour, she found Marguerite moving with stealthy steps around her spartment, and putting away the contents of the trunks she had already unpacked. She told Louise that her mother had ordered her breakfast to be served in her own apartment whenever she rang for it, and that when the Duchesse was prepared to receive her, she would send Lucille to conduct her to her dressing-room. Louise had slept soundly and dreamed pleasantly, and

now endeavoured, by a neat arrangement of her dress, to obey her mother's last command, to "look her loveliest." This loving task was soon accomplished, and having taken her breakfast, she assisted Marguerite in her labours. Leaving to her the disposal of her wardrobe, she unpacked and arranged her books, a few trinkets, presents from Madame de St. Laurent and some of her young companions at the convent, her drawing materials, some paintings, treasured by her because they had been dear to her friend. and her guitar. Two hours had passed swiftly in this employment, as she learned from the chime of a neighbouring clock, and she now sat down to await the summons of Lucille, with some wonder that it had not yet been given. Looking around for something with which to while away the time, she saw her guitar, and remembering her mother's remark about her singing, she drew it to her, tuned its long disused strings, and would have accompanied herself in a song; but the first note she truck spoke to her so foreibly of the past-seemed so like a voice from the grave, that with a species of awe she dropped the instrument at her feet. The emotions to which this little incident gave rise were checked by the entrance of Lucille, who came to say that her lady was now at her toilet, and would be glad to see Mademoiselle, Louise instantly obeyed the summons.

The Duchesse was attired with that studied negligence in which her country/omen so much excel, and though a

skilful eve might have detected the aid of art in the soft vet rich complexion, she still exhibited much of that beauty which won for the portionless, yet high-born Isabel Valancais, the heart, or, more properly, the fancy of the Duke de la Valliere. Married at sixteeen from a convent, she had been launched at once upon the world of fashion with no check on her impulses; her only guide a dissipated and not over-wise husband. Principles she had none, and who can wonder that, though free from even a suspicion of the vices which darkened the reputation of many around her, the woman of the world learned to regard as peccadilloes, if not as truely blameless amusements, many things from which the girl would have recoiled with disgust? Her affections had been chilled by heartlessness abroad and disappointment at home. The Duc had displayed too much weakness of intellect and selfishness of character, even to the perception of such a novice as his bride, to win from her the devoted attachment of which she was capable. Still, he was the first who had addressed her in the language of love; he had taken her from a dreary convent and introduced her into what seemed a very bright, gay world : for the first!few months of their marriage he lavished upon her every gratification which her fancy craved or his means could command, and she repaid him with affection that, if not very fervent, was at least grateful and sincere. But he soon tired of his new toy, and mortified vanity mingled its impulses with something of deeper feeling in sending her abroad to find solace for the neglect and loneliness of home. Again, her beauty won admirers, and in the homage of the many she strove to find that happiness which nature had fitted her to derive from the devotion of one. The deepest emotions of her heart. fortunately, she would have thought, had never been awakened, and, amused, she flitted from flower to flower, with scarce a dream of the bliss which, under happier circumstances, she might have known. In the atmosphere in which she lived, the slumbering energies of her nature were not likely to be aroused. The birth of a child was considered as an evil, because it withdrew her for a time from her accustomed pleasures. With no consciousness of a mother's responsibilities, she at once relinquished to others the cares which might have opened to the little nursling a mother's heart. Timid from illness and neglect, Louise had presented to her mother, in their occasional interviews, none of the attractions of joyous and confiding infancy-attractions which the coldest find it difficult to resist. Her removal to tho convent was therefore unopposed by Madame de la Valliere : and if, during her residence there, her existence was not altogether forgotten, she was thought of as one to whom all duties had been fulfilled in providing her with a home, though that home was a convent. "I was very happy at tho convent," the Duchesse was wont to say to those who questioned her on her daughter's destination, forgetting that the irrevocable barrier to change, which makes the gloomiest feature in conventual life, had never existed in her case, The Marquis de Montrevel's proposal had first brought her child before her as a probable inhabitant of the same world with herself. Mother of the Marquise de Montrevel! This was a pleasant thought. Besides, there were moments when she wearied of the world as it was, and sometimes a shadow of suspicion crossed her mind that the world might one day weary of her, when to newer, if not lovelier divinities would be offered the incense on which she fed. What an attraction to her coterie would be one so lovely as Louise was doscribed; and how valuable a patronage would she enjoy who had nower to give the entrée to an establishment at once so magnificent and so recherché as that which the Marquis do Montrevel's wealth and taste would doubtless furnish for his young and beautiful bride? We do not say that this was the conscious and acknowledged reasoning of the Duchessc: but that such principles were existing and working in the deepest mine of her thought, and that their influence disposed her to receive Louise with pleasure, and even awakened something like affection towards her. The postponement of her daughter's marriage did at all disturb Madame de la

Valliere's satisfaction; for as her engagement was known, she was too well acquainted with the world to doubt that it would bring around her a erowd of devotees anxious to great the rising luminary.

With feelings thus happily disposed towards the new comer, had the Duchesse hastened to meet her on the preeeding evening. Her loveliness, amid all the disadvantages of fatigue and unbecoming dress, had more than equalled her expectations. That face and form, faultless in their soft, spiritual beauty, symmetrical proportions, and sylphlike grace, told a tale of coming triumph dear to her heart. But there dwelt in that sweet voice and those pleading eyes yet deeper power; and even in the few minutes she had allowed herself to remain. Madame de la Valliere had felt a spring in her heart-a movement such as she had not known for years. "My mother," she repeated to herself, after she had reached her earriage-again and again repeated it, endeavouring to modulate her voice in exact imitation of the melodious tones of Louise, till the earriage stopped at the gay sceno to which she was repairing. Recalled to her worldly self, sho coloured, and laughed aloud at what seemed to her her strange folly. Yet she could not free herself from the influence of those words and tones-they mingled with the music to which she listened, and seemed far more tender and touching than any of it.

"Ah, ma belle!" exclaimed the Duchesse as Louise entered her dressing-room: "so you were up and breakfasted, Lucille tells me, two hours ago. You will soon learn not to keep convent hours in Paris."

Louise kissed the hand held out to her; and the Duchesse, making her seat herself on an ottoman beside her, said, "Now tell me what you have done with yourself these long two hours. But first, what made you put on that horrid black dress! I hate black—it puts one in mind of a thousand melanchely things."

"It is in memory of a very melancholy event that I wear it," said Louise, with a heightened colour and trembling voice. "Perhaps my mother has not heard that I have lost my"—best she was about to say, but checked herself with intuitive delicacy—"kind friend—"

"Madame de St. Laurent. Oh yes; I heard it, and was very sorry for it; but that is no reason why you should make yourself hideous. Fortunately, she was no relation to you, or decorum would require you to wear mourning."

The heart of Louise swelled within her, but she did not speak.

"Let Lucille bring some other dress from your wardrobe
—something less dismal than this—though I suppose they
are all as far removed as possible in fashion from anything
that was ever seen in the world." The Duchesse was about
to ring her bell for Lucille, but, with a decision of manner
which she had not expected, Louise laid her hand on hers to
prevent the summons, while she said, "Pardon me, my
mother, but you must in this indulge me. This dismal dress
is the only outward link which now connects me with the
guardian angel of my past life; I cannot break it so early
and so suddenly." Her checks were flushed, her hands
trembled, and the exaltation of her manner showed how
deeply she was moved. Her mother looked at her with
wonder.

"Well, well, don't distress yourself; we must have your mourning made somewhat more as other people wear it; and till this is done, I will not let anybody see you. Lucille shall see about it at once—so now let me ring for her."

The ready Lucille received her orders, and hastening to obey them, the mother and daughter were again the a-tile. They did not long remain so. A slight bustle was heard at the door of the dressing-room—then a tap."

« Vanish, Louise?" cried the Duchesse: "I forgot to order that I should be denied, and I would no thave you seen for the world. Through that door—through that door, child," pointing to one opposite that to which the bevildered Louise had advanced. Louise turned, but before she could make her exit, the door near which she stood oneed, and without waiting the permission of the Duchesse, Henrictte Chalonet entered.

"Stay, stay, Louise—don't run away from me. I thought by my ann'ts delay that she was sending you off, but the escaping from a host of visiters, and astonishing the world by such an early appearance, I must not lose my reward. I must see you, and talk with you."

While she spoke, Henriette had taken Louise by the hand, and leading her back to her ottoman, bade her sat herself, for that she should hold her captive for one hour at least; and this was done with such a pretty air of wifind determination, that the Duchesse, though half vexed to have her plans for Louise thus counteracted, saw it would be useless to resist her.

"And now, ma tante, pray smooth your brow, and look very gracious, for having carried my own point—always, you know, the first thing with me—I have a petition from another to prefer. The suiter stands shivering at your door, waiting with all the impatience in the world for your kind Entrex. Do not look so alarmed—it is only Auguste.

"Only Auguste—that amuses me: only Auguste—the fastidious Auguste. Indeed, Henriette, I cannot let him see Louise in that frightful dress. I shall have her caricatured before she is seen."

"Qaricatured! I never saw her look lovelier; if I wee only half as beautiful, I would bid defiance to all fashion, and wear just what I liked. You still shake your head! Well, you must give him your denial yourself, for he will never believe me that you deep him permission to see the cousin about whom he has been raving ever since—but here he is himself, with or without nermission."

Anguste Valancour, slowly opening the door, stood with it a moment in his hand before entering, while he said, "Ab, selfah Henriettel I I knew you had forgotten me, but I forgive your neglect for the sake of its fair cause, whom I rejoice to welcome to Paris." As he advanced into the room, Louise rose to receive him. Taking her hand, he pressed it to his lips, saying, "I assure you, ma belle cousine, one of my most carnest wishes is gratified in seeing you here."

"And I," said the Duchesse, laughing, "have a great mind to give such orders as shall prevent you seeing her here again for a fortnight at least, as a punishment for your assurance in effecting an entrance now without permission."

"You cannot be so cruel," said Auguste: "certainly not to me, whose assurance, if it really exist, is wholly attributable to your indulgence. I knew it was Henriette's forgetfulness of me, and not your unkindness, which detained me so long in waiting."

or long in waiting.

"You deserve, as a punishment for your ingratitude, to have the mortification of knowing how eloquently I pleaded, how obstinately the Duchesse refused, and, worst of all, how indifferently Louise listened."

"The last is mortifying indeed; but why," turning to the Duchesse, "was I to be excluded this morning?"

"Because I chose. Did you not tell me that a woman's
will was the only reason whose force she admitted?"

"If I did say so, I am disposed, in the present case, to consider it a very unreasonable reason. What say you, ma cousine?"

"That to me, at least, it is an indisputable reason," said Louise, amused by the vivacity and freedom of manner of her visiters. "Poor Auguste!" exclaimed Henriette, "I must come to

your assistance, I find. You are probably by this time more humble, and better able to value my alliance. Your wounded vanity may be somewhat mullified by learning that the Duchesse only wished that Louise should be attired a la dernière mode, before she was submitted to the censorship of such a high priest of fashion as yourself."

"A la dernière mode! talk of Venus and the Graces being attired à la mode; this is your invention, Henriette, for the Duchesse knows too well the power of beauty to doubt that it will triumph over all laws, and bow to its empire even a high priest of fashion, a dignity to which I have no claim."

"Why, Auguste!" exclaimed the Duchesse, "you are coming out in quite a new character this morning. I shall not despair of seeing you quoted in time as an example of humility. You renouncing the high and mighty office you have striven so hard to obtain! You declaring beauty superior to fashion, who, but a week ago, when the whole world was bowing with rapture before that magnificent Comptesse De Ligne, turned from her with a look almost disdainful, saying that her shoes were much to low in the heel, and were certainly not made by Le Boutillier!"

Auguste would probably have affected anger at the relation of this anecdote, but the native laugh of Louise, to whom it seemed irresistibly ludicrous, overcame his purpose, and he laughed too—laughed naturally and heartily; then suddenly assuming a serious and deprecating air, exclaimed, "Mercy, mercy, Madame! Remember, the fair Louise is a novice in our world; she may conclude me a fool among wise men, whereas—"

"You are a wise man conforming to the folly of fools," exclaimed the Duchesse and Henrictta at the same moment.

"You are always right, ladies," said he, bowing with mock gravity to both; then drawing nearer to Louise, he continued, "I pray you, do not be drawn into the coalition which these ladies seem to have formed against me this morning for no imaginable reason. Since Henriette married, she has been waited on by such a bevy of beaux that she has lad nothing for me t. do. I have been quite put aside as a useless piece of furniture, and one of my sources of joy in your expected arrival was the hope that you would bring me out again. Pray employ me. You will find me the most serviceable of pages. I will fetch and carry, watch your lovers, laugh at your rivals, and do all sorts of brotherly offices for you. Will you enzeme me!"

"Certainly; I esteem myself fortunate in securing such a

Auguste saw that the timidity of Louise was completely disarmed by his ceay, home-like air; and as this was precisely the effect he desired to produce, he determined to take his leave before anything had occurred to mar it. Rising, he asked, "What commands has my most gracious lady for me this morning?"

- "Bring her, when you next come, the music of that song we heard with such delight last night; I want her to learn it," said the Duchesse.
  - "I receive my orders only from her lips, Madame."
    "Then it is my desire that you procure me that song,"
- said Louise.
  "I fly to obey, hoping to be rewarded for my diligence by
- hearing it sung. Adieu;" and bowing gaily and gracefully to all, he left the apartment.

  "Now that existent man is gone, Louise," said Henriette.
- . "Now that exigéant man is gone, Louise," said Henriette, 'gray let me have a little clat with you. If you, Madame, have any engagements abroad, you must not let me detain you, for I have a thousand questions to ask, a hundred thousand things to tell, and I know not when I shall be done."
- "I do not intend going abroad this morning, but as I am to have no part in the conversation, Louise may take you to her own apartment, and I will receive my visiters as usual."
- "So you are actually going to shut up the poor child till the medistes have refashioned her? I think she is very good to submit quietly to such seclusion, when, for the first time in her life, among the delights of Paris."
- e Perhaps it is because I am here for the first time that these delights excite so little interest in me, Henriette. Besides, you forget how long it is since I have seen my mother; to be with her is surely pleasure enough for a few days at least."
- A low, soft sigh, as Louise concluded, told of some feeling in connexion with this subject, sadder and deeper than those sho avowed. In truth, the scenes through which she had lately passed had little inclined her to sympathize with the frivolities of the Parisian world. Her sorrow for Madamo

do St. Laurent was a life-grief, deep and still, not vehement. With the emotions it awakened, the deep, trunquil joy of her happy love had nothing discordant. They had blended together, each giving to the other greater intensity—a softer and holier character. But how little in keeping with these profound emotions was the light, frothy character of the society around her! How impertinent seemed the enter-tainment it profiered to a spirit elevated and absorbed as was hers! Y et no expression of such feclings escaped her, for she had an almost intuitive perception of the total want of sympathy with them of those around her.

During the year and a half that Henriette had spent in the same convent with Louise, she had impressed her as a lively, good-humoured girl, but there had been too little sympathy between their natures to serve as a basis for great intimacy or strong attachment. Louise had not enough of the selfishness which formed a prominent characteristic of Henriette ever to perceive it as exhibited towards herself, but she had sometimes been unpleasantly affected by its exhibition towards others. Then, the sensitive Louise shrank from the mocking spirit of Henriette, which held no feeling too holy, no character too sacred, for a jest. Of her it might, indeed, be said that " Sa dévise était que le jour où l'on n'a pas ri, ne peut compter dans la vie." These dissimilarities were, however, rather negative than positive, and caused no dislike between the cousins-no feeling which prevented Louise from welcoming with pleasure, in the strange land in which she now found herself, one whom she had met in other scenes, and to whom she could speak of those who had been the companions of her bygone life. When they had retired to her apartment, Henriette did, indeed, find a thousand questions to ask. Not a nun was forgotten; the most trivial object, the most unimportant circumstance connected with the convent, seemed considerable to her, and to the affectionate heart of Louise it was, indeed, pleasant thus to surround itself with the familiar images of absent friends aud long-prized scenes. Henriette had displayed her accustomed tact in the means thus used to win her way to the intimacy of her unsuspecting cousin; but when she attempted to penetrate deeper, when she would have touched with an unsanctified hand her heart's innermost sanctuary, she felt that she was foiled. There is in deep sensibilities a quick perception of the true, which, in some degree, protects their possessor, however simple-minded and guileless, from the designs of the most skifful actor. From the touch of the false or the artificial, however carefully it may assume the guise of truth, the sensitive spirit shrinks with a painful, and, as it often seems even to itself, an unreasonable recoil. Thus was it now with Louise, when Henriette began to express her regret at Madame do St. Laurent's death. Quickly perceiving that she was on unsafe ground, Henriette changed her point of attack.

"By-the-by, Louise, where is the Marquis? I thought he would have interrupted us long ago."

"He is not in Paris:" and the blushing Louise, spite of

her efforts at self-possession, spoke in a voice so low that Henriette scarcely heard her.

"Not in Paris! Why, did he not accompany you?"
"No;" and Louise coloured now with something more

than bashfulness.

"And why not; for his gallantry forbids us to suppose he did not desire it"

" Business required his presence on his estates."

"Business required his presence on his estates! Business prevent the Marquis de Montrevel from doing what he liked! and said with as grave a tace as if she was giving utterance to the most indisputable truth. Excuse me, Louise, but it is or dicilous that I must laugh, if I die for it;" and her words were accompanied and followed by a laugh, which was to Louise the most grating, irritating sound she had ever heard.

With an indignation of which she vainly sought to suppress all manifestation, Louise replied, "I should be sorry to check your mirth, but I must confess that I neither sympathize with it, nor can I very clearly perceive its cause."

"Not perceive its cause! Why, it is the plainest thing in the world. My dear, simple-hearted cousin, do you really suppose that men of the world, men of fashion, like De Montrevel, ever trouble their heads about business—above all, that they ever allow business to interfere with their pleasures!"

While Henriette was speaking, Louise had time to regain in some degree her self-possession. The colour had faded from her cheeks—the unusual brightness from her eyes; but her voice—alas! how many an effort at composure of manner has been rendered fruitless by that betrayer! Its deepned tone and slight tremour showed now that Louise was still moved more than her words revealed. "You will pardon me if I do not place even your opinions above the assurances of the Marouis de Montrevel."

"Now, Louise, that was said with the spirit of a champion ready to dare the world on the question of your true knight's fidelity; but you shall run no tilt with me, for I assure you I would not for the world insinante that he is not the most fervent and faithful lower to whom maiden ever plighted troth. But if, even at the expense of sacrificing your society for a few days—or suppose we should say weeks—he should have thought it pleasantor to fulfil some agreeable engagement and come to Paris with a party of his own choice, than to follow in the train of your magnificent papa, you surely would not blame him for covering such a harmless design with that all-excusing phrase, business. But do not look so grave, or I shall be afraid you are offended with me, and that I assure you, Louise, would errive me. madpri my plexity.

"Nay, Henriette, that I am not," said Louise, her brow clearing in an instant. "We had better not speak on this subject again, as our views are taken from such different points that they cannot well agree. You think of De Montrovel as he exhibits himself to the world, I as he has revealed himself to me. You will pardon me if I continue to believe mine the truest image."

"Oh, certainly, dear Louise: only believe that I mean no harm by my jest, and that I love you too well willingly to grieve you, and you may believe what else you please. And now, bon jour. I shall come to see you every day till you recover your freedom. As for Auguste, he is completely Confirm de famille here already, and now that you have promised to employ him, I pressume he will be seen only in your train. Well, I can tell you a clever brother or cousin is no useless appendage in this jostling world; but I am gone;" and gone she was, giving Louise no time to answer her last words.

Louise had spoken boldly and decidedly of De Montrevel's truth and frankness: was she as easy, as assured as sho professed to be? Alas, no! The serpent of doubt had stolen into her Eden; but not through Henriette Chalonet had he found entrance there: only De Montrevel himself could have admitted him. His vacillating manner, a sudden change which occasionally passed over him, even when he was kindest, shadowing the bright, open expression of his face, had made her feel that his heart was not fully unvoiled to her; and reason with ourselves as we will, concealment in love is felt to be akin to treachery. Yet Louise was far from yielding her spirit to the dominion of accusing thoughts. None could have chidden her so severely for them as she chid herself. She ever turned from these colloquies with licr own spirit, more humble and more tender-more impressed with Do Montrevel's worth, and with his disinterestedness in choosing for his brido one whose only dower was love and truth. Sho possessed, too, a talisman which never failed to restore her repose, if all her reasonings wero unsuccessful.

Soon after De Montrevel's return to Paris from his first visit to the convent, ho had sent to his sister a portrait of himself taken by one of the first masters of the day. In the letter which accompanied it, he playfully begged that Madame de St. Laurent would commend it to the observation of Mademoiselle de la Valliere, as he should be mortified not to be recognised by her when they next met; and he was very sure that she had not looked at him sufficiently to preserve any remembrance of his person. Louise read the message with a blush and a smile, and did not fail to comply with the request. Several times had Madame de St. Laurent observed her while her work or book lay forgotten in her lap and her eyes were fixed upon the picture, but, unwilling to check the growth of a sentiment so pleasing to her as that which at such moments was imaged in the expressive countenance of Louise, she forbore in any way to notice her absorption. One day, however, Louise turned her head suddenly, and caught the eyes of her friend resting smilingly upon her; the blood rushed to her very temples, and she covered her face with her hands.

"Do not be ashamed, Louise, of what gives me so much pleasure; but what do you learn from your study!" asked Madame de St. Laurent. "Tell me, dearest," she urged, as Louise remained silent and abashed.

Withdrawing her hands from her face, though her eyes were bent obstinately down, Louise almost whispered, "That I could not disbelieve the language of the lips, if it was corroberated by eyes so full of truth."

"Just the lesson I would wish you to learn, dear Louise, if you are to be the wife of De Montrevel; for better, far better, the waveless calm of the convent—may, better the grave, than marriage without trust."

A skiftel young artist who resided in the neighbourhood, and who had painted an altar-piece for the chapel of the convent, was soon after employed by Madame de St., Laurent to make a ministure copy of the portrait, those hours of the day being appointed for his labours which by the arrangements of the convent, Louise was compelled to spend elsewhere. The task was admirably performed, the likeness being perfectly preserved. The artist had it set according to Madame de St. Laureng's direction, and the whole effair was so.

well managed that the surprise was perfect to Louise when her friend, fastening around her neck a gold chain of the most delicate workmanship, suddenly displayed to her the miniature which was suspended to it, but had been concealed till the chain was clasped. "Wear it, Louise, and let it be a talisman to protect you, not from the encroachment of doubt-for apprehensiveness is perhaps inseparable from some stages of love-but from its dominion. Promise me, and let this speaking likeness be the witness to your truth, that you will never long entertain doubt; at least, that you will not suffer doubt to grow into condemnation without unveiling your heart to the lover or the husband, and thus giving him an opportunity to regain your confidence, if he deserve it. Do you promise?" Madame de St. Laurent's tone was almost solemn, and as Louise caught her eve, it expressed such earnest gravity, that it was with something of religious awe she repeated, "I promise."

Madame de St. Laurent then dropped the miniature into the bosom of Louise, saying, as she did so, "None need know of its existence till you choose yourself to reveal to De Montrevel how highly he has been honoured."

And what a precious treasure had this miniature proved! How many and thoughts had it dispelled! It gave to the dreams of Louise a visible, tangible basis, and by associating the form it represented with every vision of the future, gave earnestness and consistency to her regard for De Montrevel. She had never shown her prize to any one, and perhaps enjoyed its contemplation the more, because it was a stolen pleasure. From De Montrevel, especially, was the secret guarded with sensitive delicary.

Henriette Chalonet fulfilled her promise of cheering by her presence what she continued to call the prison-hours of Louise. Day after day found her still at the accustomed hour in her room, and time passed quickly away in her entertaining society. She had ever some new question to ask, some remembered aneedote of the past to tell, which, transporting Louise back to her convent home, made her feel that there was a tie between Henriette and herself, such as linked her to no other in her new abode. Then, her anecdotes never touched painfully on the self-love of her listener. Louise, if introduced at all, was introduced advantageously, and she would have possessed a sterner nature than most philosophers can boast, if she had not learned to relish flattery so delicately conveyed, and to view more gently than ever the faults of her from whom it was received. But Henriette eame not alone: Auguste, too, had established himself as a daily visiter; and so much of the insouciance, yet ready kindness of a brother, did he exhibit, that Louise would as soon have shrunk from a brother's attentions as from his, To Henriette and to her his manner was equally affectionate, and if there was in the latter ease somewhat more attention, it was just such a distinction as might be thought natural to a younger, a more timid and sensitive sister.

The musical powers of Louise had been highly cultivated by Madame de St. Laurent, and with these her mother was satisfied, but her dancing though pleasing and graceful, was totally destitute or that style which in Paris was all-important. A master of this highly-esteemed art was soon engaged. To avail herself of his lessons was the most painful demand her mother had yet made of Louise. Daneing in a ballroom would have been a very different affair. There, many would have divided with her the attention, above which the exhilaration of company and the brilliant lights and decorations would have elevated her; but at home, in her unadorned morning-dress, in the broad glare of day, to stand or move, to practise attitudes and steps at the direction and for the observation of a stranger, it seemed impossible. Auguste Valaneour read her repugnance in her manner when the daneing-master was first announced, and in a moment came to her aid. "Henriette," said he, "I do not often avail myself of the brother's privilege to say disagreeable things, but, as it is to promote your improvement, you will excuse me in the present instance : your dancing is excerable : pray avail yourself of the present opportunity to improve it; take lessons with Louise; then Louise, if you will permit me to join your party, I think we may make the visits of Monsieur Dandin not unpleasant to you."

"Auguste," remonstrated the Duchesse, "this will not be at all what I intended. It is not amusement, but instruction, I am now seeking for Louise."

"I know it, dear lady, and it is precisely for that object I have made my proposal. Does not every writer on education tell you that the most powerful motive of which you can avail yourself in the youthful mind is emulation? Now, in Henriette I have provided a competitor—"

"Nonsense, Augustc, Henriette does not need lessons."

"So much the better; if that is your opinion, she will then
serve as a model for Louise, which, however, I pray her not

to imitate."

He looked at Henriette with a deprecating air. She understood him too well to be angry, but declared, laughing, that she loved dancing too well not to enjoy it, whether as pupil or model.

"And pray, Auguste, what advantage do you propose to Louise from your making one of the dancers?" said the halfvexed Duchesse.

"0, the greatest I shall act as aid to Monsieur Dandin, who has always acknowledged me the most accomplished of his pupils. Now, gracious lady, pray smile on me, and givo me your hand in a past de deux, and we will show these novices the true poetry of metion. Entere: "he exclaimed to Monsieur Dandin, who now stood bowing at the door. "Now, Dandin, give us music, and the Duchesse and I will exhibit your favourite art in perfection."

As Auguste concluded, he took the hand of the Duchesse, and proplicated by his flattery, and conscious that her grac-fal figure and movements were never displayed to greater advantage than in the dance, she did not resist. Louiso watched her mother with admiration as she moved along with stately, yet easy grace. As Madame de la Valliero completed the figure Which Auguste had selected, she

beckoned to Henriette to take her place, and withdrawing to the side of Louise, directed her attention to the steps which she thought particularly beautiful, or the movements most worthy of imitation in Henriette. Louise listened with a clouded countenance and listless manner. The Duchesse at length exclaimed, "Pray, Louise, do not look so hopelessly when I speak of your dancing. It is to your cultivation of this art, more than to anything else, I look to prevent the timidity induced by your long seclusion evincing itself in awkwardness, the least degree of which would be fatal to your success in Parisian society, and what is, I suspect, of more consequence to you, fatal to your influence over De Montrevel. By-the-by, do you know such is his admiration of what Auguste calls the poetry of motion, that, with all his fastidiousness and coldness of manner, he has been suspected of being quite captivated by a favourite danseuse?"

Oh, woman! how quickly dost thou read thy sister woman's heart-how easily discover the spring by which she may be moved! What was emulation in comparison with the impulse now awakened in the mind of Louise? All her listlessness vanished, and instead of shrinking, as she had hitherto done, from the exhibition of herself, she was almost impatient for the moment when she should begin to qualify herself for the admiration of De Montrevel. As Henriette withdrew, invited by Auguste, she took her place without hesitation, and went through the mazes of the dance, now twice repeated before her, without error. Her steps were few and simple, but the light, airy grace of her movements, elicited applause even from Monsieur Daudin himself. The premier pas thus accomplished, her progress became easy and pleasant. Henriette did not always join her in her lessons, but Auguste was never absent.

Sho danced always with him, and, to the delight of Monsieur Dandin, they executed together several famey dances which were seldom introduced into private circles. In one of these, lately invented by himself, he doclared Mademoisello excelled herself. Her dancing was belle, magnificus, superbe, and his commendations always ended with a wish that all Paria was collected to see this child of his fancy so beautifully represented. Louise would laughingly assure him that, were all Paris collected, he would soon find that her powers had vanished. Once he seriously tried to win her promise, that at some réunion at her own home, if not at a more public assembly, she would perform this dance, only for his sake, to exhibit to such advantage as only she and Monsicur Valancour could, the grace and beauty of his design. But Louise declared it was impossible; a dance which, from its very novelty, would attract so much attention, and occasion such display, could never be oven thought of before any but her mother, Henrietto, and Auguste. Her heart whispered another name, but it was one that seldom escande her line.

## TY GETGALL

"Amid these venerable trees the air Seems hallowed by the breath of other times. Companions of my fathers! Ye have marked Their generations pass. Your giant arms Shadowed their youth, and proudly canopled Their silver hairs when ripe in years and glory, Those walks they trod to meditate on Heaven."

Four weeks passed away, and De Montrevel was still absent. Louise had heard from him twice. She had written in reply; but how ill did the studied, measured, and, as she herself felt, cold terms of her letters, convey the emotions which were throbbing at her heart, even while she wrotel. His first communication accompanied some very valuable jewels of Madame de St. Laurent, which, he informed Louise, had been reset for her in accordance with that friends request. Her mother pronounced the diamonds splendid, and Henriette gazed on them with somewhat envious eyes, while to Louise they were chiefly valuable as proofs of her friend's tenderness and her lover's valuable as proofs of her friend's tenderness and her lover's

munificence. But for their connexion with those so dearly loved, they would have been far less valuable to her than the sheet of paper which came with them. How often did she turn to that! How did she dwell on every word it contained! It was in a sad and tender strain; for De Montrevel had been, as he informed her, engaged ever since they parted in an examination of his sister's papers, and, as he did not inform her, had found there so many records of past and well-nigh forgotten events and sentiments-so much that had conjured up the forms of buried or estranged love : still more, so perfect a picture of his own early self, that, contrasting the hopes, the aspirations, the faith of his youth, with the frivolous pursuits, the indolent and distrustful spirit of his manhood, he had riscn from the contemplation humbled, and sorrowing, and softened. As the emotions and perceptions of his youth were reawakened, his views of the character of Louisc, and of the influence of that character on his own happiness, underwent a change. Distant from the world, he lost some of his reverence for its fiat. As he read some outburst of the independent spirit that formerly animated him, he blushed to feel how much a slave he had become, As his sister's pure and just sentiments were unfolded to him-as he learned from her correspondence with a friend, whose early death had caused her own letters to be returned to her, her views of the capabilities of her sex, and her mournful consciousness of the waste, and too often perversion of those capabilities, his views of woman and of the ties that might connect her with man became greatly modified. He remembered the apparent freshness and simplicity-the childlike purity and tenderness of Louise, and he began to doubt whether any artificial grace would not be dearly purchased by a sacrifice; or even by a shadowing of these qualities. Contrasting the true and earnest principles of his sister with the worldly and frivolous character of the Duchesse de la Valliere-the simple, and almost severe manners of the convent with the glare, the bewildering facinations of the gay world, his heart smote him for having exposed one

so unprepared for the trial to its dizzving whirl. He shuddered as he thought that elements of passion might be slumbering in the heart of Louise which, roused by the influences she was now encountering, would prepare for her a terrible downfall, or, at least, a fearful struggle. And why had she been sent forth to such an encounter? That he might enjoy a prouder triumph in appropriating her to himself. Why had she gone forth unaided-nay, unwarned? Why was he not beside her, to steady her perhaps even now tottering step; to withdraw the veil which the world places before the eyes of a novice in its mysteries; to dispel the phantasms which its witcheries conjure to mislead ; and with that touchstone supplied by experience alone, to separate for her the true from the false, the innocent from the noxious? As his conscience responded to these questions, he stood self-rebuked for indolence and selfishness, and the result of his reflections was a determination to return immediately to Paris. But he who supposes that this resolve was immediately executed, knows little of the strength of those chains forged by long-indulged habits. The Marquis slept, and when he awoke, many of the mental views on which his resolution had been founded seemed to him like the phantasmagoria of a dream. Yet these views frequently recurred, and, under the influences we have described, there was arising in his mind a higher value and deeper love for the pure and true, and an abiding conviction was strengthening there that he had some obligation to fulfil in relation to the character and happiness of Louise. A change, too, was passing over those feelings with which he regarded her. Her image no longer addressed itself chiefly to his passions. It touched his heart. He thought of her oftener as the sharer of his thoughts-the companion of his home-for a home he was now resolved to have. In Paris he knew that he must live abroad; but here, on the estate which had been his father's-in the midst of scenes hallowed by the remembrance of the dead, and endeared by a thousand associations, pure, and tender, and sacred, he would spend part of every year; and here he loved to contemplate his gentle Louise, blessing and blessed. Her natural, simple manners, her tender tones, her loving looks, seemed here in keeping with the quiet beauty of the scene, while his imagination could not bring them into any accordance with the circumstances of Parisian life.

Let it not be supposed that, in describing the process under which new convictions were forming in the mind, and new emotions stirring in the heart of the Marquis de Montrevelwe have recorded anything miraculous. We have already said that, though selfish and indolent, he was not heartless. In truth, his affections were more than ordinarily ardent by nature, and they had been developed into more than usual power, in early life, by the influence of happy domestic ties; and, though fifteen years of absence from all which had ever come in contact with his heart-fifteen years pursuit of pleasure and acquaintance with life in its most frivolous aspects -had left little in appearance of the sanguine and ferventspirited boy, whom the death of his parents had sent forth into the world without guidance or constraint, holy feelings were yet within him. They had slumbered, it is true, but memory had always power to arouse them; and where could memory be so omnipotent as at the grave of his sister, and in these the scenes of his early childhood?

Under such influences had De Montrevel's first letter to Louisa beam written, and in every line of it was impressed a regard at once earnest and anxious. He would soon have followed this letter, but he had found many abuses on his estate to be corrected, much suffering to be relieved, and he could not turn away from the pessantry who flocked around him with eager hope, till he had at least removed their most pressing necessities, and set in action a system whereby their heaviest burdens might be lightened. As the first step to wards their relief, he had displaced an oppressive, cruel, and faithflows agent, and substituted one on whose humanity and faithfluess he could rely. This last had been De Montrevel's chosen playfellow in childhood, had gone forth with him as

an attendant in his youth, and had remained with him ever since, an attached and privileged, yet humble dependant.

Jacques Brissot would have been a very stern-looking man, could he by any possibility have banished from his lips a good-humoured smile, which completely contradicted the grave expression of his brow. The same varieties, not to say contradictions, mingling in his speech and sometimes in his actions, had often afforded annusement to the intimates of De Montrevel. He was a man of Herculean frame, great strength, and, as he had proved on more than one occasion, undannted courage; yet so conciliating in manner, and such a professed lover of peaceful measures, that many a braggart had left him with the conviction that his warlike demonstrations had inspired Jacques with no slight degree of awe. "Jacques," said his master, as he stood in attendance on

his morning toilet, "what do you think of the management of this Pierre Valot?"

"Management, sir? Oh, excellent, I think—especially for

"Management, sir? Oh, excellent, I think—especially for himself."

This was said with as determined gravity as the obstinate smile on the lower part of his face would permit Jacques to assume. "Perhaps so," said the Marquis; "but I think I should

like better an agent who would have more regard to my interests and to the good of the poor creatures over whom he is placed." He paused, but Jacques made no reply, "What say you, Jacques, do you know any one who may be trusted in this matter!"

"Doubtless, Monsieur, there are many; but I hardly ever met with one whom I should be willing to recommend."

"Well, then," said De Montrevel, with a smile, "you must take it yourself till you find one you can recommend. I think I may trust you."

"I hardly know, Monsieur, whether it will be prudent, I am very sure I shall never manage with the rent half so well as Pierre has done in these bad seasons."

"I do not think you will but for that I will forgive you,

if you show me my land in better order, and tilled by a happier peasantry."

"Happier, do you say, Monsieur? The varlets! I don't believe they ever were happy in their lives. I hope you do not believe the half they say. Poor, miserable creatures! it makes one's heart ache to look at them."

The Marquis laughed as he replied, "Ah, Jacques, I see you are the very man I want. He who will not believe the half they say, but who will look for himself, and whose heart will ache when he sees their sufferings, will exactly fulfil my wishes. So you will prepare to take the place, from which I will this day dismiss Pierre."

"Ah! there is a difficulty again, Monsicur; Pierre will never give up such a place peacefully."

"What then? he must give it up. You do not suppose his remonstrances will change my determination?"

"Oh no, Monsieur, I was thinking of myself after you are

"Nonsense, Jacques; do not expect to persuade me that you are afraid of Pierre. When you would play the coward, let it be to those who have not known you quite so long. But enough of this," said he, assuming the grave look which always silenced Jacques: "I shall return in a few days to Paris: you will make the preparations necessary for my journey, and will remain here yourself as my agent, unless you have some stronger objection to present to such an arrangement than any I have now heard."

The Marquis left the room. Jacques was standing opposite to a mirror, and as he raised his eyes, they rested on his own image. He smilled, then sighed, and, shaking his head, exclaimed, "Ah, Jacques, Jacques, I wish I knew what Dame Nature meant you for. The old Marquis, my master, used to say, 'You must acquire a character, Jacques, my boy,' and I have been all my life trying to obey him, but when I would be a hard, sterm man, people look here," touching his mouth, "and think it is all in jest; and when I would be a Peaceable, quiet man, who would rather do anything than

fight, they look here," touching his forehead, just between the eyebrows, "and believe not a word of it. Well, well, I suppose I must just be Jacques."

The estate of the Marquis de Montrevel Iay in the interior

of France, distant almost two hundred miles from its capital. A branch of the Loire flowed through it, and its clear, bright waters, here shadowed by rich groves of chestnut, there giving back an unveiled and unbroken reflection of sun or stars, were visible from the windows of the chateau. Its ponderous and highly ornamented style of architecture gave evidence of the antiquity of this mansion. It was situated on an elevated piece of ground, and overlooked a country beautifully varied by hill and dale. In the time of his father, De Montrevel remembered that the richly-cultivated fields and vineyards, and the cottages of the peasantry, with their little gardens, bright with flowers, had been among the most pleasing traits in the landscape; but now it was not so. The peasantry were no longer under the fatherly care of their own lord, but were oppressed by a tyrannical agent, who cared neither for their comfort, nor for the improvement of the property, while by the severest exactions he could win from their toil enough to minister to the luxurious tastes of his employer, and thus prevent his dismissal from a situation which gratified his love of ease and power. There were now few gardens, and no flowers. They were struggling for the necessaries of life, and could afford no time for its ornaments. Their countenances were depressed and unhealthy, their persons and their houses dirty. But already, since the arrival of De Montrevel, hope had begun to beam from their eyes. He had heard their complaints, had lessened their taxations, had stimulated them to industry by promises of reward, had removed their tyrant, and put in his place one in whom they confided; and, above all, had intimated that it was his intention to spend hereafter a part of every year with them.

Thus employed, the ensui, of which De Montrevel had complained a few months before, vanished, and he, the glass of fashion and umpire of taste, would have been contented

to remain vet longer in this uncivilized region, as he had been accustomed to style and consider it, had not thoughts of Louise, thoughts becoming every day more solicitous, drawn him to Paris. The day before his departure, as, seated in what had been his father's library, he peopled it with the living originals of those still, mute faces, which looked upon him from its walls, and pictured Louise, still the protégée of his sister and his own fiancée-for when was fancy checked by improbabilities?-giving a softer and more tender interest to the scene, he was roused from his reverie by the sudden opening of the door, and the announcement of a visiter. Turning with something of impatience in his air as well as at his heart, he saw the Compte de Ligne, whose estate lay contiguous to his own, and with whom he had preserved, by occasional meetings at Paris, an intimacy which commenced in boyhood.

The Compte de Ligne was little older than the Marquis de Montrevel, but the difference in their ages was magnified by the impress which very different pursuits had left on each. The father and mother of the Compte were yet living. He had been educated at home, had married, after some months of travel, and a year's service in the army, a lovely and sensible woman, who had relinquished voluntarily the charms of the capital, which many found resistless, that in his paternal mansion she might watch over the education of his children, and cheer his parents during those periods when his military duties-for he still retained his commissionrequired his presence with the army. His early entrance into life, and the stirring scenes through which he had passed, had given a gravity to his air and a decision to his tone which made him seem, at least, ten years the senior of his more courtly friend.

"Ah, De Ligne! I know no other man to whom I could just now say, with truth, I am heartily glad to see you."

"Well, I rejoice that, though self-invited, I am not unwelcome; but it seems to me that you are not so much engaged as to render any visiter mal d propos, unless he was particularly disagreeable; and De Ligne glanced smilingly at the cumbrous arm-chair from which his friend rose to receive him, and at the table before it, on which lay neither book nor paper.

"Only a moment of rest after employment," said de Montrevel, colouring slightly. "But," he continued, "how came you here I understood you were with the army; and your Comptasse I left in Paris, winning the homage of all by her beauty and her wit."

"Ah, my Marie wrote me that you were her cavalier servants. I was glad to hear that you were pleased with each colter, but far more glad, De Montrevel," cordially shaking his friend again by the hand, "far more glad to see you here-Forgive an old friend for saying so much; I always felt that you were born for something better than a courtier, and I have hoped every year that you would begin to remember Paris was not the whole world."

"Ah, you gentlemen of the camp underrate the charms and refinements of a court."

"Perhaps so, perhaps so," said De Ligne, "for I acknowledge I have always found its formalities tedious, and its idleness wearisome. When do you return?"

"To-morrow."

"So soon? I hoped you would find so much to do here that you would be long detained among us."

He spoke with an air of chagrin. The Marquis smiled, and said, "Speak out, De Ligne, with the freedom of old times, for I see there is something you would say. The pleasure you express is not only at meeting with an old friend unexpectedly, nor your regret wholly occasioned by my return to Paris."

"No, De Montrevel, it is not, and I thank you for the permission to speak freely what I should probably have found it impossible, even without permission, wholly to refrain from speaking."

They were still standing, and De Ligne, passing his arm through his friend's, led him to the chimney, over which hung the portrait of his father, and looking up reverently to it, said, "You remember him, De Montrevel ?" De Montrevel replied only by a look of deep interest, and a pressure of the arm on which his rested. "His was, indeed, a glorious character: a soldier without ambition: a student without pedantry; a courtier without frivolity or insincerity; to his tenantry in war a chieftain, in peace a patriarch. How often have his remembered sentiments guided my judgment or aroused my energies! but it was to you I looked fully to act out those sentiments. Your boyhood proved that in you nature had perpetuated his noble qualities, and I loved you for what you then were; but, Henri, I acknowledge I loved you yet more for what your manhood would become. Five years your elder, I left you a boy, to go forth, little more myself, to the contest with life. I returned to find your home-it had been my home too-tenantless. My heart followed you with the [hope, nay, the belief, that you were but seeking to fit yourself more fully to be a worthy successor to the noble dead. I said to myself, the fripperies of a court will never dazzle the eyes of his son; he will return and live as he did, not for pleasure, but for duty; but, Henri, I am trying you too far-forgive me."

De Montrevel had, during the latter part of this address, satached his arm from De Ligne, and was rapidly pacing through the room; he now stopped before him, and said, with much energy, "Nay, nay, Louis, you cannot offend me, for my own heart has anticipated you, and far more bitter have been its repreaches than aught which you can say. You spoke of my boyhood; it has continued even to the present moment, for manhood begins not till we have ceased to live for the amusement of the hour."

He would have proceeded, but De Ligne—the enthusiastic De Ligne—was beside him, had again caught his hand, and was expressing his delight. "God be thanked, my friend, your better nature is aroused—awake—you will yet be all I hoped: you will yet live for your duties; for your duties to vourself, to your tenantre, to your consultry; and Heaven

knows this last never more needed the help which lies in a sound head and a brave heart."

"Stay, stay, Louis, do not be so rapid; you must not expect at once to transform a Parisian dillettante into a statesman and a soldier. Here," he added, more gravely, "I have found, alas! much to do. I have to atone here for years of negligence."

"And thus render the most essential service to your country, for it is from her own starving peasantry that France has most to fear. De Montrevel, were those fainéans who have lately borne in rapid succession the title of minister, and each of whom has signalized his brief day of power by some remedy for the diseased state more wretchedly inefficient than the last prescribed-were these men but banished to their estates to behold the misery which their edicts do but mock with the vain hope of relief, France might yet be saved. She is perishing for lack of faithfaith of the rulers in the people, and of the people in their rulers. Bring these two classes together-let the rulers see that the want and woe which seems to them incredible because they are themselves surrounded by luxuries, do really exist-let the people find in them the helpers, the fathers, which thus convinced, they must become, and France, I repeat, may yet be saved. Her danger springs not from want of internal resources, not from fear of foreign attack, but from social disorganization."

De Ligne had spoken with an energy and rapidity which prevented interruption: as he paused, De Montrevel exclaimed, "Why, De Ligne, you speak as if we were on the verge of destruction; at least, of revolution."

"And so we are—and so we are—or, or if not already on the verge, we are rapidly approaching it; and if you perceive it not, it is because you have neither entered into the cablas of the court, nor perceived the dissatisfaction of the provinces. Let your arms be prepared, De Montrevel, for unless I greatly mistake, you will soon have to use them." "And yet it is at this time that your hitherto secluded Comptesse—a gem too brilliant, by-the-by, to have been so long concealed—makes her appearance at Paris, which, if your prophecies be correct, will soon be the scene of conflict."

"There is no present danger in the capital; but even were there, my Marie would not shrink from her duty. You seem surprised at my speaking of her visit as a duty, but that is because you do not know her reasons for it. We, the provincial nobility, who have lived on our own estates, identifying our interests in some degree with the cultivators, are the true connecting links between the king and the people, the peasantry of France. To preserve our usefulness with either, we must preserve our influence with both. With the peasantry, this is to be done by a rule at once kind and just; with the king, by every expression of loyalty that circumstances render possible; and what expression of this could be so forcible as placing our dearest treasures in the same vessel with him when storms are approaching? But Marie herself desired to go, because she felt, De Montrevel, that the time had come when even an humble Comptesse de Ligne, whose purity no breath of slander had dimmed, might, by her reverent loyalty and womanly sympathies, bring solace to the heart of our lovely and gracious, but bitterly maligned queen."

De Montrevel was long allent: when he spoke it was with deep gravity. "De Ligne, in every word you say, I see new reason for condemnation. Placed by nature and the institutions of my country as a watch and guardian over many, I have slumbered while influences were astir which, if your views are correct, threaten to ingulf them and me in one common ruin. How shall I redeem the past 19

"By vigilance for the future, dear Henri. When I heard last night, on my arrival at home, that you were here, I, hoped that the signs of the times had become visible to you; that the cry of your people's misories had reached you, and that you were here as a reformer. This hone brought me over this morning, and occasioned my disappointment when I heard you would depart so soon; but, now, you will not go."

"I must"

"To-morrow ?"

- "To-morrow; but look not so chagrined, Louis. My convictions are of no evanescent character: I will return; nor do I now leave this place without some evidence of my presence. I have administered present relief to the most pressing wants of the people-have dismissed a dishonest and oppressive agent"—De Ligne uttered a fervent, "I am glad of that"—"and have left in his place my faithful Jacques, who understands my wishes, and will abide by them."
- "This is all well," said De Ligne; "but your own presence would be better-why go so soon?" De Montrevel coloured : "Pardon me, Henri, I had no right to ask that question."
- "It is one which I have no objection to answer, Louis, to you. I have assumed other obligations, to which I have been already unfaithful in leaving Paris at the present time: yet, this I regret not, for it was here, among the pure and touching associations which the first sight of vonder mountain peaks awakened"-pointing to the open window through which the Cevennes might be seen at no great distance— "that I first felt the extent and sacredness of these obligations; and it is not too late, I trust, in this instance, to redeem my fault. I have entered into a contract of marriage. not yet publicly acknowledged, with-" "The daughter of the Duc de la Valliere," said De Ligne,

coldly: "I heard something of it."

"And the protégée and élève of my poor Gabrielle," added De Montrevel.

"Ah, of Madame de St. Laurent? Then, Henri, I heartily congratulate you, for one formed on such a model must bring you joy; and in the new career you propose to yourself, you will find nothing which will so kindle your heart and strengthen your hands as the sympathy of a noble-minded and true-hearted woman. I speak from experience."

"I know you do. I have visited the Comptesse de Ligne often, and she interested me, as seeming to belong to a very different order of beings from the women who surrounded her. I must introduce my Louise to her. Have you nothing with which to intrust me for her! Any communication from you will, I know, secure me a kind reception."

"Yes: I have a packet, for which I am desirous to find a safe and early conveyance; but as it contains important public information, which I transmit to the court through my wife, as the surest medium—another sign of the times, Do Montrevel—and which has been delayed already too long, I must ask, if you take charge of it, that you will lose no time in delivering it on your arrival in Paris."

"It shall be my first care."

When De Ligne would have taken his lcave, De Montrevel proposed returning with him. He was welcomed as an old friend at the home of De Ligne, which had been the scene of many a bovish frolic, and where his vouthful sorrows had mot the truest sympathy; and as he regarded the peaceful aspect of all around him, and saw his friend's countenance softened by the reverence of the son, and brightened by the exultation of the father, he felt that such emotions, experienced even for one hour, were worth years of what he had been accustomed to call pleasure. On his return home, soothing visions of a future full of such tranquil happiness floated in his imagination waking-mingled in the dreams which slumber brought; and, as he travelled on the morrow towards Paris, seemed to beckon him onward. Several days were employed in the journey, which would now probably occupy little more than one. He arrived at night-nearly midnight; yet, late as the hour was, he would not go to rest ere he had at least made an effort to see the Comptesse de Ligne, and place in her hands the packet intrusted to him by her husband. On his entrance into the city, therefore, he gave orders to be driven immediately to her hotel. She was at home, but declined seeing any one at so late an hour. But for the hint of its contents given by the Compte de Ligne, he would have left the packet with a servant : this he now feared to do. After a moment's thought, he wrote with a pencil, on a slip of paper, "I have seen De Ligne, and bear an important packet from him; if you will not see me, send some one to whom I may intrust it." The reply to this was a request that he would enter. He followed the servant without observing the carriage of the Duchesse de la Valliere, which, impeded in its course by the crowd of vehicles thronging the street, had stopped opposite to his own, just at the moment when he was writing by the light of a blazing torch, so held by its bearer as fully to exhibit himself and his employment. It was not till he had passed within the gate of the mansion that this carriage moved on. His interview with the Comptesse was brief, and he returned rapidly home to dream of the morrow, and of his meeting with Louisc.

## CHAPTER VII.

"Iago. Oh! beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster, which doth make The meat it feeds on."—Othelio.

Wa let Louise acquiring, under the skilful guidance of the Duchesse de la Valliere, those nameless touches of fashion which, like the stamp of the mint, should give value to the golden ore of her personal loveliness and native grace. But a few years earlier than the period to which we refer, it would have seemed, probably, even to the sanguine Duchesse, well-nigh impossible to transform one of such simple natural tastes and habits into a distinguished leader of ton. But the elegant simplicity of her whose name has since become the synonyme of sorrow—of Mario Antoinette—had already influenced the manners as well as costume of her sex. Louise, while, in reality, governed by her own taste,

would seem one of the most decided in adopting the new style, and even the censures of those who "opposed its innovations would add to her reputation. Such distinction would have been hazardous to the success of one less richly endowed; but a diamond of the first water, thought the Duchesse, will be prized the more, the more it is observed.

As soon as the mourning, which Louise had so strenuously insisted on retaining, was remodelled in accordance with the mode of the day, she was permitted to remain in the reception-room of the Duchesse, while she entertained her morning visiters. She was seldom addressed except by commonplace inquiries after her health, observations on the weather, or the repetition of some current report; an unmarried female being scarce considered in France as a member of society; yet she was often amused, and sometimes interested, and after a while, gaves were turned to her frequently, not merely with the admiration that a beautiful statue or picture might have excited, but with an intelligent quest for accordance, for approval, and for sympathy.

Auguste kept his station at her side, proclaimed himself her devoted servant, sketched for her the characters alluded to in conversation, and when he saw that a tale of scandal land shocked or wounded her, often disarmed it of its point by exhibiting the selfish design of the narrator. This near approach to fashionable life divested it of all the attributes which, by dazzling her fancy, might have caused her to anticipate her entrance into it with much either of apprehension or enjoyment. This indifference annoyed the Duchesses. She had discovered, as we have already seen, the master-spring of her mind, and would gladly have used it here to awaken an impulse more in accordance with her own character and the career which she had marked out for her daughter, but as yet she saw not how this might be done. Accident aided her in its perception.

The morning visiters of the Duchesse had departed, except Henrictte, Auguste, and a young and gay widow, who, having just laid aside her weeds, had returned, with fresh relish, to the world, and who had evinced no slight disposition to win Auguste to her side. Fiqued that she could not succeed, sho determined, at least, to mortify her whom she regarded as her rival. Of any deeper ill her words might cause she probably thought noj.

The Marquis de Montrevel, who was known to be engaged to Louise, though their contract was not suspected, having been named, "Ah," said Madame Richaud, the widow we have just described, "speaking of De Montrevel reminds me of his last love, the Comptesse de Ligne. See seems quite melancholy, and I fear will pine away her beauty if he do not return soon."

The Duchesse saw the malice of her visiter, and replied carelessly, with a quiet smile, "The hazard to her beauty will, I suspect, have little influence on the movements of De Montrevel."

Glancing at Louise as she spoke, she was vexed to perceive, from her changing colour, that the arrow of Madame Richard had found its mark. The widow perceived it too, and there was something of triumph in her tone as she answered the Duchesse. "You are right; her beauty he docs not care for. Her attraction lies in her perfect toilet and her elegant manner. He told me once that these would make her the queen of fashion if she was the ugliest woman in Paris, and we all know the queen of fashion will be De Montrevel's queen. But a thousand people are waiting upon me while I am delaying here. So, adieu, mes chères dames! adieu, Monsieur!" and, with one exulting smile at the downcast Louise, one tender glance at Auguste, the pretty widow fluttered from the room, careless of the pang her words had inflicted, and little suspecting how powerful and enduring would be their influence on the destiny of her unconscious rival. Henriette and Auguste soon followed her. The Duchesse had ordered her carriage, and was retiring to dress for her morning drive, when Louisc, colouring with embarrassment, said hurriedly, in a low tone, "Is the Comptesse de Ligne so beautiful?"

- "So beautiful?" repeated the Duchesse, gaily: "yes, just so beautiful."
- "I mean," said Louise, "is she very beautiful, very charming !"
- "More charming than beautiful; though she has a very fine figure, and a countenance of noble expression."
- "And what makes her so charming?" asked Louise, her cheeks glowing with yet deeper crimson, and her eyes fixed on the embroidery, on which for many minutes she had not taken a stitch.
  - "Different things to different people, I suppose," answered the Duchesse, still preserving her gay tone. She paused, and stood looking for a minute in silence on Louise, then added, "Now, ma chère, why do you not ask what I know you are longing to learn-what makes her so charming to De Montrevel ? You won't ? Well, I will tell you without asking; it is, that, to use Madame Richaud's expression, she is queen of fashion here; for, silly as that coquetish widow is, there was truth in her remark that whoever was queen of fashion would be De Montrevel's queen." Louise sighed. "But I foresee," continued the Duchesse, "that Madame de Ligne's reign will soon cease if you contest the crown with her. Why do you shake your head and look so sadly? You are more beautiful a thousand times than she, more charming; she has no advantage over you except that she is the fashion."

"And that is, you say, everything with De Montrevel?"

"True, but you can hecome the fashion; it rests with yourself to he so. A few years ago this would not have heen. A young unmarried woman was then nobody; however charming, she attracted no attention in society; but we are changing that among other things. The range for English grooms and English coats is extending itself to English customs. You have only to do what the reserved English demoistelle does always, partake of the enjoyments of society and show your pleasure in them; in short, be and do what you would not feel to be improner were you Marquise do

Montrevel. You look grave. Do you believe, Louise, that your mother would propose to you an impropriety !" "No; but—" and Louise was again silent.

"Hear me, my daughter. You love De Montrevel-nay, do not turn your head away, it is a woman and your mother who speaks-and De Montrevel is worthy of the sentiment with which you regard him. But you would be loved in return ; your happiness depends on it. Is it not so?"

"Louise answered not, but she hid her face on the shoulder of her mother, who had seated herself beside her on the fauteuil, and pressed her hand,

"I understand you Louise, and I would teach you how to accomplish your own desires. De Montrevel has evidently been charmed already by your beauty, but it is equally evident, by his desire to have you in Paris during his absence, that he wishes, before you are even known as his fianche, that you should acquire the graces which Paris only can give, and thus be prepared to do credit to his taste. If you follow my guidance you shall do more : you shall command the homage of that world about whose opinion he is so anxious, and, in doing so, be assured you shall secure his devotion"

"But," murmured Louise, "De Montrevel knew my ignorance of the world when-when-"

"When he chose you as his wife, you would say; but he then thought, doubtless, that his sister would be always beside you, to guard against any betraval of that ignorance, Believe me, my dear child, there is not one of these lordly men with independence enough to love an angel, should one stray into a Parisian assembly, without first being attired in the latest fashion."

After a pause, Madame de la Valliere resumed, in a gayer tone, "I have told you a great many new and strange things. They are not very romantic, but you will find them very true; and now I will leave you to think them over while I make some visits, and hope, on my return, to find you determined to enter the lists with the Comptesse de Ligne,"

After the departure of her mother, Louise continued long absorbed in painful thought. It was not jealousy of Madame de Ligne which caused this pain, for on her her thoughts did not long rest. It was not even doubt of her own influence over the heart of De Montrevel. It was that new views had been given her of his character, and of the nature of his regard for her. It was no longer difficult for her to understand the reason of De Montrevel's voluntary separation from her. She had been sent to Paris to acquire those graces necessary to gratify his taste and to win the world's approval of his choice. She might have asked, Would it not have been both wiser and kinder in De Montrevel to become himself her guide and teacher in this new school but she looked upon the miniature, her hidden treasure, and hushed her heart's painful questionings. She now knew his wishes, and sho resolved, at whatever effort, to fulfil them. She would yield herself to her mother's guidance, enter into the world, share the gaieties she had hitherto shunned, and acquire those accomplishments which made Madame de Ligne so pre-eminent.

We will not enter into the movements of Louise, which were the result of this new decision. It is sufficient to state that it occasioned a complete change in her social manifestations. She no longer withdrew from observation, or checked, by her reserve, the approach of her companions in pleasure's giddy round. Following her mother's guidance, she now occupied ever a prominent position among her gay associates, and only the deepened colour on her check, and a slight tremulcoussess at times in her voice, betrayed that her new career cost her an effort. It would, in truth, have been a painful effort, but she ever repeated to herself, "It is for De Montrevel;" and when was that painful to a woman which was undertaken for the one beloved!

The seemingly sudden change in Mademoiselle de la Vallicre could not but occasion surprise and speculation in those who had remarked her previous reserve. To Auguste and Henrictto it was especially puzzling, but they solved the problem, after many debates, by the conclusion that she had begun to taste the clarms of that great enchanter, the world. Whatever might be the cause, Auguste was well pleased with the effect, as she was thus brought more constantly within the sphere of his influence, saw him where he was best fitted to shine, and where her timidity and his perfect exercit faire made her often dependant on his good offices. Indeed, so frequently did his assidutly and her confiding friendship make him her partner in the dance, the promonade, or the ride, that already she was thought to have transferred her favour to him from the absent Marquis, and thus to have added another to the many instances of woman's inconstancy.

The Duchesse felt this excess of intimacy to be an evil, but it was an evil which she believed the arrival of De Montrevel would remove without effort on her part. Till then, it could only be remedied by such a revelation of the world's censoriousness and the possible schemes of Augusto as might drive Louise back in disgust to her old seclusion, and the Duchesse was too much gratified by the increased \$62st she received from the companionship of her beautiful daughter to hazard such a result.

Thus was Louise urged on her dangerous path by the deepest and truest impulses of her nature. She trod the world's summit with a precipice on either side, blindfolded by a mother's hand, and attracted onward and onward still by the voice of De Montrevel. That voice was a delusion, but there was a beautiful reality in the carnest love which thus strengthened the spirit to surrender its habits—its wishes—all, save its principles, to the one beloved.

Returning late from her first ball at court, where many an oye had rested with admiration on the soft, girlish beauty which seemed to mingle something of the charm of childhood with the grace and dignity of woman, Louise, from the accidental detention of her mother's carriage, had seen the arrival of De Montrevel, and his entrance into the hotel of Madame de Ligne. It has been said that jealousy caused no part of the pain with which Louise had reflected on the new views given by her mother of De Montrevel's character and feelings, yet it cannot be denied that a sharp pang shot through her heart at this apparent proof of another's influence over him to whom she regarded herself as sacredly wedded. That pang brought a mist before her eyes. Ere it had passed away, the carriage was again in motion. She turned her eyes upon her mother, but soon precived that De Montrevel had been unobserved by her. Why did she not mention his arrival I Was it that she feared to find her painful doubts confirmed by the cooler reason of another?

Blind that we are, we fix our desires on some event as the seal of our joys : call on Heaven to speed the flagging hours in their course, and would sacrifice days, nay, weeks of life, to attain the moment of its fulfilment. "Without haste, without rest," time moves on, and brings the desired event-are we happy? The cold hand of Louise, which made her mother start as she pressed it on parting for the night; the hurried movements and quick sighs which made Marguerite loath to comply with her earnest request that she would leave her alone to make her preparations for repose; and the deep, quivering sobs which burst forth as, locking her door, she threw herself on her knees beside her bed, and hid her face in its pillow, would answer-no. But the very vehemence of her feelings produced exhaustion, if not repose; and accusing herself of too great apprehensiveness, and well-nigh acquitting De Montrevel of any fault, she sank to sleep, Morning came, with its soft twilight and its cheering sun, and she rose, if not joyful, hopeful, and with an agitation that partook more of pleasure than pain. She had already departed from her convent hours, and now frequently breakfasted with the Duchesse, but on this morning her bell summoned Marguerite to her room quite early. Her breakfast was quickly despatched; her toilet occupied a longer time, and seemed more than usually important, but even this was at length completed. Finding that it was but nine o'clock Louise took her embroidery, hoping that occupation would

tranquilize her, and enable her to await more quietly her mother's summons. The embroidery was soon exchanged for a book : this was in turn laid aside, and after again consulting her watch, Louise descended to the saloon in which the Duchesse received her morning visiters. This room overlooked the street, and though Louise sedulously avoided anproaching the windows, her ear was alive to every sound, and each carriage, as it drew near, caused her heart to throb with expectation, and, as it passed on, to sink with disappointment. She was still alone when her mother entered. The Duchesse was gay, and Louise laughed more than usual, but there was a fitfulness in her merriment which did not indicate a tranquil mind. It was still early, and no visiters had yet appeared, when the sudden pause of a carriage, and, in a moment after, the quick, sharp sound of the bell at the entrance of the Hotel de la Valliere caused Louise to start, and, checking herself in the midst of a gay sentence, remain with lips apart and eyes fixed on the door.

"What is the matter, Louise?" exclaimed the surprised Duchesse. "Whom do you expect?"

Louise was relieved from her embarrassed silence by the cuttance of a servant to announce the Marquis de Montrevel. As the man left the apartment to usher in the Marquis, Madame de la Valliere said, hurriedly, "Pray, Jonisa, compose yourself, and do not show so plainly what you feel. De Montrevel will think you were dying to see him, and he will be shocked at your russicity."

Thus is nature—pure and holy nature—stifled by the world's false maxims! It had been difficult, perhaps, under any circumstances, after the mental conflict of the last night, for Louise to meet De Montrevel with a manner natural and unrestraincd—it was now impossible. Site roses mechanically at his entrance, and stood with her hand resting on the carved back of the chair from which site had risen, paier than usual, and so still, that her very breathing seemed hushed with the effort to suppress all emotion. De Montrevel, after a hurried greeting to the Duchlesses, approached Louise. If

spoke to her, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. She replied by a few words of quiet, and, as he felt, cold greeting. He would have pronounced her insensible, but the hand he had taken was like ice, and he said to himself, "Here is emotion—but painful emotion."

The Duchesse allowed him no time to spesulate on the cause. She launched at once into the full tide of congratulation and condolence, of inquiry and narranion. Especially did she dwell on the gay life they had lately led in Paris, on the delight with which Louise had entered into its enjoyment, on the admiration she excited, and the compliments she had received the last evening at court. "At court?" interrupted De Montrevel: "you were at the Tulleries last night: then, perhaps, you knew that I was come; you saw my carriage at—at a hotel in that neighbourhood."

De Montrevel spoke eagerly, for he was not ignorant of the Parisian on dits respecting his admiration of the Comptesse de bigne, and he almost hoped that Louise had heard them—that she had seen him last night, and that her present coldness was the result of pique—of jealousy. This hope was soon destroyed by Madame de la Valliere's answer, "No, we did not see you. Had you just come! Where did you call!"

An embarrassed and indistinct, "Only to deliver a package," had scarcely left De Montrevel's lips, when the door
opened, and Auguste Valaneour entered unannounced. The
Duchesse looked vexed. Louise really regretted his arrival,
as she was hopping each moment that some word or look would
restore to her the De Montrevel from whem sle had parted,
and every addition to their party seemed to render this
more improbable. Yet, aslamed to show her dissatisfaction, sho met Auguste's advance with a cordiality which was
only the more pleasing to him, and the more painful to De
Montrevel, from the evident embarrassment mingled with it.

Auguste rattled on with even more than his general animation of the incidents of the last evening, in his allusions to which he so frequently connected Louise with himself as to make it appear that they had been seldom apart. The Marquis grew each moment more and more distant to Louise, more and more laughty to Auguste, who preserved a manner at once gay and nonchaldrat. De Montrevel was the first to withdraw, having promised to meet the Duchesse and her party in the evening, at an assembly which, it was supposed, would be unusually brilliant.

"Yes," said De Montrevel to himself as he left, "I will go, mortifying as it is to be brought into seeming rivalry with a coxoomb. I will not condemn Louise on slight testimony. I will not believe that the pupil of Gabrielle can have become a mere coquette, or that in a few short weeks she can have given the heart, seemingly almost mine, to such a frippon as Auguste Valancour. Let her but stand this trial, and my heart shall be hers—hers wholly, hers with a trust, a tenderness, I thought not, a few months since, I could ever feel again. But should she prove as light, and vain, and heartless as I now fear—"he pansed a moment in the flow of thought, while a proud expression lighted his eye; a shade of tenderness followed as he mentally continued, "even then Gabrielle's child shall not be foreaken. So far as I can influence her lappiness, sho shall be lappy?"

## CHAPTER VIII

"A something light as air: a look,
A word unkind, or wrongly taken—
Oh! love, that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this has shaken."
Mong.

SELDOM, even in Paris, has a more brilliant circle been collected than that which adorned the saloon of Madamo Beauvilliers in the evening succeeding this meeting between De Montrevel and Louise. This lady had been one of the first to dismiss from her assemblies all the oppressive cercmonies of the old régime, which fettered the mind as completely as its costume did the person. At her assemblies, wit, talent, the power to please, were titles more sure to win admittance than Duc, or Marquis, or Compte. True, some of the haute nobless had refused her invitations in consequence of her innovations, but Madame Beauvilliers cared little for this while she could be amused, and, if their desertion was noticed at all in her circle, it was but to prompt an epigram or excite a laugh. Yet, with all this freedom in mere conventionalisms, Madame Beauvilliers had never been accused of the slighest impropriety of conduct. She was a devoted adherent of the already unpopular queen. This formed a bond of sympathy between her and the Comptesse de Ligne, who was one of her guests, and stood beside her when De Montrevel entered.

De Montrevel had come early, prompted by a restless impulse which he could not control. The reason he alleged to himself-men always have a reason for following their inclinations-was the importance to his object of observing the first entrée of Madame de la Valliere's party, and the manner of Louise, before his presence should be known to her. In the farther prosecution of his design coolly to observe and calmly to judge the developments made during the evening of her feelings and character, he had resolved to withdraw, soon after his entrance, from the circle around Madame Beauvilliers, to some more retired position, whence he might see, himself unseen. But this was not easily done. Many old acquaintances were there who had not seen him since his return, and Madame de Ligne, who had scarcely spoken to him on the previous evening, had now a thousand questions to ask of her husband, her children, her parents, which detained him at her side. In the midst of a reply, to which the Comptesso was listening with evident interest, he became suddenly distrait, hesitated, and ended abruptly, Madame de Ligne looked at him in surprise, and, following the direction of his eyes, she perceived Louisc de la Valliere accompanying her mother, who, leaning on the arm of

Auguste Valancour, was approaching Madame Beauvilliers. De Montrevel, forgetful both of his previous resolutions and of his half-completed answer to Madame de Ligne, was about stepping forward to ofter his arm to Louise, when Auguste, bending back, whispered a few words almost in her ear, and her cheek, her very brow, became suffused with a crimson flush, a smile played around her lip, and though her eyes were quickly lowered, she did not quite succeed in concealing their sudden spartle. De Montrevel drew back with unconscious haughtiness of manner, and was again the severely rigid observer of Louise. Had he heard the few words which occasioned her emotion, he might have been less displeased. They were, "Votre Marquis Louise, le voici dija."

Louise, with all those advantages which, spite of the poet's dictum, the truest loveliness derives from a tasteful toilet, and with the flush of excitement on her cheeks, and its sparkle in her eyes, had never, perhaps, looked more attractive than this evening. There was a timid grace, too, in her movements, that seemed to Madame de Ligne perfectly irresistible. She had met Louise more than once in society. and had always admired her : but this evening there was something about her, discoverable to her womanly tact, which excited her womanly sympathies. Madame de Ligne smiled as she thought, "Though she has not once looked at De Montrevel, she feels his presence as I should feel that of Louis." She glanced at De Montrevel as this thought passed through her mind, and was surprised at the coldness of his aspect. He seemed absorbed in painful thought, and, after a few moments of silence, left her, and approached Madame dc la Valliere and her daughter. The interest of the Comptesse had been excited, and, almost involuntarily, her eyes followed his movements. She saw him, after his salutation to the Duchesse, turn to Louise, and address her with a countenance and manner grave and self-possessed. Louise replied only by a bow, and, as he again directed himself to her mother, her eyes were lifted hurriedly to his face. It was but for a moment, and they were as lurriedly withdrawn, yet in that rapid glance Madame de Ligne saw the agony of a bitterly wounded spirit.

De Montrevel seemed ill at ease in his present position, and soon returned to his station beside Madame de Ligne, who, impatient with him, she scarce knew why, exerced hereself but little for his entertainment. Her silence and inattention only made her the more pleasing companion to him in his present mood, and he remained near her, seemingly occupied with her, but really observing the movements of Louise, till dancing commenced, and Madame de Ligne was led away to join a quadrille. Louise was in the same set.

Madame de Ligne commenced the dance. We have already said that she was just then a reigning belle at Paris to of course else was always an object of attention. Many persons now pressed around to see her dance. De Montrevel was almost insensibly drawn along by others, but when once his eyes rested on the Comptesse, it was impossible for one with his keen perception of the graceful and the beautiful not to look again, and to admire the mingled dignity and softness of her movements, the airy freedom which never for a moment trenched on womanly refense. He did look long and fixedly, and his admiration was almost audibly expressed. Madame de la Valliere, who stood near Louise, failed not to make this obvious to her, adding significantly. "This may be yourse if you will."

The excitement with which Louise had entered the saloon had long been subdued, leaving her pale, lauguid, and spirit-less; but again, with the hope her mother kindled, came light to her eye and colour to her cheek. When her turn came to mingle in the dance, she was agitated, trembling; but this soon passed away, and gently, lightly she floated along, a stylh sporting in air. Whispered plandits met her ear on every side, and the hope that the one desired voice would be heard among them inspired her with new life. She longed to raise her eyes to De Montrevel's, but she dared not. Could she have done so, she would have

been surprised and shocked at the expression stamped upon his features. He smiled, but it was a smile sad, and bitter, and mocking. The thought was in his heart, "How powerful must be the influence which could, in a few short months, transform the sorrowing and diffident recluse, from whom I parted at the convent, into this gay flutterer! And whose influence! not mine—" a glance at her partner, Auguste Valancour, seemed to answer his question, and painfully and bittery he admitted the answer.

In one of the movements of the dance, which left him for a moment at liberty, Auguste approached Madame Beauvilliers, and whispered a few words to her. "Oh, charming, charming," she exclaimed in reply: "I am more obliged to you and your beautiful cousin than I can express."

A few minutes after, Madame Beauvilliers might have been seen in a distant part of the room, conferring with Monsieur Dandin, the most approved leader of an orchestra in Paris, and, as such, always in request at a ball. Their conference was short, she soon returning to the neighbourhood of the dancers, and he to his musicians, to whom he gave some directions, with many gesticulations and grimaces, all expressive of the most intense delight.

Had Louise been less absorbed in her own sensations, she would have observed a slight bustle around her as the quadrille ended. Those who had been engaged in it fell back among the spectators, who had arranged themselves in a circle around the room, leaving Anguste and herself occurpying the centre alone. This movement was the work of a moment, and as suddenly the music changed from that of the quadrille to the favourite child of Monsieur Dandin's genius, the fancy dance which Louise had attempted only with Auguste and before her mother, and in which she had never supposed it possible to exhibit before the world. This dance was full of expression, an expression which perhaps Louise had not at first understood, but to the perception of which she was beginning to awake. It was love; but love doubting, restless, perturbed, and, finally, inconstant. Per-

haps, with the new light that was dawning upon her, Louise would have hesitated even in her mother's boudoir to become the partner of Auguste in this ballet, but here it would have been impossible, had not the rapidity of his movements, and her unpreparedness for them, rendered it vet more impossible to recede. We have said that the change in the music was instantaneous; as instantaneous was the advance of Auguste, and, surprised and bewildered, Louise had accomplished several movements ere she was fully aware that no others were on the floor but themselves. To retreat was then impossible, and she proceeded with a timid consciousness, which added a new charm to the exhibition; a charm so perfectly in keeping with her movements, that she seemed, to more than De Montrevel, to be giving expression to her own feelings rather than to the fancies of another. To his excited vision, her countenance seemed to wear the impress of the same emotions which had so captivated him on the day when he first sought her love. "Fool, fool," he exclaimed to himself, "that could thus be won again to trust in woman! and I could believe she loved me-ycs, me, or him, or any man who would stoop to seek such love." A taunting laugh, the bitter self-mockery of a deluded spirit, rose to his lip, but there it died; he was too thoroughly a a man of the world to betray his feelings by outward sign. save, perhaps, by a haughtier carriage of the head and a firmer compression of the lips.

At length the dance was ended, the circle of observers opened, and while many enweled around Louise and her cousin with flattering praises, the Marquis de Montrevel essaped unobserved. And Louise—"Ah, Mademoiselle, you are unrivalled in the dance!" "Enchanting!" "An angel of grace!" Such were the exclamations that met her ear on every side; but the one voice, the only one that could have given her pleasure, was not heard. Weary with expectation, she raised her eyes and glanced inquiringly around the circle: he was not there; and when, a few minutes after, Auguste, at her carnest entreaty, led her to her

mother, sie seemed so exhausted, that Madame de la Valliere, without remonstrance or hesitation, yielding to her wisk of immediate departure. Auguste attended them to their carriage, and did not return to the ball-room. Thus there was none to control the observations of the censorious,

"Ah, the nun-like Louise makes a most admirable danscuse," said a young lady to her lover, who had formerly, with indiscreet frankness, expressed his admiration of that nun-likeness.

"Le pauvre Marquis!" repeated a boyish coxcomb, with a shrug of the shoulders: "he is certainly un peu passé."

"So young, so lovely, and so fickle!" exclaimed a sentimental dame.

"Bah!" replied a wit: " what would you have t is she not a woman!"

And this fields, inconstant woman lay in her mother's arms within their closely-curtained carriage, weeping with all the abandonment of an exhausted spirit. The Duchesse de la Vallier's heart—for a beh had one, chilled though it had been—was deeply touched by the sorrows of Louise, and gently and tenderly slie southed her with many an endearing cares and fond word. Louise spoke not till the carriage stopped. Then, though darkness was around her, she bent her head yet lower on her mother's bosom, ere site whispered, "Mother, let me see him alone to-morrow." It was the last hope: in the convent he had been cold before others, tender when only with her; it might be so again. "You shall, my love," said Madame de la Valliere; and "You shall, my love," said Madame de la Valliere; and

ere she slept, she had given orders that no visiter, except the Marquis de Montrevel, should be admitted on the following mornlag; and, when the morning came, she sent a message to Louise, requesting her, should he come, to apologize for her not seeing him, as she was too much fatigued to rise.

De Montrevel did come, and his looks, if not gay, were not gloomy. His face wore that serene smile which is the best evidence of a self-approving spirit. There was a momentary hesitation in his step as he approached the boudoir of the Duchesse; but, from whatever feeling it arose, he overcame it, opened the door, and, stepping quickly across the threshold, closed it behind him. Louise was seated there alone. The Marquis had entered unannounced. She rose hurriedly at his sudden appearance, and something fell from her trembling hand to the floor. It was a minature. De Montrevel lifted it, and would, perhaps, have returned it to her without a look, had she not sprung forward and placed her hand over it, as if to hide it from his gaze. He looked down, and enough of the form and dress were visible to show him that it was the likeness of one of his own sex. He could not have relinquished his grasp of it more quickly had it been a bar of heated iron. Louise as quickly concealed it in her dress, and, covering her blushing face with her hands, sank again upon her seat.

"You need not hide it, Louise," said De Montrevel sadly, "I well know whose resemblence alone can be thus dear to you. But why have you concealed this from me, Louise! Surely the brother of Gabrielle, to forego every dearer name, was entitled at least to the confidence of a friend."

Desper and deeper glowed the crimson on the brow of Louise, but a smile began to wreath her lip; for, though there was something not quite intelligible to her in the words and manner of De Montrevel, she believed him to refer solely to the miniature and the trust in her affection, which she interpreted his first sentence to express, and his carnest appeal for her confidence scattered at once the doubts and fears which had weighed so heavily on her spirit during the last day and night. Her smil was perceived. To De Montrevel it seemed a shameless triumph in her successful deception, and it was in a stem, indignant tone, that her resumed, "Your smiles, Louise, had better be reserved for him you love—for the fortunate Aurgust Valancour!

Louise started, erected her head, and gazed wildly at him, as she repeated slowly, and with evident effort, "I—love— Auguste Valancour!"

"Yes," resumed De Montrevel, impetuously: "yes-it is in vain to deny it-you can no longer deceive me, nor is it necessary that you should. Listen to me, while, for Gabrielle's sake, I endeavour to remove from you all temptation to degrade yourself by farther falsehood. Your ready adoption of Monsieur Valancour's tastes, and the unmaidenly exhibition, to which I hope no less potent influence could have won you vesterday evening, made your preference for him sufficiently visible; but, deceived by your seeming truth and delicacy, I came here this morning, believing it an unacknowledged, an unwilling, nav, perhaps, an unconscious preference, and determined to be to you the guardian and friend which Gabrielle would have desired me to be : I came to woo your confidence, to unveil your heart, if that were nccessary, even to yourself, and to remove every barrier to your happiness that I could reach."

He paused for a moment, while Louise remained with her eves fixed upon him-eves in which large tears were gathering. She made an effort to speak, but before she could sufficiently command herself, he resumed, with a softened voice and manner, "Would, Louise, that I had never been undeceived; that I had never had such incontestable proof that what I hoped was an unconscious preference, had been, in truth, a cherished, perchance a long cherished, attachment, Yes"-and again his tone became stern and hard-"ves. I sce it all now: that conditional contract; that singular bond. making the fortune which would have been your dower as my wife, the forfeiture of my withdrawal from the contract; that bond, which I believed to originate with your wordlyminded and suspicious father, and which I would not shock you by naming, was your own work, and your subsequent conduct has been nicely arranged to produce the rupture contemplated by the bond." This sentence had been uttered slowly, as if De Montrevel was announcing conclusions to which his mind was just then arriving; he now proceeded more rapidly, bowing profoundly as he added, "Suffer me Mademoiselle, to do homage to your transcendent abilitiesto acknowledge myself your fool—your dupe—what you will; but let me add, that you are no less the dupe of your own art, for the very fortune, to secure which you have so sullied your soul, would have been yours by the will of Gabrielle, had you avowed your disinclination to become mine."

Louise land several times endeavoured to interrupt this excited and intemperate address, but her voice had been low and tremulous, and was unheeded. She now spoke firmly, and in a tone which commanded attention. Her aspect, too, had wholly changed. She was no longer the blushing, trembling, timid girl. Pale, even to ghastliness, except for one crimson spot on either check, she yet stood firmly before limit, the proud and collected woman.

"Monsieur de Montrevel, you compel me to remind you that you are a gentleman, addressing yourself to a woman. For your accusations, I can disprove them in a moment," she put her hand to her bosom, but, seeming to change her design, suddenly withdrew it, and continued, "but it is of no consequence to do so, since your esteem can now interest me as little as any character does you. I must still, Monsieur, claim your forbearance while, with your permission, I souck a few words to my father in your presence."

With a steady hand she lifted a small silver bell from the table before her, and rang it. A servant entered.

"Is Monsieur le Duc at home ?"

"Oh yes, Mademoiselle! he never goes abroad so early."
"Say to him that I request to see him here for a short time; add that Monsieur de Montrevel desires to see him, and must take his leave in a few minutes. Pardon me, Monsieur, for using your name," she added, as the servant bowed, and left the anartment.

De Montrevel answered not. He was bewildered by the strangeness of her manner. It seemed as though Louise had been suddenly spirited away, and a totally different being had taken her place. His eyes were fixed upon her, while hers were bent strainingly upon the door. The Duc soon entered. "Ah, Marquis!" he began, in his usual cordial manner, but Louise interrupted him.

"I have taken the liberty of requesting your presence, sir, in order to inform you that, finding it impossible to become the wife of the Marquis de Montrevel, I surrender all claim which the contract we signed might have given me upon bilm, and am ready to return to the convent whenever you please. Good-day, Monsieur;" and with a ceremonious obeisance to the Marquis, she had passed from the apartment before the Duc could gather voice for a single expression either of surprise or anger.

"Impossible to become the wife—surrender all claim ready to return to the convent," he at length ejaculated slowly. "Is the girl mad? What does all this mean, Monsieut!" he added, in a sharper tone, turning to the Marquis.

So much doubt and confusion had entered into De Montrevel's mind in the last few minutes, that he was much more disposed to ask than able to answer this question. He replied, however, with as much composure as he could assume, that Mademoiselle de la Valliere had sufficiently declared her feelings, and he could only add that by these his wishes would always be determined.

"Her feelings, Monsieur," said the Duc, with a derisive smile; "the capricious feelings of a girl can scarcely be expected to influence the engagements of men: your wishes you have every right to gratify, though it may be at some expense."

"I understand you, Monsieur," replied the Marquis, coldly, "and assure you you will find me prepared to fulfil all my engagements."

"I doubt it not, Monsieur, I doubt it not," began the Duc, but De Montrevel interrupted him.

"I must now bid you good-day, Monsicur, and will communicate with you on this subject at another time."

As soon as De Montrevel was gone the Duc de le Valliero

turned towards his wife's dressing-room, a place in which he

appeared only on uncommon occasions. He found Madame de la Valliere as little au fait as himself of the causes of the present very unpleasing aspect of their daughter's fortunes. For once, too, they were agreed in the resolution to oppose by all the influence they could exert what they considered her mad designs. Accordingly, as soon as the Duc withdrew, Madame de la Valliere went to the apartment of Louise, intending to remonstrate with her in no measured terms upon her folly. Tapping at the door, and having no answer returned to her summons, the Duchesse tried the latch. It yielded to her touch, and she entered. Opposite to the door sat Louise. The crimson spot which wounded pride had called upon her cheeks had faded, and now her very lips were white, Her tearless and dilated eyes were fixed upon the door; her mother passed directly before them, but no change in their expression, no movement indicated that she was seen; she spoke to her, at first gently, then loudly, but her voice seemed unheard; she approached and took her hand, but started, and dropped it quickly, shocked by its stone-like coldness and rigidity. Terrified, Madame de la Valliere screamed aloud, and Marguerite, who was seldom far away from the apartment of Louise, rushed in.

Vain was every attempt to restore warmth to the limbs or consciousness to the mind of Louise, till the family physician of the Duc, who had been summoned soon after Margueritée entrance, arrived, and directed their efforts by medical skill. The sagacity of this gentleman soon divined that the cause of this attack was some terrible shock received by the morale of his patient; and when he perceived the first gleam of intelligence in her eyes, the first relaxation in her limbs, he warned Madame de la Valliere that life and reason both could be secured only by the most tender and soothing treatment; that her wildest desires must meet with at least seeming indulgence, as opposition would, in her present condition, produce an irritation from which the most fatal consequences were to be apprehended. This representation addressed itself as strongly to the selfish as to the com-

passionate feelings of the Duc and Duchesse de la Valliere, who, as the physician well knew, dreaded nothing more than the gloom created by the near approach of suffering and death.

The return of Louise to perfect consciousness was first evinced by heavy sighs. She closed her eyes, and tears began to trickle from beneath the lids: tears which seemed the expression of exhaustion rather than excitement, as the face remained placid and still. At the instance of the physician, Madame de la Valliere spoke to her, asking what she wished, what she could do for her.

"Send me back to the convent," was the murmured reply.

"We will, dear Louise, as soon as you are well enough, if you continue to wish it."

"Monsieur Bourdier, the physician, stepped to the bedside.
"My dear young lady, I assure you your wish shall be compiled with. If the Duchesse will permit me, I will myself accompany you, as soon as you are strong enough to go; but, in order to become so, you must obey my directions; and, for the first thing, take this draught I have prepared for you."

Louise opened her eyes, and looked into the face of the

Some opened in eryes, and notes into the motion of the speaker. It was a face from which age had stolen some of its fire, but on which it had graved its benevolence in deeper lines. It was a face to inspire confidence, and Louise, satisfied with his promise, received from him the glass he held, and drank of its contents without a word. Closing the cuttains around her bed, and whispering a few words to Marguerite, Monsieur Bourdier left the room, accompanied by the Duchesse.

## CHAPTER IX.

"Existence may be borne, and the deep root Of life and sufferance make its firm abode In bare and desolated bosoms."

IEUN.

THE next day, at noon, a travelling carriage stood at the porte cochère of the Hotel de la Valliere. It did not wait long ere Louise, supported by her friendly physician, and attended by Marguerite, entered it, and was driven away. The physician, Monsieur Bourdier, had been deeply interested in his patient of the day before, and he had exerted himself with perseverance and tact to accomplish her desires. Louise had already become dear to her mother, and her consent to her departure was given tearfully and reluctantly, while the Duc replied to the representations of Monsieur Bourdier, "I think she is quite right in desiring to return to the convent, if this fracas between her and the Marquis de Montrevel is really not to be adjusted: and as matters stand between him and me, it is not of much consequence that it should be: so. Monsieur, she has my consent to do as she pleases."

And of this consent, as we have already seen, Louiso quickly availed herself. Monsieur Bourdier had insisted, somewhat sgainst her will, on accompanying her; for her hurried, nervous movements, and the alternate flush and paleness of her cheeks when he visited her in the morning, had alarmed him. He would have advised her delaying the journey, but a hint to that effect excited her so painfully that he feared to urgo it.

"Mother, you promised that I should find shelter here," said Louise to the Abbess, who came to greet her on her arrival at the convent.

"And you shall, my daughter, shelter, and, with God's blessing, peace."

That good Abbess had been initiated into the sacred mysteries of sorrow, and she saw well that since they parted Louise had suffered, yet by no look did she inquire how. She guarded her, too, from the intrusions of the kind but inquisitive sisters.

But no care, no skill can plack from the memory a rooted sorrow, or restors at once vigour and repose to nerves exhausted by conflict. For weeks, a low, nervous fever lung about Louise. She became feeble as a child—feeble, seemingly, in mind as well as body. There seemed to her no future in life. A wall, an insurmountable wall, was before her, from which her thoughts were ever turned back to the past—the mournful, the inflexible past. From this state she was aroused for a time by a communication from De Montrevel. At sight of his hand, his seal, her heart sprang, and her pulses played as she had thought they never would again. She tore open his letter: it contained but these lines:

"Louise, you have returned to the convent, and I learn from Monsieur Bourdier that you went in illness and sorrow. Louise, will you not forget the intemperance into which passion betrayed me at our last interview? Will you not remember me as the brother of your protectress, and as your friend? Can you not, in these characters, confide in me? Circumstances have given me influence over your father, which I value only as it may enable me to promote your happiness. Do not fear to let me know how this may be done. Louise, this is probably the last time I shall address you: my absence from France will soon deprive me of the power of communicating with you. Let me have the consolation of leaving you in happiness, of knowing that I have aided to make you happy. Louise, the convent cannot be your deliberate choice; that cherished picture forbids me to believe it. If your father's will have consigned you to it, suffer me to exert my influence with him in your behalf : if pride or a vain remorse detain you there, for my sake, Louise -nay, for a dearer sake-for his you love, resist their dictates, consent to make him happy, to be happy yourself, and, in being so, to give the truest happiness he can now know to your friend,

DE MONTREVEL."

Many times was this letter read by Louise, at first through blinding tears; but these were dried up, and a proud light came to her eye as she said to herself, "Yes: better the convent—better the grave, than marriage with one who can so distrust me—who can so easily dismiss me from his heart, and even desire to see me the wife of another."

She took the miniature from her bosom, gazed on it long; then disengaging it from the chain, wrote hurriedly a few lines, and enclosed it in the paper containing them. Ringing for Marguerite, and finding that De Montrevel's courier was awaiting her reply, she directed the packet slowly and hesitatingly, held it towards Marguerite, then withdrawing it before it could be taken, hade her wait in the antechamber. As soon as sho was alone, the packet, scaled and addressed, was placed in her desk, and murmuring, "Why should I seek to undeceive him?" she wrote the following lines:

"Mademoiselle de la Valliere assures Monsieur de Montrevel that her abode in the convent is by her own free deliberate choice, uninfluenced by her fasher. She hopes to find here that peace which can never exist accompanied by remorse. With her thanks for his interest in her welfare, she would present to Monsieur de Montrevel her earnest wishes for his happiness."

This note was quickly sealed and dispatched, and from that moment Louise seemed to have decided on the character of her future life. She avowed her determination to take the veil, and entered at once on her novitiate. The playful, tender, impassioned girl, to whom we first introduced the reader, the gay flutterer, who, in the saloons of Paris, had sought and won the homage of their glittering throng, now went through the daily routine of conventual life, distinguished from the nuns around her but by a paler checks a more composed—we had almost said—a more composed—we had said—a more composed—we had said—a more composed—we had said—a more composed—we had said—a more sources.

manner. She never walked now in the convent garden; she never was unemployed; the breviary was relinquished only for the pencil or the needle. While employed with these, her mind was forced from its painful retrospection, and her paintings and her embroidery enriched the treasury of the convent.

For a few days the sudden departure of Louise from Paris was the subject of speculation in the circle in which she had moved. At first it was supposed that the jealousy of De Montrevel and the anger of the Duc at her evident penchant for Auguste Valancour, had banished her to the convent: but, as Madame de la Vallierc assured her friends that her daughter's return was perfectly voluntary, all attempts at an explanation of her singular choice was relinquished, and it was only referred to as one of woman's most unaccountable caprices. Perhaps the most puzzled of all her acquaintances was her cousin Auguste. His plans had been so well arranged, had advanced so rapidly towards completion, and had seemed on that last evening at Madame Beauvilliers' so certain of accomplishment, that he could not understand how she had escaped him. The very artful never can understand perfect artlessness. The taunts of Henriette, whose feelings were embittered by the failure of her promised triumph over De Montrevel, and a suspicion that he was regarded in society as plante by Louise, made the saloons less agreeable than formerly to Auguste, and first induced him, probably, to enter the field of politics, where, in France, at that period, all was mad excitement,

It was now 1759. Already had the feeble and harassed Louis lost the supremacy which to KING had for ages possessed in France—supremacy over the HINDS as well as the lives and properties of its inhabitants. He had conceded the States-General, and in these a new power had become visible, the power of the people. To oppose this, the king would have sought succour abroad; for andit the cabals of the court, the dissatisfaction of the army, and the rage of the people, he knew not whom to trust. Many of the nobi-

lity, also, deemed the only safe and practicable course for the supporters of the established dynast y to be an appeal to foreign powers, and they accordingly fled from France to Austria. It is easy, now that we have read the page on which the destinies of that generation were written, for us to see their mistakes; and it may be true that this expatriation was one of them; that it would have been wiser for them to draw around the throne, with whose security that of their order was identified, and to preserve by their loyal homage that outward show which was all that the unfortunate Louis ever possessed of majesty. But they went, and it is with this fact only that we have to do, for among them went De Montrevel, no longer the indolent voluptuary, but a man quick in thought and decided in action.

The disappointment which had made existence aimless and valueless to Louise, seemed to have awakened in him a deeper and healthier, though sterner, sense of its nature, its objects, and its worth. Why was this?

Louise had existed only in her affections; with her, to live and to love were identical. In her connection with De Montrevel, her affections had attained their highest development, yet they had been suspected, contemned, trampled; what, then, could give life value in her eyes! In the convent she was not likely to learn the sacred charm which dwells in that word—duty.

With De Montrevel, on the contrary, the affections had long slept, while he skimmed the surface of existence, grathering its roses and sporting with its toys. The influence of Gabrielle, an influence to which Death lad given power and sanctity; the exichaling of old memoricaby his visit to his home; the view of its neglected peasantry; the starding revelations of De Ligne—these had borne him at once into the heart of life, had shown him, in its responsibilities, its duties, the proper objects of those energies which had hitherto struggled in vain for free exercise; and in the union of the affections with those duties he had had a dim and distant revelation of that new and sweeter pleasure for

which his sated spirit had long sighed in vain. In the affections he had been disappointed, but the duties remained; and with these life was a grave and solemn, but a far more valuable possession than pleasure could have made it even in his earliest days. It may be observed that, in enumerating the influences which had awakened the nobler nature of De Montrevel, we have said nothing of Louise. In truth, she had exercised little direct influence over him; and though she had doubtless contributed to the rapid development of that nature, it had been rather by exercising than awakening it, rather as the recipient than the source of its action. De Montrevel had not acquired that intimate knowledge of her character necessary to a reposing, a confidential, and, consequently, an influential affection. All which was enduring in his feelings towards her had been the result of her asssociation with Gabrielle-Gabrielle, dying and dead -with his hopes for the future and his aspirations after the Highest Good. And for these associations he had loved her truly-more truly and more deeply than he himself knew till he strove to forget her. Forget her he could not. The very inconsistencies which

had driven him from her, fixed his thoughts upon her. The busy day, with its stirring events and absorbing employment, might banish her from him; but with the still hours of night and of repose, came the Louise of the convent, sad, tender, artless; while the Louise of Paris danced before him, gay, mocking, treacherous. No! Louise was not forgotten.

## CHAPTER

"Powers depart,
Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat;
But by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to celipse nor wane,
DUTT exists—immutably survives."—Wordsworth.

Louise hoped for peace in the convent, and now, alast there is no peace in France. Abbess and nuns, all must quit their quiet home—quiet no more, for its old gray walls are echoing to the fierce denunciations and licentious revelry of a mob, who have trampled ruthlessly over its fair gardens, pillaged its scanty treasury, and descerated its altar. But Louises is not there. She has been removed in time by the provident care of the patriothe citizen, Auguste Valancour, who, it is said, has much influence with the Republican chiefs, of the hour, and who certainly rules the Due de la Valliere.

The poor Duc I when others were sleeing from the coming storm, he could not so it; and now he never feels safe except in the presence of Auguste, who resides with him by his request. Here Louise finds him, and strives not to shrink from him, but strives in vain, though she repeats often to herself, "It was not the fault of Auguste: he was ever kind and friendly to me, and nothing more." But she begins, after a time, to apprehend that now he would be something more. Besides, Louise loves and pities the poor Queen and reverences the priests, and has no sympathy with Republicans; and Auguste is a facre Republican.

Another face, seen in better times, greets Louise at her father's house, which gives her pleasure at first. It is that of Jacques Brissot. But soon she learns that he too cries "Vive la Republiques," and "A bas les Aristocrates," and that his patriotism has been rewarded by a large share of the plunder of his master, and his face pleases her no more. It seems strange to Luties, the influence which this man,

Jacques Brissot, has acquired over her father and Auguste. He is received as their equal, their friend, and yet there are times when he seems to her to mock them both.

But the being in all Paris who interests Louise most is her mother. Madame de la Valliere welcomed her daughter back sadly, but tenderly. In that wild, dark chaos of fear, and treachery, and cruelty, it was so pleasant to feel there was one to whom she could look and speak as he felt, without dread of betrayal; one who would remain faithful to her even in danger; and this Madamo de la Valliere felt to Louise, and Louise alone, of all Paris.

And thus, even from that chaos life was emerging with a new aspect to both 'mother and daughter. Each had now obligations to fulfil, duties to perform to the other; to soothe, to cheer, to protect, above all, to cling faithfully to each other heart to heart and hand in hand, through their dangerous path. Strange as it may seem, Louise was happier, far happier here, amid strife, and horror, and bloodshed, than in the still and seemingly peaceful convent. In her generous efforts to support another, she was learning self-dependence, and Madame de la Valliere was learning sometimes to forget herself.

But if love is thus kindling a little light around them, it is growing darker and darker everywhere else in Paris. More and more timid grows the Duc de la Valliere, more and more desirous to leave Paris. Augusté has undertaken to procure passports for them all. They must not, however, go all together. So large a party would find hindrances, and might excite suspicion. But what is to be done! The Duc will not leave Auguste—with him only can he be persuaded safety lies. The Duchesse and Louise will not be separated, and Auguste will not stir in the business, will not even procure the passports, if he has not some assurance that the reward for which he is labouring shall be his. And this reward is Louise and her fortune—for Louise has fortune, 20,000 livres, secured in good English stocks, and lying in the hands of a banker in London. This was the for-

feiture of De Montrevel for his withdrawal from their contract. He had made the amount equivalent to that which he believed would have been secured to Louise by the will of Gabrielle, and, mindful of her expressed wishes, he had placed even its income beyond the disposal of the Duc de la Valliere, except with the consent of his daughter; and the principal she could not herself alienate, till she married or became of age. The arrangements which transferred the funds so appropriated from Paris to London, had been made just before he left France, and after he had written to Louise at the convent. Twice the Duc de la Valliere had received the annual income of these funds, and vet Louise knew nothing of them. Her signature had been given, when asked by her father, without question or remark. But Louise was no longer an unquestioning child. She had seen much in her father which pained, and some things even in the more politic Auguste, which displeased her. Suspicion, undefined and vague, but not, therefore, the less powerful, was aroused; and when next her signature was required, she asked to know for what it was needed, adding, sportively, "These are dangerous times for signing without seeing."

Auguste Valancour was present at this scenc, and Louise, observant of him, because she had already learned to think her father but a puppet in his hands, perceived him glace significantly at the Duc, who replied, impaticntly, "I have no time for explanations now; this paper must go by to-day's post, so sign it quickly."

"I cannot, sir, till I know what it is," said Louise, more gravely and firmly than before.

"Do you know, Mademoiselle"—the Due began in an angry tone, but Auguste, stepping forward, interrupted him. "Why should you hesitate, my uncle, to tell Louise that, alarmed by the hazards to property here, you have funded most of yours in England; and that, anxious to place her maintenance beyond the reach of accident to yourself, you have made your deposites in her name, and are therefore really dependant upon her? You are wrone. I am sure, in

fearing that she could make an ungenerous use of such knowledge."

A few short months ago, and this artfully-constructed tale would have gained the ready credence of Louise, and she would have felt no expression too forcible of gratitude for her father's goodness, and condemnation of her own distrust; but now, though she coloured and looked down, abashed by the thought of her own injustice should this bo so, she still hesitated to sign the paper. The pen was in her hand, however, when the door opened, and Jacques Brissot entered. He looked with an inquiring smile from one, to the other of the assembled trio, and then exclaimed, with that familiarity which had of late marked his manner towards Anguste and the Duc, a What! signing the marriage contract without a notary!

Improbable, nay, impossible as was the idea conveyed in these words, in her present doubtful mood they arrested the pen of Louise. Augusto perceived it, and he bit his lip and frowned with ill-concealed rage. Little daunted by this, Jacques continued to smile, and as he was not answered, began, "I say, are you signing—"

"Mademoiselle de la Valliere is signing an order on her banker in England," said Auguste, hastily.

"Ah, touching that 20,000, are you! A pretty good bargain you made, Mademoiselle, out of that silly Marquis —20,000 livres—nearly as much as I got myself."

"What do you mean, Jacques?" exclaimed the dismayed Auguste, as he marked the effect of these words on the expressive countenance of Louise.

"Mean! why, that all the property the Marquis de Montrevel left in France would hardly bring more, in such times as these, than the 20,000 livres—"

"Which the Duc de la Valliere has secured to his daughter," interrupted Auguste, speaking with significant emphasis.

"The Duc de la Valliere!" repeated the obtuse Jacques; "no, I mean the 20,000 livres which the Marquis de Montrevel funded in England for Mademoiselle de la Valliere. Ab, Citoyen Valliere, you do deserve credit for that contract; it was cleverly managed."

The Duc, whose past reserve to Louise had been the effect of Auguste Valaneour's caution rather than his own, and who could little understant the influence such a disclosure was likely to exercise on her, was checked in his smiling reception of the compliment to his sagacity, by seeing Louise rise and advance towards the door.

He glanced at the paper still lying on the table at which she had been seated. It was not signed. "Louise, you have not signed the paper," said he.

"She turned towards him, and, insensible as he was, he quailed for a moment before the strange fire in her eye.

"No, Monsieur," she replied, in a deep and firm tone of voice, "I have not signed the paper."

Again she approached the door; but the Duc, recovering himself at a quick and meaning gesture from Augusts placed himself before it, saying, "Mademoisello de la Valliere, we have had quite enough of these heroics. I have need of money, and you will sign that paper before you leave this room."

"Then, sir," replied Louise, steadily, "this room is my abode for life, for sign that paper I never will. If you are willing to become the recipient of the Marquis de Montrevel's bounty, you must obtain it through other means than the degradation of your daughter."

Auguste, who had hitherto hung back, somewhat abashed by the detection of his falsehood, now drew near, and in the most submissive accents began, "Louise, permit me to explain—"

"Monsieur Valancour, I pray you to spare yourself the trouble of inventing tales which will gain no credence."

Stung by the cool contempt of her manner more even than by her words, Auguste exclaimed, "It is indeed unfortunate that Mademoiselle de la Valliere should have been deserted by one who, it is evident, still exercises such powerful influence over her feelines." Elevated, by her present emotions, above all girlish considerations, and resolved at once to assert herself—to rebuke Auguste and to do honour to De Montrevel—Louise replied, "Your sarcasms do not wound me, Monsieur, for I can feel no mortification at being supposed to honour and regard true nobility in the person of the Marquis de Montrevel."

"Come, come, Mademoiselle," said Jacques Brissof, "this is no time to talk about your honour and regard for nobility: less than that has carried some to the guillotine. Indeed, there is little time for any of you to stand prating here. Your friend," addressing himself to Auguste, "is getting out of favour, and two days hence will not be able to obtain a passport for himself. I discovered this accidentally this morning, and on my way here I called on him, and now bring with me the promised passports. On ois for the good citizene Valancour and Valliere, travelling on secret business for the Republic into Switzerland; the other is for Madame de la Valliere, daughter, and servant—that last is a part I can play pretty well—travelling on business of their own to Holland."

"But why is this?" inquired Auguste, in an impatient tone. "If compelled to form different parties, we surely need not pursue such very different routes." "Had passports been asked on the same day for two parties

who were to pursue the same route, would it not at once have excited suspicion?"

"But why need we go to Switzerland! why not go to some scaport, from whence we may embark at once for England?" questioned the Duc.

"So you may, Citoyen Valliere, if you have no value for your head, which most of our countrymen think a triffe that may be dispensed with by a Frenchman hurrying towards England." The Duc turned pale and was silent. Jacques turned to Louise: "No time to loss, Mademoiselle, in preparing for your journey."

"You say nothing of Marguerite; I cannot leave her here."

"You need not; I remembered my old friend Marguerite, and your passports provide for an attendante."

Again Louise would have left the room, but the Duc arrosted her with, "You have not signed that paper."

"And all the better," said Jacques, preventing her reply,
that she has not. What would you do with an order for
money, the answer to which, if you sent it now, could not
reach Paris for many days after you had left it, and which,
being on an English banker, would be rather a dangerous
travelling companion?"

The shrewdness and hardiness of Jacques had already acquired perfect control over the weak and timid Duc, who now readily admitted the force of his conclusions, saying, "That's true—that's very true; it had better stand till we meet in Londous, and then I can see Mr. Elford myself, and perhaps make a better arrangement of the funds in his hands."

While Jacques had thus been arranging for all parties.

Auguste Valancour had remained silent, and apparently abstracted; but as Louise was released by her father, he intercepted her, and, laying his hand upon the door, said, "Stay, Louise; we must not part without a fuller understanding between us.

"Monsieur Brissot says there is no time for delay," said

Louise.

"Then make no delay in hearing me, for heard I must be before we part."

"Speak quickly, then," said Jacques: "speak quickly, and we will wait for you a few minutes in the saloon. Come, Citoyen;" and with a familiarity which Jacques precised towards the Duc, perhaps the more frequently because he was so evidently annoyed by it, he now laid his hand upon his arm and drew him from the room. The door had searcely closed on them when Auguste, with an impetuosity, the more remarkable from its contrast with his usual nonchalance, exclaimed, "Louise, you say well that there is no time for delay. Did you hear Jacques Brissot tell me that, in two

days' time, my friend—be through whom our passports were obtained—would wish himself out of France I To be in danger in France now—to be suspected—is to be lost. When danger comes to him—to this friend—it comes to me; and when to me, to your father, your mother, yourself. Two days, then, are left us to escape so far from Paris, that, swift-winged as are its messengers of blood, they cannot overtake us. Do you understand—do you see our position 19

"I do," shudderingly replied Louise, "and I wonder but the more why you detain me."

"You wonder why I detain you? To tell you that neither you nor I stir one step from Paris, though certain that the guillotine awaited us here, till you have become mine, or at gamounts awasee to seek, sin you have become mine, or at least promised to do so when we meet again in England. Louise, interrupt me not." he cried in vehement tones, seeing her about to speak: "hear all. I have loved you from the first moment we met; and though affianced to the Marquis de Montrovel, I flattered myself that you could not but pre-fer one whose age, habits, and temper were more congenial to your own. Regardless of the interests, which a wealthier bride might have promoted. I devoted myself solely to please and win you. Just as my success seemed certain to the world, and even I myself had dared to hope, you vanished from my grasp. Evil times came upon us. Few of my own class who could escape from Paris remained. De Montrevel fled, but I fled not; for what would life have been to me where you were not? And now—now that you are again restored to me—that all ties are severed which might have formed a barrier between us—think you I will again be parted from you with uncertainty between us? No. Yet in this alone, Louise, will I ever have a will distinct from yours. You are pained, I know, by this dependance on the cold, the insensible De Montrevel—a dependance in relation to which I seemed a deceiver, because I was myself deceived by your father. Be mine, and the very day which makes you so, you shall give him back his gold. Louise, promise—only promise to be mine, and those simple words make me your slave for life. I wait for those words, Louise—I wait for them, and again I say, we part not without them."

In France, at this period, danger and death were such close companions that the face of Louise had been blanched with terror at the first allusion of Auguste to the hazardous position in which delay would place her friends and herself. She thought of her mother. She knew that every day women, as noble and as innocent, were dragged to prison and to death; and imagination presented a picture before which her heart sank and her brain reeled. But indignation almost mastered fear when she discovered the object of Auguste in arousing these horrors. The love he professed for her seemed strangely uncongenial with such tyranny. Having already distrusted Auguste, she was quicksighted to his inconsistencies. She doubted his baving been deceived by her father; she doubted his sincerity in promising that, as his wife, she should return the property secured to her by De Montrevel; and though these doubts did not change her reply, they gave her composure in making it, for falsebood awakens contempt-a feeling incompatible with either great fear or great anger. It was with calmness, therefore, that Louise, when Auguste paused, replied, "I cannot make such a promise, Auguste."

"And why not, Louise—why not! Is marriage with me worso than the guillotine! Does it threaton greater misery than a violent death for your mother, and for yourself, perchance, what you may dread worse than death! You are very lovely, Louise."

These words, and the look which accompanied them, sent the blood rushing for one moment to the very brow of Louise; the next she became pale as the dead, and grasped at a chair near her for support. Auguste supposed her falling, and extended his arm to save her, but she recoiled from his touch. He noticed this movement only by a smile, as he said, \*Death—dishonour—these are terrible things, Louise." He raused, but she replied only by a shudder.

- "Will you do nothing to avoid them?"
- "All which is possible would I do to avoid the mention of them," she answered in low, but energetic tones.
  - "Then you will give me the promise I ask ?"
  - "No, for that is not possible."
  - "A simple promise not possible !"
- "The performance of it would not be possible; and I have not learned to separate the performance and the promise."

There was a ficre fire in the eyes of Anguste Valancour. A minute passed ere he mastered himself so far as to speak, and then it was in low, hissing tones that he said, "Louise de la Valliere, beware! I leave you here to reflect on what I have said, while I go to make arrangements which shall close the prison doors on yourself and all dear to you, if I find you not in a more complying mood on my return."

Deprived, by the steadfastness of Louise, of the last hope of retrieving his desperate fortunes, the passion of Auguste Valancour had overpowered his policy. Hate and malice gleamedifrom the eves of the professed lover, as his lips gave utterance to his unmanly threats, and passing immediately from the room, the door was closed with violence after him, and Louise heard the key grate harshly in its lock. No longer excited by indignation or sustained by pride, Louise, when left alone, wrung her hands and looked around her with a countenance expressive of wild and hopeless agony; then sinking on her knees beside a sofa, she buried her head in its cushions and sobbed convulsively. Fifteen, or perhaps twenty minutes had passed away, when the sound of an approaching footstep caused her to start up. She heard the key again entering the lock, and endeavoured to resume her composure of countenance, though her disordered hair and flushed cheeks bore witness to her recent agitation. The door opened, and she was as much pleased as surprised to find that not Auguste Valancour, but Jacques Brissot entered. He closed the door carefully behind him, and came quite near Louise before he spoke. Even then it was in a low, suppressed voice that he said, "Mademoiselle, we have no time for explanations, and I have come to ask you to trust me without them, and to believe, in spite of all you have seen, that Jacques Brissot is an honest man, and as faithful a servant to the Marquis de Montrevel in Austria as he was to the Marquis de Montrevel in France. It was he who sent me to Paris; and it was to look after you that I came, and to get you away from this dangerous place if I could. Things are growing worse here every day, my dear young lady. Your father and his family have been safe till now, because Monsieur Valancour has had friends in power; but his friends, as you heard me tell him, will soon want help themselves, and, therefore, those who depend on them have no time to spare in getting away. He knows this, and vet he will find means to delay your departure even at the hazard of his own life, for on you now hangs his last hope of fortune."

To all that Jacques said Louise had listened with the deepest attention. His assurance that in his care for her he was obeying the direction of De Montrevel, sent a thrill of delight to her heart long unknown, and it was with entire confidence in his right and his power to direct her that she now asked, "What would you have me to do?"

"He tells me that you will not give him a promise of marriage," said Jacques, with an earnest look, and in an inquiring tone.

To Louise, Jacques was now the organ of De Montrevel, and these words sunk heavily and coldly on her heart: but she answered firmly, "Never: I cannot give a promise knowing its performance to be impossible."

"Then, my dear young lady, there is but one thing to be done. Monsieur Valancour would doubtless like your fortune better with you; but if he cannot have both, he will, I think, be satisfied with the fortune, or, rather, with a part of it, for we must not offer him all."

"But I have no fortune," said Louise: "Heaven knows, if I had, how gladly it would be given to place my mother in safety."

"Well, this 20,000 livres, of which it seems you heard this morning for the first time, is your own; and though you cannot give it away now, for my lord took care of that, you can give a promise that half the interest from it shall be Monsieur Valancour's till you marry or are of age, and that then you will divide the whole sum with him."

"How can I make such a promise in regard to money which is not mine, and which I would sooner die than touch f You say you are in the confidence of the Marquis de Montrevel: assure him, I entreat you, that I never knowingly drew one sou from that sum; entreat him."

"My dear young lady," interrupted Jacques, "we may talk of that another time; now I can think of nothing but how to get away from this infernal Paris, and in what way I shall contrive to satisfy Monsieur Valancour, and prevent his hindering us. Even he does not know as much as I do of the danger of continuing here."

Jacques remained silent and thoughtful for a few seconds, while Louise watched his every movement with intense anxiety. In him seemed to be her only hope of escape for herself from Auguste, for her mother from the perils of her present abode. Her mother-at the remembrance of her, of her helpless dependance, her agony of terror at even the suspicion of danger, Louise felt wildly impatient to be away: she thought that to accomplish this object she could do, could promise anything that would not make her contemptible in the eyes of De Montrevel. She could not, by appropriating that for which he had accused her of plotting, confirm his belief in her treachery, her venality; no, it would be easier to marry Auguste, at least, to promise to marry him-she might die before he could claim her promise. She opened her lips to declare her resolution to Jacques, but with a shiver which made him look wonderingly at her, she exclaimed instead, "No, no, I cannot marry him; I cannot promise to marry him: but pray him to let my mother go. and I will stay here and die."

"My good young lady," said Jacques, soothingly, "there

are botter things to be done than that. I think Monsieur Valancour will be satisfied; at least, that he will feel it to be his interest to let you go, if you will give him a written promise to divide equally with him whatever fortune you may have on the day of your marriage, or when you come of age."

"I shall have none," ejaculated Louise.

"Well, well, that is as you think; he thinks differently. You are willing, I suppose, if you should have any, to divide it?" asked Jacques.

"To give him all, everything that is my own," was tho eager reply.

"Half will do, I think," said Jacques; "at least, we will try it;" and seating himself at the table where the writing materials, which Louise had refused to use, still stood, he prepared to write, saying, with a smile, to her, "We have hardly time to look for a notary, and if we had, we might not find one so homest as Jacques Brissot."

He wrote but a few lines, and rising, said, "Now, Mademoiselle, sign quickly, if you please."

Louise obeyed without a moment's hesitation. She did not even ask to know what she had signed, so perfect was her confidence in one who had avowed himself the agent of De Montrevel; and yet, could she have seen the smile with which Jacques Brissot contemplated her while she was obeying his mandate, she might have doubted him. As soon as he had received the paper from her hand, Jacques hurried away, asking her to wait there a few minutes, and he would bring her intelligence of his success. He very soon returned to say that he had found little difficulty in persuading Monsieur Valancour to accept the proffered terms. "In truth." he added, "he has had some information which makes him little less anxious than we to leave Paris behind him. And now, Mademoiselle, in an hour your carriage, which I shall drive myself, will be at the gate. Madame and Marguerite have been busy packing ever since I came to you; I thought it was the best way to keep Madame quiet about you till you could join her."

Louise thanked him for his care, promised to be ready in time, and proceeded to her mother's apartment with a lightness of spirit she had not experienced for months, and which arose from the thought, perhaps unconsciously indulged, that again she was cared for, protected by, De Montrevel.

## HAPTER XI.

You may my glories and my state depose, But not my griefs."—SHAKESPEARE.

Lourse saw nothing more of Auguste. The Ductook a hasty leave of his wife and daughter, promising to join them in England as soon as he could make his way there with safety. He could give them no directions for their conduct. Jacques would do all that was necessary for their safety and comfort while with them, and would give them, at parting, what money he and the Duc could spare. They must call on Mr. Elford, the banker, when they needed more. To this last charge Louise said nothing, but silently she resolved that no extremity should make her comply with it.

Had every party proceeding from France during these poritous times poissensed a Zaques Brisock, there would have been few unsuccessful attempts at flight. His shrewdness was never at fault; he anticipated all difficulties, used all precautions which the utmost timicity could have suggested, and when the danger could not be avoided, met it with a cool hardihood which overpowered suspicion. Under his guidance, Madame de la Valliere, Louise, and Marguorite passed safely into Holland. He proceeded with them to Ostend, at which port he told them, he had, through a friend, made arrangements for their embarkation to England. At Ostend Jacques took them at once to the house of this friend, who kept a quiet, respectable inn, near the quay from which they would sail. From their departure from Paris to their arrival there, he had aksed no orders from and made

few explanations to those whom he ostensibly served, but in reality directed. Madame de la Valliere was too grateful for her escape from the terrors of Paris, too little accustomed to decide for herself in difficult circumstances, to resist his guidance, and Louise never forgot that Jacques had said he was acting under the orders of De Montrevel.

There was a strange mingling of respect and pity in the manner and tones of Jaques Brissot when he asked an interview with the Duchess and Louise, on the morning after their arrival at Ostend. He wished, he said, to tell them what arrangements had been made for their voyage, and to give them some information he had obtained respecting a residence for them on their arrival in Encleson.

"But why trouble us with these things now, Jacques!" said the Duchesse, with something like peevishness: "it will surely be time enough when we get there."

"Time enough, perhaps, for you to learn them, Madame," replied Jacques, "but too late for me to tell them to you. I shall be in France before that time, with good fortune."

I shall be in France before that time, with good fortune."

"In France!" repeated both his auditors, in accents of dismay. "Do you leave us here?"

"I must do so, ladies, and, I am sorry to say, even before you sail, for the English captain tells me he will not be able to leave here before to-morrow; and I must not delay, even for an hour, my return towards Paris."

The dismayed Duchess exclaimed and protested, commanded and entreated by turns, that, at least, Jacques should go with them to England, and see them established in lodgings there before he left them, but in vain. Respectfully, but firmly, he continued to declare any delay on his part impossible. Finding that Madame de la Valliere was too much absorbed in her own emotions to give any head to what he said, he turned to Louise, who, after her first exclamation of surprise, had remained silent. "Mademoiselle, permit me to explain to you the necessity for my immediate return, if I return at all. To render you, and Madame your mother, more secure in your journey here, my attendance on you

seemed to those who gave me the passports but a secondary affair, to be used as a cloak for my real object, the obtaining important information for them in this country. Should I make any delay in carrying to them this information, my head will not be safe in Paris."

"Then why return to Paris at all? why not escape with us to England?"

"I was born the servant of the Marquis de Montrevel, Mademoiselle, and I can serve him at present best in France."

Louise coloured, and was silent. After a few moments Jacques resumed, "And now, Mademoiselle, will you permit me to make to you the communication which Madamo seems scarcely able to attend to?"

Louise, glancing at her mother, who now sat weeping in seemingly hopeless dejection, signified her acquiescence, and Jacques proceeded to business. He placed in her hands fifty Louis, which, he said, was the sum given him for them by the Duc de la Valliere. Their passage to England was already paid, and he handed her a receipt for the amount, signed by the captain of the vessel in which they were to make the voyage. "And now, Mademoiselle," he continued, "I have some letters here for you, which have been waiting your arrival at this place for some weeks. They were written and sent here by the Marquis de Montrevel, to whom I found means of sending information of the route you would take. They are addressed to some of his friends in England, and will secure their kind attentions for the Duchesse and yourself. This one," he added, drawing it from the package, " is addressed to Mr. Elford, the banker, in whose hands my master, the Marquis, placed your money."

"I have nothing in Mr. Elford's hands, and have no need of his address," said Louise, rejecting the proffered letter with quickness and decision.

"Indeed, Mademoiselle, you had better take it," urged Jacques, carnestly: "fifty Louis will soon be gone, and it is very uncertain when the Duc, who goes in such an opposite direction, will be able to join you; you will have no means of living."

"We have jewels, and we must sell them."

"You may not find that so easy as you think, and you will be fortunate if you get half their value—you cannot live long on them."

"When they fail us, I can work," said Louise; "my paintings and embroidery brought money to the convent; I may hope they will not prove less profitable in England."

Jacques shook his head with a doubtful smile, and she added, impatiently, "At any rate, I will not take that to which I have no claim: I shall not need the letter to Mr. Elford."

"I am sorry," said Jacques; and, as he held the letter irresolutely in his hand, he glanced at Madame de la Valliere. She had ceased to weep, and his quick eye detected in a moment, by her change of posture and countenance, that she was listening with interest to his colloquy with Louise. "Perhaps, Madame, you would!take this letter and keep it. It may serve you, one of these days, to know the address of Mr. Elford, if only to hear through him of your friends abroad. My master corresponds with him, for he is an old friend as well as his banker."

The Duchesse took the letter, and Louise probably felt not unwilling that she should thus possess the means of obtaining intelligence of absent friends. This affair arranged, Jacques returned to his plans.

"I thought, Mademoiselle, that you might have some trouble in finding ledgings on your arrival; so I have been asking the English captain if he knew any place where two ladies might have comfortable lodgings at a moderate price, and I find he has a sister who lest lodgings. They are not likely to be such as would suit you long, but they may serve for a few days, still you can look about and do better."

"Thank you, Jacques," said Louis, when he paused; "thank you for your care of us. The lodgings you talk of

will, I dare say, suit us very well; for, with fifty Louis and a few jewels for our only fortune, we must not expect much?"

"Brighter days will come, Mademoiselle-brighter days will come," said Jacques, encouragingly; "and when I remember that poor Princess Lamballe and the beautiful queen who is just shut up, waiting till her hour of execution comes, I think, ladies—that is, great ladies, like the Duchesse and yourself—ought to rejoice to get out of France, if they brought nothing but their lives away with them."

"We do, Jacques, we do rejoice," said Louise, in a low, earnest voice, full of sympathy for the unfortunates he had named.

Cordial was toe farewell of both the Duchesse and Louise to this humble, but honest guardian. Before his departure, Jacques asw their baggage on board the vessel, and, with their permission, introduced to them the plain, honest-looking English skipper, who, with unceremoinous kindness, expressed his pity for "ladies like them, who were left to steer for themselves," and promised that he would take all possible care for their comfort till he should have seen them to their lodgings in London.

## CHAPTER XII.

"There is a perennial nobleness and even sacredness in work. In idleness alone is there perpetual despair."—Carlyle,

THE voyage of Madame de la Valliere and Louise was made with a favouring breeze, and under a serence summer sity. The sea was so smooth that Louise suffered little from the illness which its motion creates. She was able to sit on deck and enjoy to the full her first view of this truest image of infinity. In its vast extent, boundless to her senses, its fathonliess depth, its ecaseless movement, it seem 3 do her a type also of the human spirit, to whose extent, and depth, and hidden energies, she had just begun to awake. As she leaned over the vessel's side and listened to the soft dashing of the waves, or heard those low, booming sounds which seemed to come from the far depths of the sea, she likened them to the sad utterance of an earth-wearied spirit; but, as she looked upon the clear waves, gleaning and dancing in the sun's light, she said to herself—"Thus will God shed the light of His grace and peace upon the heart which open itself to him, and thus the pure heart will reflect His image, and rejoice in His light." Sorrow was doing its appointed work with Louise. The loving woman's heart was there still, but she was learning that in this was not her life.

On their arrival in London, if Louise and Marguerite were dismayed at the small rooms, in an obscure street, to which they were shown by the sister of the honest captain, Madame de la Valliere was in despair. It was late when they arrived, and she agreed to stay for one night, and take such rest as she could upon the narrow bed. Louise reminded her that it was much wider than the berth in which she had slept the preceding night; pointed out how spotlessly clean were its linen and drapery, and persuaded her, at length, that it was possible to sleep very comfortably there for one night. Both felt that the work of the morrow would be to look out for other and better accommodations. But when the morrow came, the bright morning's sun, the cheerful look of the little rooms opening into each other. Marguerite's account of the kind inquiries of their hostess, and, above all, the difficulty, to persons who knew nothing of business, who had, indeed, rarely been abroad, except with carriage and attendants, of setting out as lodginghunters, made the Duchesse and Louise almost resolve to remain in their present abode till the Duc's arrival. Marguerite, however, said it would never do; her ladies could not live there; she would go out and look for better lodgings for them, some place where they would not be ashamed to see their friends.

Louise smiled. "Our friends, Marguerite! it will be long, I fear, before we see any of them."

"Well, Mademoiselle, I did not know, but Jacques told me that he hoped you would find kind friends in London, for that he had given you letters from the Marquis de Montrevel to persons he knew here."

"That is well thought of, Marguerite," said the Duchesse,
"those letters may contain something to help us now. Look
them over, Louise."

Louise obeyed, but there was no help for their present

difficulties in the letters. They were open letters of introduction for the Duchesse de la Valliere and her daughter to persons of rank and fashion in London. To send such letters from their present abode, Louise at once decided, and Madame de la Valliere reluctantly assented to the decision, would be folly. Their friend, the captain, had promised to see them in the morning, and they determined to ask his advice. He could, at least, direct Marguerite where to look for a more airy and handsome street, and larger apartments. Accordingly, Madame de la Valliere explained to him their wishes, and he readily proffered all the assistance in his power. He would not only direct Marguerite-he would go with her. as he had some hours of leisure that morning. He added that he would not have thought of bringing such ladies to such a street, if Mr. Brissot had not told him that they had not been able to take much away with them from Paris, and that they would like to live cheaply till their friends joined thom.

"Cheaply," said Madame de la Valliere, with a condescending smile, "but yet respectably."

The honest sailor looked around the neat rooms with an approving glance, which seemed to say that he thought them very respectable, but he replied only by a slight smile and a shrug of the shoulders, as he accompanied Marguerite down stairs. They were gone several hours, and before they returned, Marguerite had seen many places which she preferred to the presant residence of her ladies; though none

that exactly suited her desires for them. Of the terms at which they could be obtained, neither she not her employers had thought; but, fortunately, her companion had been more considerate, and he produced a paper, on which, opposite to the street and number of each place, he had noted the sum demanded by the week. Alas! Louise found that the lowest and least eligible would take three of her little stock of Louis, while for those which Marguerite would have chosen, more than four were demanded. Her look of consternation was perceived by Captain Weldon, and he rightly interpreted its meaning.

<sup>a</sup> My dear young lady," said he, <sup>a</sup> I see that neither you nor your mother know anything about buisness—indeed, how should you! Now I can't help feeling sorry for women in such a strait, and if you'll let me be your friend, and tell me how much you've got and what your dependance is when that's gone, I may be able to help you to some good advice at least, which, you know, costs nothing to any-body.

Madame de la Valliere, though perfectly understanding English when spoken by others, had not been accustômed to use it herself in conversation, and, therefore, generally made Louise her interpreter. To her the language had been made familiar as her own by Madame de St. Laurent, who had associated much with English travellers in her girlinod. Now, therefore, it was Louise, who, after receiving her mother's permission to make the desired communication, frankly told Captain Weldon the amount of money which Jacques had placed in her hands, and acknowledged that until the arrival of the Duc, for which, from the indirectness and uncertainty of his route, no time could be appointed they had no know of more.

The countenance of Captain Weldon clouded over as he heard her communication, and when she had ended, he exclaimed, "Fifty Louis! why, you will not be able to live on them, oven here, for half a year. Why, my dear ladies, even these little rooms, that seem so mean to you, with your

board, will cost two Louis every week; and I cannot ask my sister to take less, for she is a poor woman, and can, I know, get that sum for them any day."

There were a few minutes of general silence, when Madame de la Valliere said, "Nous arons des—I mean," correcting herself, with a smile, and speaking in good English, though slowly, and with French accent, "we have some jewels. They are very valuable, and very dear, too; but, if it is necessary, we may sell them?"

"Suppose I put them in pledge for you for one year. You may be able to redeem them in that time, and if you cannot, I think I know an honest jeweller who will give you all they are worth for them."

The proposition was gratefully accepted by the Duclesse, who only added the stipulation that they should be returned to her at any time within the year at which sho might be enabled to demand them. Marguerito was sent for the jewels to the adjoining room, in which the trunk containing them had been placed. She soon returned, bearing the boxes, clasped as they had been by the Duchesse herself. Madame de la Valliere received them, and, selecting the largest box, said, "These diamonds will, I think, sell for enough of money to support us for more years than one. But I do hope to redeem them. It grieves me to part with them even for a short time?

It was with a sad countenance and slow movement that she touched the clasp of the box, which she had held while speaking. As the spring yielded to her pressure, the lid fiew back, and displayed the elvet-covered compartments, in which had once been diamonds, now empty. Bewildered and aghast, the Duchesse gazzed upon the box, and then upon Louise, Marguerite, and the captain. A wild agony was in her eye, and it was in a faint voice that she said, "Marguerite, they have failed out."

"That was not possible, Madame; but I will bring the trunk herc, and we will look."

<sup>&</sup>quot; Was the trunk locked ?" asked Captain Weldon.

"The trunk was locked in Paris, and has never been opened since."

"And the key?"

"I have carried it myself," replied the agitated Duchesse. Marguerite had now brought the trunk, and it was searched, first rapidly, then carefully. A ring and the drop of one ear-ring were found, which had probably fallen from the hand of the thief before he could secure his prize. And this thief-who was he? Marguerite declared that the jewel cases had been laid by her in the trunk from which they were now taken, as the Duchesse clasped them, and that no one entered the room afterward but the Duc, who came to inquire for her lady; and not finding her there, had sent her for her, remaining himself to guard the trunks till her return. Indignation and shame burned on the cheeks of Louise as she heard this statement, for she could not doubt that her father had clandestinely possessed himself of the diamonds. The Duchesse seemed not to think at all. Pale and still, she sat with the open case in her hand, gazing into it as if she read there a destiny of woe. Louise was the first to recover some composure after this shock.

"Come," said she—and she commanded herself to speak in cheerful tones—"come, dear mother, here are two boxes unexamined: enough for present comfort may be left us yet. But it did not prove so. Every diamond had been taken.

Some pearls and jewels of less value had alone been left. These Captain Weldon took to his friend the jeweller.

These Captain Weldon took to his friend the jeweller.

It was evening before he returned, and then he seemed reluctant to communicate the result of his efforts. Fifty

pounds were all he had been able to obtain on the jewels; and this, the jeweller declared, was their full value; in proof of which, he would readily relienquish them, if a purchaser could be found who would give a larger sum. The Duchesse had been made really ill by the agitation of the morning, and Louise received the money and this account from Captain Weldon, alone. When it was concluded, both remained silent for some minutes. The kind-hearted sailor

first spoke. "Ma'amsella," said he, "I feel very sorry that I haven't been able to do any better for you. I can't help thinking that you don't know much about managing for yourself and the old lady"—well was it for the honest man's favour with the Duchesse that she did not hear him.—"and the old lady seems to be worse yet. Have you any friend I can call upon for you i"

"None-we have not an acquaintance in London."

Again there was silence for a moment, and again it was broken by Captain Weldon, who, rising, said, "Well, you're anchored here for to-night, I'm a thinking."

"I think!" said Louise, hesitatingly, "that if your sister will permit us to retain these rooms, we had better not remove at all till our friends arrive. We have now the means of paying their rent and our board for some time; and perhaps," she added, colouring, and speaking rapidly, "you or your sister might instruct me how to procure some employment by which our other wants might be supplied."

"Employment!" exclaimed the surprised Captain Weldon:
"why, my dear young lady, a day's hard work would kill you;
and what could you do with them little hands?"

"Many things," said Louise, smiling, "by which money may be made in my own country, and, I suppose, here. I was educated at a convent, and the Abbess often told me that visiters there who purchased paintings and embroidery seemed to prefer mine, and would pay a higher price for them than for those done by others. Now, if I could procure such work here, or knew how to dispose of the articles I should make"—she paused, looking anxiously in the good captain's face. He shook his head, saying, "I don't know much about such things, ma'..., but maybe you would let me speak to my sister—she will understand better about such woman's tackle."

Louise felt that any extension of confidence on the subject of their embarrasing position was undesirable; but, as she looked down upon the small sum of money in her hands, sho also felt that something must be done, and she no longer hesitated. Caplain Weldon, with a delicacy she could not have expected from him, went out to his sister and made the necessary explanations to her, apart from Louise. This sister of Captain Weldon was a widow, whose four children tasked her utmost powers to procure them food, clothing, and some education—the house in which she lived, and by the hire of whose rooms they mainly lived, being her only property. The atrocities of the Republican party in France lad enlisted in favour of the noble refugees from that country the sympathies of all classes in England, and Mrs. Bloomaby listened with deep interest to her brother's communication respecting her lodgers, and readily promised to de all in her power to promote the wishes of Louise.

"But, Miss-"

"Ma'amselle," said Captain Weldon, correcting his sister, not from a desire to display his French, as it might have seemed, but from the delicacy which would withhold from the fallen no accustomed mark of respect—Ma'amselle being, as he supposed, a French title, equivalent to "my lady" in England.

"Manuselle-I beg your pardon, ma'am," recommenced Mrs. Bloomsby; 'a but, as I was going to say, 'if's little such as I can do towards helping you to sell things that only the quality buys; yet I may do something, for I have a friend a sort of cousin—who is laundress in a very high family; and if you will let me have some of your painting and embroidery, I will givo it to her, and she may have a chance, through the housekeeper, or some of the ladies' maids, to show them to the ladies themselves."

And for this distant hope of patronage from the quality Louise was sincerely thankful: With all the hopefulness of success that so eminently characterizes her nation, and tho activity of one whose energies had not been prostrated by repeated disappointments. Louise possessed herself on the succeeding day of the materials necessary for her work; and before the next visit of Mrs. Bloomsby's cousin, the laundress she had remared various fance varieties for sale. and had embroidered a small piece of muslin in the delicate manner for which the French are so famous. This last was only intended as a specimen of her powers, for the exercise of which she hoped to obtain orders. Educated in a convent. Louise was too unsophisticated to feel any of that unworthy pride which causes some to shrink from owing the necessaries or comforts of life to their own honourable exertion; yet she had requested that Mrs. Bloomsby would not reveal her name or residence, both from regard to her mother's feelings, and because she did not wish to make any personal appeal to the sympathies of strangers. It was with pleasure unalloyed by any feeling of humiliation, that she received the smiling Mrs. Bloomsby's information that her specimens had been much admired, and that a long list of orders was their result. Thenceforth Louise did not lack employment, for which she received, in most cases, liberal remuneration; and though her cheek grew pale, and her step languid, from her constant application, those necessities were a blessing by whose demands her mind was forced from dangerous reveries on the sorrows she had endured, or the horrors she had seen. Could she have had the satisfaction of giving comfort to her mother by the unccasing exercise of her powers, she would have found in it more of peace than she had known for many weary months. But Madame de la Valliere's spirits were broken, and her health daily failed beneath the privations, both physical and mental, imposed upon her by her present condition. To Louise, who had been most of her life accustomed to the simple fare and the seclusion of a convent, these privations were far less trying; and then the young adapt themselves much more readily to change than the more mature. Louise felt all this; and though she could not bring around her mother the luxuries or the associations in which, and for which she had so long lived, she strove to make her sacrifices as few as possible, adding to their plain meal often delicacies which their slender purse could ill afford, and of which she seldom, if ever, partook, and procuring from a circulating library near them.

those light works of fiction which might restore to her mother, at least in imagination, the world she had lost, These works she would persuade Madame de la Valliere to read aloud, while she was busy with the needle or the pencil: and she would strive to listen, and at least appear interested, that her mother might have the healthful exercise of the affections associated with the entertainment of tho hour. Notwithstanding all her efforts, however, and notwithstanding the efforts of Madame dc la Valliere herself, who, for the sake of Louisc, did exert herself, suppressing many a murmur, and even sometimes succeeding in putting aside a sad thought, the gloom deepened on her brow. Day after day, some accustomed habit was relinquished, some effort was forborne, till at length she kept her bed, and her indisposition assumed such a form that medical advice became necessary. Then came the physician's fees, the apothecary's bill, and the thousand nameless things which, unthought of luxuries in health, become indispensable necessaries in illness. Now it was that Louise felt the comfort of such a faithful and kind attendant as Marguerite; for as she saw her little store melting rapidly away under these demands, she was compelled to leave the care of her mother chiefly to her, while she confined herself more closely than ever to her needle and her pencil.

Among the amusements which Louise had procured for her mother was the reading of a newspaper, whose columns were daily searched for intelligence of the far-distant frients; whose arrival in England seemed to offer to them the sole hope of relief. In this paper Madame de la Valliere, while looking one day listlessly over its advertisements, read one for a governess, in which the applicants were directed to apply to Mr. Efford, the banker, to whom De Montrevel had sent them a letter of introduction. That name awoke a thousand visions of comfort, and she looked quickly up, and spoke in a tone of such unusual viracity, that Louise, whose nerves were now castly disturbed, started, and spoiled, by a dask of her brush, a nearly finished painting. "Louise, here is that Mr. Elford's name, and his address is still No.— —— Street."

Louise did not answer, but the colour, which her momentary surprise had brought to beer cheek, fadded, leaving her even paler than usual. Madame de la Valliere looked steadfastly at her a moment, and said, "Louise, the money which must now be waiting your orders with that man would make us quite rich, and enable you to put aside that constant work, which is killing you to do, and me to see."

"Mother," said Louise, "there is no money with Mr. Elford for me; it is the Marquis de Montrevel's, and I have no right, no claim to it."

"Louise, this is ridiculous," exclaimed Madame de la Valliere, angrily: "you know the money was placed there for you, and if the Marquis de Montrevel is an honoumblo man, he will not touch one sou of it; and is it to lie at a banker's while we are in danger of starving?"

"We are not in danger of starving, dear mother."
The Duchesse burst into tears. "Louise, for the first

time in my life I am about to become a beggar—a beggar to you, my child, that you would sacrifice this fantastic feeling of I know not what, to the comfort of your mother—of your ill, perhaps your dying mother."

"Mother," cried the tortured Louise, "have mercy on me! All but this will I do for you: I will work, I will beg; nay," she added, wildly, "if they refuse to give, I will steal for you; you shall not starve, you shall not want—but this— O, have mercy on me! Ask me not to take from him—to take the gold for which he thought me false—to prove myself the wretch he believed me.

Madamo de la Valliere was softened by the agony of Louise, and half terrified by the wildness of her looks and tones. She spoke soothingly to her, promised to say nothing again to pain her, and thus quieted in appearance the tempest she had raised. But the effects of this seen odid not pass away. The mother continued to think of Mr. Elford and the money in his hands, the daught or continued to dread. a repetition of the proposal which was so terrible to her, But to repeat that proposal was by no means the intention of the Duchesse. She became more cheerful from this day, Her health hourly improved. She again left her bed, moved about the house, and sometimes said that if Louise would walk out and become familiar with the streets around them, she would, after a time, venture to accompany her. She appeared, indeed, most anxious to have Louise take the air, and at her earnest persuasions she at length reluctantly consented to accompany her landlady on an excursion up the Thames. They were to land and spend some hours on shore, so that they would be absent all day. It was a fair and mild day in June which had been chosen, and as the boat containing the little party floated gently along, the bright sunshine and the balmy breeze, the silvery stream and flowery banks. brought more cheerful thoughts to the mind, and a fresher colour to the cheek of Louise, than she had known for long, and she was able, without much effort, to evince the pleasure, which was the best reward she could bestow on her kind hostess for the exertions made to gratify her. Little did she suspect how the hours of her absence were employed by her mother.

Scarcely had the soft "adien" uttered by Louise as she left her mother in the morning, ceased to sound, when Madame de la Valliere commissioned Marguerite to procure her a coach. As soon as she was alone, she took from her porte/feuille the letter to Mr. Elford which Jacques had given her, and arrayed herself in her shawl and bonnet. Taking her place in the carriage as soon as it arrived, she ordered the coachman to drive to Mr. Elford's place of business On her arrival there, she desired him to inquire if Mr. Elford was in, and to say that a lady wished to speak with him on important business. She did not wait longr. A young man accompanied the coachman to the carriage, and unshered her into a room, in which, seated at a desk, alone, was a gentleman whose white hairs and benevolent counter.

He came forward to meet her with a manner at once kind and dignified. She handed him the letter of De Montrevel. Merely glancing at its address, he said, speaking in French, "I have the honour of seeing the Duchesse de la Vailiere !" She bowed. "And your daughter, Madame, where is she, and why is it that she has left the interest on her funds for nearly two years past uncalled for, and yet has not empowered me to make any profitable appropriation of them!"

The Duchesse hesitated for a moment; then, with one of those smiles which she had often been assured were irresistible, she said, "The answer to that last question, Mr. Elford, would involve a longer story than you could probably find leisure to listen to, but I have come now to claim that so long unappropriated interest."

"It is ready for you, Madame. You have an order from your daughter, of course," he added, after waiting a moment for it to be presented.

The Duchesse coloured, and looked confused. Unaccustomed to business, she knew not the necessity for this demand. "No, sir," she at length replied; "but if you read the letter of the Marquis de Montrevel, I think you will not hesitate to trust me with the money without an order."

He opened the letter, ran his eye hastily over it, and said, "My dear lady, you do not, I think, understand this matter. It is not that I cannot trust you—it is that I have no power to do anything with this money—not to pay it to the Marquis de Montrevel himself, if he were in your place, without an order from your daughter. Such were the conditions under which I received the trust."

These words destroyed the hope which had restored Madame de la Vallicre to health, and on which she had lived for weeks past. She grew pale as she heard them, and reached out her hand for the support of a chair near her.

"Seat yourself, Madame—seat yourself," said Mr. Elford, kindly: "I am sorry to give you pain—but is not your

daughter with you? Nothing has happened to her, I hope," he added, as he marked the extreme agitation of the Duchesse.

"No, sir-nothing has happened to her. She is with me, 'yet she does not know of my visit to you, and I have promised never to name this subject to her."

"Mr. Elford expressed his surprise at this statement, adding, "May I venture to ask what reason the young lady alleges for her distaste to receiving that which all the world are seeking?"

"0f her reason I know little myself. You are, perhaps, aware that she was contracted to the Marquis de Montrevel. This contract was relinquished, but whether on one or both sides, or for what reasons, I know not; I only know that the result was the funding this property by the Marquis for Mademoiselle de Valliere, to which she declares she has no claim, and never will assert one."

"That resolution comes somewhat late," said Mr. Elford, ironically, "as I have forwarded to her order, when in Paris, several hundreds of pounds, and am now making quarterly payments of half the income to a certain Monsieur Auguste Valancour, who claims, under a dead from her, half the interest now, and half the principal when she becomes of age or marries."

It was now Madame de la Variere's turn to express surprise.

"For the money forwarded to Paris," she said, "I know that Louise signed the orders without knowing what they were, and that she refused her signature as soon as she discovered for what object it was required. As for this deed to Auguste Valancour, I am convinced there is some trickery in it."

Mr. Elford shook his head and smiled incredulously, at least so thought Madame de la Valliere, and she said, with dignity, "You seem to doubt the truth of my statement, sir."

"No, no, my lady—not at all. I only doubt whether you understand your daughter."

"I do not pretend to understand her, but you would be convinced of her sincerity in rejecting any claim to this money, if you had seen her since her arrival in this country, tolling till the colour has faded from her cheek, and the light from her eye, or if you had heard her agonized, her almost phrensied entreaties to me to forbear urging her to an application to you, declaring that she would work, beg, nay, steal, rather than be indebted to the Marquis de Montrevel."

Mr. Elford, after some moments of thoughtful silence, said,
"There is some mystery here—I must see your daughter.
Can you not induce her to come here?"

"I fear not."

"Then give me your address, and tell me at what hour tomorrow I shall be likely to find her at home, and I will call on her."

Madame de la Valliere gave the address, saying, "You will find her at home at any hour, for she rarely leaves her work; but I would rather she should not know of my visit here."

"On what plea, then, shall I present myself to her?"

After a little reflection the Duchesse asked, with a smile, "Do you correspond with De Montrevel?"

"I do, and have lately heard from him."

"Does he inquire respecting us?"

"He does."

"Then, if your call could be make to appear the result of interest which he had excited, you would, I think, secure for yourself a grateful reception from my daughter."

"And yet she would rather steal than be indebted to him—more mysterious still!" ejaculated Mr. Elford: "however, Madame, the cause you suggest may be truly given for my visit, since my interest in your daughter has been excited mainly by my friend De Montrevel. I will see her in the afternoon of to-morrow," he added, as the Duchesse rose to take her leave.

"How dear are all those ties that bind our race In gentleness together, and how sweet Their force! let Fortune's wayward hand the while Be kind or cruel."

THE next day Louise found the room more confined and looked abroad more longingly on the smoky sky and doubtful sunlight of London than she had ever done before. Under such influences her work did not advance very rapidly, and at four in the afternoon she was endcavouring earnestly to retrieve the time lost in her reveries, when Marguerite entered to say that a gentleman requested to see her in the parlour.

"To see me!" repeated Louise, in surprise,

"Yes, Mademoischle; he is quite an elderly gentleman, and one I have never seen before."

Perhaps no accompaniment of youth is more valuable than that ready faith in the promises of hope, which makes the heart bound and the eye kindle at every unexpected incident, as at the certain forerunner of good. Ten years' farther experience of life in such a school as she had been in during the three or four preceding years, would have probably made annoyance at the interruption of her labours the strongest feeling of Louise at the announcement of Marguerite : but now she threw her work aside, and prepared to descend to the parlour, with the expectation of something pleasant to be met there-it might be the news of absent friends, or at the least, some offer of profitable employment. There was nothing in Mr. Elford's benevolent, composed countenance, to rebuke her faith; and with a smiling bow she answered his, "Mademoiselle de la Valliere, I presume?"

Having received this assenting movement, he continued, "My name, Mademoiselle, is, I believe, not wholly unknown to you-Mr. Elford."

Had Mr. Elford known with what painful events in the life of Louise the transaction in which he was an agent was connected, he would have been better able to interpret the quick vanishing of her smile, and the reserved expression which stole over her face, and was visible in her manner, as she heard his name. As it was, these changes seemed but a part of the riddle he had come to read, and he waited patiently for further developments.

"I did not know, sir, that you were aware of our arrival in London."

4 I was informed of it some time since by my friend, the Marquis de Montrevel. The place of your residence I only discovered yesterday, and I have availed myself of my earliest moment of leisure to call on you. The desire of Monsieur de Montrevel would have induced me to do so, even had I not such indisputable credentials to present as your banker.

He spoke with a good-hr-moured smile: but it was with grave, though gentle courtesy, that Louise replied, "I am happy to see you, sir, as a friend of the Marquis of Montrevel, and grateful for your attention to exiles. Permit mo to inform my mother of your visit, and to extend to her the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"Another day, my dear young lady, I shall be happy to see the Duchesse de la Valliere, but I have now some business to transact with you. I have brought you here the interest on your funds, which has been accumulating in my hands for nearly two years past."

As Mr. Elford spoke, he took out his pocket-book, and unclasped it; but before he could draw from it the inoney or check it contained, Louise stopped him by saying, "Stay, sir, there is a mistake in this affair. I have no funds in your hands; you owe me nothing."

"Am I not speaking to Mademoiselle de la Valliere!" inquired Mr. Elford, with an accent and look of surprise, not altogether unfeigned, as his interview with the Duchesse lad prepared him for this resistance from Louise.

"Yes, sir: I am Mademoisclle de la Valliere; but—"
Louise paused. How should she explain to a stranger her

repugnance, her invincible repugnance, to the reception of this money? Her eyes were fixed on the ground, and her countenance became deeply thoughtful.

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle, for hastening you," said Mr. Elford, "but my time is much engaged; and as I am satisfied that this money is due to Mademoiselle de I av Melirer, and you acknowledge yourself to be that lady, I shall be glad to have your receipt for the money, or your orders for its disposal, if you prefer any other appropriation of it."

Louise looked up quickly, as if a happy thought had suddenly occurred to her; and with prompt, decisive tone and manner, said, "You will oblige me, sir, by forwarding it immediately to the Marquis de Montrevel, with whose address you are, I presume, acquainted."

The surprise depicted in Mr. Elford's countenance and manner was now wholly unfeigued, as he said, "I must obey your order, Mademoiselle, but it must be your written order."

Louise soon procured writing materials, and, with evident pleasure, seated herself to give the order required. Her paper was arranged before her, her pen was dipped in the ink, when her ignorance of the forms of business arrested her proceedings, and, with a gay langh at herself, she asked Mr. Elford what she should write.

"If you will tell me your design, Mademoiselle, I will write the order, and you need only sign it," said Mr. Elford, seating himself opposite to her at the table.

"My design is to convey to the Marquis de Montrevel all this money in your hands, which every one persists in calling mine, though it is, in reality, his." Louise spoke with animation.

"All not already otherwise appropriated ?" said Mr. Elford.

"Yes, sir; and I entreat you to assure the Marquis de Montrevel that no other appropriation of it was ever sanctioned by me consciously, for of the contents of the papers I signed in France I was wholly ignorant." Mr. Elford bowed, and taking up the pen she had laid aside, wrote a few lines rapidly and handed them to her. She held out her hand for the pen. "Read first," said Mr. Elford, "and never again do as you did in France—sign papers of whose contents you are ignorant."

Louise read, looked up in surprise at Mr. Elford, read again, as if doubting the accuracy of her first perusal, and said, "I do not understand this, sir. You say, 'Except the moiety secured to Monsieur Auguste Valancour?' what has he to do with this?"

"Nothing, but to receive by your order the half of the income at present, and half the principal when your marriage or your coming of age gives you control of it."

Mr. Elford looked fixedly and with a quiet smile in the face of Louise, while speaking. Her eyes were riveted upon him. She became pale and agitated, and said, in a dismayed accent, "By my order, sir! I never gave such an order. Indeed, sir, you must be mistaken."

Mr. Elford again opened his pocket-book, and taking a paper from it, unfolded it and placed it before Louise. "Examine that signature, Mademoiselle, and tell me if it is not yours."

"It is," said Louise, after a moment's observation.

"Now read the paper."

Louise tried to do so, but it was long, and in her present agitated state, she could not seize the meaning, which was involved in legal phrases. "I cannot understand it," said slic, after several vain efforts.

"Let me explain it for you," and Mr. Elford, very patiently, unravelled for her the sense of the instrument, which made the conveyance to Auguste Valancour he had stated, and which had been attested before a notary, and received all the validity that could be imparted to it by legal forms. Jacques Brissot was the only witness to her signature, but her father had added before the notary his attestation to its truth. Louise looked at its date; it was the 10th of September, 1792—the day of their flight from Paris. Size under

stood it all in an instant. It was for this paper Jacques Brissot had obtained her hurried and incautions signature. Between the time of his leaving her and their departure from Paris, most of the deed must have been written, and the legal forms necessary to its validity taken. And so, for almost a year, Augusto Valancour had, through her agency, been living on the property of De Montrevel—De Montrevel, who Montrevel how how as himself probably impoverished by the Revolution, which had made him an exit! Did he know of this unjust appropriation! If he did, he, doubtless, believed her a willing agent.

Absorbed in such thoughts, Louise ast gazing on the paper in her hand, it! Mr. Elford again intimated something of his engagements, and requested her signature to the order he had drawn. Looking up to him with a bewildered and anxious countenance, Louise said, "Indeed, sir, my signature to this paper was most unjustly and dishonestly obtained; but I cannot prove that, and now what shall I do?"

Her evident distress, and the trust with which she appealed to a stranger, touched Mr. Elford, and he said, with a more sympathizing manner than he had previously exhibited during their interview, "11 is impossible for me to advise you, Mademoiselle, ignorant, as I am, of the circumstances which embarrass your decision; but your mother may, and I will leave you to consult her, and call on you sagain to-morrow."

"No, sir; it would be uscless, worse than uscless, to consult my mother, for I cannot do what I know she wishes."

"Have you no other friend near who might advise you?"

"None-no other friend on earth."

Mr. Elford was a thorough Englishman, and though he had too much refinement and liberality of mind to be the slave of such absurd prejudies as some of his countrymen entertained against the French, he could not divest himself of the conviction that, excepting some few whom he had known and valued on full trial of their worth, every French woman was a coquette and an intripante, and he had come to Louise believing that the reluctance to receive her in-

come, of which Madame de la Valliere had spoken to him, was only a new exhibition of the coquetry which had probably placed her in a somewhat embarrassting position between two rival claimants to her hand. These impressions had repressed the benevolent interest which so young and lovely an exile would otherwise have excited in his mind; but from the first moment of her entrance they had been giving way beneath the ingennous truthfulness stamped on her conntenance and manner, and the still, quiet sadness with which she said, "None—no other friend on earth," left him no feeling towards her but the tenderest compassion, and he reglied to it, "Then, my dear young lady, let me be your friend, and my first advice to you as such shall be to take time for thought before you deprive yourself of what, if I understand aright, is your only present source of income."

"O, sir! if you knew all, you would not, I am sure, think me wrong when I say that, let the consequences be what they will, I cannot keep it."

"Well. I will not ask to know all; but if it will not pain

"Well, I will not sak to know all; out it it will not pain you too much to communicate it, I should be glad to know so much of your present position as may enable me to advise you with confidence, and, if possible, to aid you in getting rid of what seem to be very painful embarrassments."

Louise was about to reply, but interrupting her, Mr. Elford added, "Stay, let me first tell how much I already know, and then you shall judge how much farther I may be trusted. I lave heard that you were contracted to the Marquis de Montrevel, and that the sum placed in my hands by him was the penalty he incurred by breaking his contract."

"He did not break his contract," said Louise; and though her voice showed that she spoke with effort, she looked steadily into Mr. Elford's face.

"Then why was this payment made?"

"I know not, sir; it was done while I was in a convent, to which I had withdrawn on releasing the Marquis de Montrevel from his engagement, because"—she hesitated, then

concluded rapidly—" for reasons which it is not necessary to explain."

Mr. Elford's sympathy was again chilled by this apparent mystery, and he said, "I cannot understand the business, Mademoiselle, unless your father was deceived in relation to the causes of your separation from De Montrevel."

"There was no deception, sir. I wish I could explain all to you; but you will at least see, from what I have told you, that I have no possible claim on the Marquis de Montrevel; and you will, I am sure, understand me when I say that I cannot receive any part of this money. How shall I return to him what I have already taken from it, and what others have taken? she exclaimed with such anxious solicitude, that again the heart of Mr. Elford was touched, and he answered, soothingly, "I will write to De Montrevel, explain your wishes to him, and send him your order for the whole amount yet in your power."

"But, sir, cannot he regain from Monsieur Valancour what has been so unjustly obtained !"

Mr. Elford shook his head; then, as he saw what pain his negative occasioned her, he said, "Not at present; but, as I said before, I will write to De Montrevel, and we will see what can be done."

There were a few moments of silence, and then Mr. Elford said, "I cannot now plead my character of banker as an apology for any inquiry into your future plans; but may I not hope that you will continue to consider me as your friend, and allow me to be useful to vou?

"You are very kind, sir."

"Nay, do not answer me with compliments. Ladies situated as you are have a claim to the sympathy of all, and the recommendation of my friend, be Montrevel, entitles you especially to my good offices. Pray show your confidence in me by employing me. Perhaps through my correspondents abroad I may facilitate your communication with your absent friends. I can at any time forward letters to the Duc de la Yalliere for you, perhaps in a more safe and expeditious mode than you could otherwise command. Have you any now which you desire to send ?"

"No sir; we do not know where my father is. As we have not heard from him, we fear that he and Monsieur Valancour have found it difficult to communicate with England from Switzerland, to which country they were bound when we parted."

"Switzerland! Is it possible you did not know they were in Austria! I have heard from Monsieur Valancour several times since he left France. He is now at Vienna, where the Duc de la Valliere has been rewarded for his attachment to his queen, and his sacrifices in her cause, by an office about the empeor's court."

"An office about the court" repeated Louise with the utmost surprise, remembering how little of devotion to his queen, or, indeed, to anything but his own interests, her father had over displayed. After a moment's effort to arrange her tinoughts, she added, "Then he cannot mean to come to England."

"I should suppose not," said Mr. Elford; "but I will give you Monsieur Valancour's address, and you can write to the Due under cover to him, and I will see that your letter is safely and speedily forwarded."

"Thank you, sir; I will avail myself of your kindness."
"Well," said Mr. Elford, with a smile, as he presented his

hand to Louise at parting, "you have dismissed the banker to-day, but I hope to-morrow to be admitted as the friend. Present my respects to Madame de la Valliere, and tell her, with her permission, Mrs. Elford will call on her with me to-morrow, and I will trust to her to win a pardon for my hurrying away without seeing her to-day."

Mr. Elford kept his promise, and came the next day, accompanied by Mrs. Elford, whose kind and gentle manners won the confidence, and almost the love of Louise, in this their first interview; though the Duchesse remarked, after her departure, that there was great want of ton ovident in her appearance. With Mr. and Mrs. Elford came a little girl five years old, the child, as Louise afterward discovered, of their only daughter, Lady Howard, who, dying a few weeks after her birth, had bequeathed her, with Lord Howard's consent, to her mother as her comforter; and a comforter she had, indeed, proved to the otherwise desolate hearts of the childless parents. Knowing nothing of the sad event which had attended her entrance into life, Mary Howard had experienced but one sorrow, and that arose from her father's expression of a wish that she should have a governess, and begin the acquirement of those accomplishments which should fit her to enter society with éclat. Mr. Elford, though he thought it quite too early to put a check upon Mary's freedom, readily consented to secure a good governess, if such a one could be found, determining in his own mind to accept none who did not seem likely to prove a pleasing companion to Mrs. Elford, and who did not agree with him on the injudiciousness of exercising much restraint or constraint at present with her young pupil. Many had applied for the place in consequence of the advertisement which had led Madame de la Valliere to his office ; but none had yet satisfied Mr. Elford in regard to these two essential points, and Mary had almost ceased to dread an evil so long delayed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

"Earth, with her thousand voices, calls on God."

COLERIDOR

"Let those deplore their doom

Whose hopes still grovel in this dark sojourn:
But lofty souls, who look beyond the tomb,
Can smile at fate, and wonder how they mourn."

BEATTE.

From this time Mr. and Mrs. Elford's visits to Madame de la Valliere and Louise were frequent, and they seldom went without leaving some pleasant memorials of their visit in rich bouquets of flowers and baskets of fruit. For these offerings, Mrs. Elford delicately apologized by saving that Mr. Elford did not think his friends could obtain in London such fruit and flowers as were the produce of his own gardens and conservatories. Frequently, too, did they urge the exiles to visit them at their beautiful villa, which was but a few miles from London. When their invitation had been accepted, they would have had the visit extend from hours to days, and from days to weeks. They were interested in Madame de la Valliere, sympathised with her sorrows, and pitied her friendless condition, but Louise they loved. If the brilliancy which had marked her beauty in earlier life had faded beneath the touch of sorrow, it had been replaced by a more intellectual and earnest expression, which awakened confidence and attracted regard. Nor was the change in appearance alone. The hopeless, joyless novice of the convent differed not more from the sensitive girl whose spirit had trembled at a threatened sorrow and bounded with wild delight at the soft promises of love, or the siren song of pleasure, than did both these from the woman, who, resigning with a sad but chastened spirit the hopes and joys which had made her young dream of life, yet felt that life was not valueless; who, while the stars were fading from her darkened sky, yet endured, in the faith that above them was an unfading sun, and that, could she but attain to a loftier condition of being, she should see and rejoice in his beams, The past she could not forget, but she did not willingly live in it. The future was still a blank to her, but she turned from it, not to the past, but to the present : and, by a day of closer labour, an act of more thoughtful tenderness to her mother, stifled many a gush of regretful memories.

Though thus attaining to a region of clearer light, life was yet a struggle to Louise, and the struggle was marked in her earnest eyes, in her pallid cheeks, and the pensiveness which mingled even with her smiles. Nothing so wore upon her spirit's energies, and impeded it in its upward tondencies, as the fretful complainings of her mother—complainings which often sprang from misjudging affection. Adversity, like the summer sun and summer showers, brings out from the heart's soil whatever may be imbedded there, whether the seed be of good fruit or of unwholesome weeds. In Madame de la Valliere, latent affections had been developed, her circle of thought and feeling had been expanded, and she now suffered or rejoiced, feared or hoped, for her child as well as for herself; but the sorrow or the joy, the hope or the fear, was still "of the earth, earthy." She could not see the golden ore which Louise was gathering from the very process that pierced, the deep mines of her heart; no sympathy revealed to her the lofty faith which sustained her in her daily toils, by linking the performance of the humblest duty with high and holy hopes.

A visit to Mr. Elford's always restored Madame de la Vallière to cheerfuhess, and ministered to the serenity of Louise. Madame de la Vallière would seldom have refused the invitations given with such cordial friendship, but Louise was often admonished, by the want of means for their daily recurring wants, that her time must be more profitably employed.

Two months after Mr. Elford had forwarded a letter to the Duc from Madame de la Valliere passed without bringing a reply, and the hope of relief from Vienna had almost died away, when he one morning called with a bouquet for Louise and a letter for Madame de la Vallier. The letter was from the Duc, and its contents proved that change of country had wrought in him no change of mind.

With many complimentary expressions and assurances of his pleasure at hearing that she was safe, he informed the Duchesse that he was detained in Austria by very important affairs; that he should be happy to welcome her to Yienna, had thought it would be still possible to make an arrangement for the marriage of Louise with Auguste Walancour, whose influence over him seemed to be undiminished. He regretted that she had suffered any inconvenience from the loss of her diamonds, which, supposing that she would not wear them under present circumstances, and fearing that, should her trunks be searched on the journey, such possessions would involve her in difficulty, he had removed them from their cases on the eve of parting, and in his haste had forgotten to mention it. With some of these diamonds he had been compelled, he said, by his necessities, to part, and he enclosed to her an order from a commercial house in Vienna on Mr. Elford for £100, as part of the proceeds of their sale. As the sum he had obtained was nearly exhausted, he must, unless there was an immediate change in French affairs, sell the remainder, when he would make her another remittance, should she decide to remain in England. He seemed to find no language sufficiently expressive of the folly of Louise in refusing to draw on Mr. Elford. The money in his hands, he said, was all that, in any event, she would have been likely to receive from De Montrevel, who, probably, brought little from France, and who did not seem greatly skilled in the art of improving his fortunes, all his time being spent with the army, where he was said to act with a strange independence, making no effort to advance himself or secure the friendship of men in power.

The Duchesse commenced reading this letter aloud to Louise; but the Duc's cool acknowledgment of the abstraction of her diamonds, the very small sum he remitted to her from the comparatively large amount which, with all her ignorance of buying and selling, she knew he must have received for even the part of them he had sold and the quiet assurance with which he avowed his intention of selling the remainder, so aroused her indignation, that she could no longer command her voice except for an occasional ejaculation of contempt. Mr. Elford, in sending the letter up to her apartment, had requested her to see him in the parlour after she had read it. But before she had concluded it, with the childish impulsiveness which marked her character, she sprang from her seat, and, rushing down stairs, handed the open letter to Mr. Elford, exclaiming, " Pray read that, and tell me if there is no remedy for such iniustice."

When she left so hurriedly, Louise, guessing her object, followed her, for, though it was impossible for her to respect the Duc de la Valliere, she was anxious to guard her father from shame. Springing forward before Mr. Elford could take the letter, she said, "Sky, Mr. Elford, for one moment; my deer mother, is it quite right—will my father quite approve—had you not better think before—

"Louise, you do not know of what you are talking," said the impatient Duchesse. "Pray read that letter, Mr. Eiford. You will find that the diamonds, the loss of which has caused me so much suffering, and this poor child such toil and privation, were taken by no common thief?"

"Oh, mother, say no more," exclaimed Louise: "I do not care for toil—I have not suffered from privation; but spare me—spare yourself such shame."

"Do not distress yourself, Louise," said Mr. Elford: "you and your mother have no cause for shame; but I will not read the letter. Indeed, Madame," turning to the Duchesse, "I have no occasion to do so, for I already know all, and perhaps more than it communicates respecting your diamonds. I am informed, by a correspondent in Vienna, that, at the request of the Duc de la Valliere, he has given au order on me at sight for £100. He adds, that is part of £1000 paid by him to the Duc for diamonds; that the Duc has other and more valuable diamonds, for which he was in negotiation with him, but that, since the discovery made by this order of a Duchesse de la Valliere, he hesitates to complete the transaction, fearing that another claimant to the property may arise to dispute his possession. This would not greatly disturb my friend in a commercial point of view, for he could easily dispose of the diamonds, so that it would be difficult for you to dace them, even could you establish your claim; but he is a just man, and would not like to be even the innocent abetter of a wrong. He proposes, therefore, that I should ascertain whether you have any claim on this property, and promises, if you prove such a claim to his satisfaction, to act as your agent, and secure for

you at least a just proportion from the sale of the remainder."

"How shall I prove my claim ?"

"I can do that to the satisfaction of my friend by sending him the description of the jewels, as you gave it to me."

The Duchesse looked down thoughtfully, for already her anger at the Duc's injustice was yielding to her womany fear of inflicting pain or causing dishonour to him. Mr. Elford read her thoughts, and replied to them. "It will not be necessary, Madame, that you should appear in this business at all, and I assure you there shall be no unpleasant disclosures made. My friend informs me that the jewels have been valued at £2000. I will pay you £1500 here, and will thus become the purchaser from you of your share of the diamonds. It will be easy for me, through my Vienna correspondent, to make such arrangements with the Duc as will secure me from 10ss."

"But suppose the Duc should refuse his assent to these terms?"

"The arrangements shall be such that he cannot materially embarrass us without a public prosecution in a court of law, and the Duc values his standing at Vienna too highly to provoke this."

"Well, Mr. Elford, I know nothing of business, but I shall feel truly grateful for such an arrangement, if you can secure repayment for yourself. You will, indeed, confer an obligation when you give me the means of living without tasking Louise so heavily."

"Dear mother," said Louise, with a smile, "I have been all the happier for my tasks, and they must not cease because you have £1500. I have learned that it takes a great deal of money to live even very frugally."

"In London," interposed Mr. Elford, "I grant you it takes a great deal of money to live in London; but why need you remain here! Why not take a cottage in our neighbourhood! I wish I could induce you to give us yet greater pleasure by making your home in our house. It would be a delight, indeed, to Mrs. Elford, who, loving society, is yet too feeble to seek it often abroad, and Louise would do so much for our little Mary."

"Will you let me be her governess?" asked Louise.

"Will you be?"

"Gladly, gratefully, if you will trust me."

"Trust you! I have been looking for your counterpart ever since we met. You know not what a favour we shall all consider it, if you will consent to be her guide. She loves you already as an elder sister, and as such we shall regard you if you come to us. May I hope for your approbation, Madame! I will not ask you to give us, or even to lend us your Louise, but only to share her society with us. Come to us at least for a visit; perhaps your countrymen will return to their senses, and you may leave us for Paris soon; but if this be not so, your £1000 will enable you to punish us should we at any time deserve it, by withdrawing to an independent home."

Mr. Efford was too much in earnest, and was too well seconded by the entreaties of Mr. Efford and Mary, when they were made acquainted with his proposal, not to overpower the slight resistance Madame de la Valliere could offer to it; and in little more than a week after the conversation we have recorded, she and Louise were welcomed to his beautiful villa, where, to the Inxuries to which they had been accustomed in their Parisian home, were joined the comforts that the English understand better than any people under heaven. There the Duchesse again enjoyed association with persons of her own rank, for against the wealthy banker no society in England barred its portals, and she could now deliver the introductory letters so long unused.

Louise was received with admiration and interest whenever the wishes of her mother forced her from the retirement she best loved. Mr. Elford did not permit her to assume the style and title of the governess of Mary Howard, yet she conscientiously devoted herself to the development of her mind and the formation of her manners, though in a

way so gentle that she seemed to Mary herself only a dear playmate or kind sister. Mr. Elford's library was extensive and well selected, and he evinced great pleasure in directing the intellectual pursuits of Louise, in which she often admonished him of her desire to keep in view the future demands upon her of her young pupil. This was not the only way in which Mr. Elford influenced the mind of Louise. With his long experience of life, and the knowledge he had in various ways obtained of her history, he easily read her spirit. He saw in her many manifestations of one who. having seen the beauty and the joy of life crushed out by disappointment, had been roused from the lethargy of despair and driven into action only by the force of circumstances, merciful even in their sternness, and he strove gently and unobtrusively, but perseveringly, to aid her in acquiring a truer appreciation of life, a perception of that higher beauty and deeper joy which arises, not from the gratification of our tastes, our passions, or even of our affections, but from the harmony between our own natures and His whose attributes are impressed upon creation; in finding in all the works of His hands, and the ways of His providence, responses to the love which had sought vainly for an echo of itself in some human heart; in seeing in Him the truth, the majesty, the wisdom, before whose faint image in some mortal form our idolatrous hearts had prostrated themselves.

Entering his library earlier than usual one morning, Mr. Elford saw Louise seated near a window, through whose upraised sash a thousand mingled sweets were wafted by the summer breeze, with her eyes riveted on a book which lay open on her lap. Her lips moved slightly, and her countenance wore an expression of intense earnestness as she read. Mr. Elford watched her silently for a moment, and then, advancing quietly, looked on her book, and said, "Shakspeare! I should have been jealous had any other so enchained you as to prevent your seeing me; but what were you reading?"

"This" quointing to Hamlet's exquisite soliloquy). "Is it not a perfect transcript of a mind which had expected much, and found little in life, which longs for the rest of the grave, yet dares not rush, unbidden, on its unknown consequences?"

"Yes, I think it is, as you say, a perfect transcript of such a diseased mind."

"Diseased! yes, I suppose it was diseased, but with a disease which many share."

"True—many expect much from life; more, greatly more than it can ever give; for they expect to find in it what will satisfy a spirit immortal in its nature and infinite in its tendencies; but I hope there are not many who, because these unreasonable and famiful expectations have been disappointed, turn with such determined hoplessness as Hamlet from the heautiful realities of life?

"The beautiful realities of life!"

"Yes, Louise; do you not believe there are such? Surely to you life is not valueless."

"No, O no! not valueless; I have long felt that in its exercise of our powers it has a deep and solemn value; but its beauty—" She paused and sighed.

its beauty—" She paused and sighed.
"Louise, look there," said Mr. Elford, pointing smilingly
to the garden, where, over roses and honeysuckles, laburnums and acacias, the dewdrops were yet sparkling.

"Beautiful!" she exclaimed; then, looking at him with a smile, she said, "but we were speaking of spiritual enjoyments"

"And is there no enjoyment for the spirit in perceiving all that beauty, and reading there the love of Him who created it with senses fitted for its perception?"

"Certainly there is," said Louise; "but did you mean nothing more by the 'beautiful realities of life!""

"Yes, much more. We have agreed Louise, that a slight acquaintance with life is productive of bitter disappointment to our high-raised expectations: we look for perfection, and because we find it not, we conclude all to be deformity. But when we have searched farther-when we have gathered courage to look steadfastly on the world as it is, we find that the impress of Him who formed it is not yet wholly effaced. Even in the vicious and degraded of our race, we meet sometimes with traits of fidelity, of generosity, and devoted tenderness which make our hearts acknowledge readily their claim of brotherhood, and teach us that if we were wrong in our first belief that any were all good, we were equally wrong in believing that any were all evil. As we learn the real value of our brethren, we acquire a higher value for the life which connects us with them; but we never know all the beauty and all the joy of life. Louise, till we regard it in its relations with the Eternal and the Infinite, till we regard it as the medium through which we see and know the Father of our spirits, from whose faint shadow we learn all we know of excellence, and beauty, and joy."

Louise answered not for some time, and Mr. Elford would not interrupt her thoughts; at length she said, slowly, "I think you are right in all you say; but my feelings—it is so lard to relinquish wholly the personal wishes, hopes, which have been the very life of our life—so sad to look to a long future unchoered by their light."

"A long future I what right have we to look to a long

future! If we do, the lines of thought should so diverge as to take in the eternal and infinite relations of which I have spoken. Life, in its present relations, is the business of an hour, and in regarding those relations only, we should not look beyond the hour. Each hour brings its duties and its trials, Louise; let us conscientiously perform the one, and patiently endure the other, and we shall find that each hour brings its pleasures too."

We have given this conversation that the reader might form some opinion of the views of life which Mr. Elford endeavoured to impress on the mind of Louise; but his mode of doing this was not by a simple statement of his sentiments, or even by arguments, which should convince her reason of their truth. He introduced her to the beauties of the country around, which offered a new delight to one whose life had been divided between a convent and cities. Nature's thousand voices in the rustling leaf, the murmuring insect, the chirping bird, the rippling brook, all spoke of joy; and her heart responded to them, for they could not deceive or desert. Often, too, Mr. Elford brought home for her some gleaning from his day's associations, illustrative of the fine qualities yet exhibited by human nature-of the moral beauty which, in spite of man's perversions, still dwells in our world. But Mr. Elford served Louise most by finding for each hour employment which should exercise, yet not overtask her powers, and should give her the deep, true satisfaction that springs only from the performance of duty. The effects of such benevolent and judicious guidance were soon evident to Louise herself, in the healthier tone of her mind, and to others, in the elasticity of her movements, and the serenity of her countenance. We would gladly dwell longer, did our limits permit, on the character of that happiness which Louise now enjoyed: a happiness more stable, more enduring than any she had before known, because more spiritual. Her memories of the past were never more dear than now. Of Madame de St. Laurent she thought often, and as often felt that never before had she truly understood and entirely sympathized with her. Nor was De Montrevel unremembered. She knew he was with the Austrian army, daily exposed to death in battle, or to the more terrible death of a traitor, if taken prisoner, and her heart throbbed with painful solicitude, as stealthily, but constantly, she examined the public journals for news of the Royalist forces; yet, spite of this solicitude, her remembrance of him was less bitter than it had been since they parted. In reviewing, with the calmness she could now command, the circumstances connected with their separation, she saw much which, if it did not excuse, palliated the unjust suspicions of De Montrevel. She still felt that the love which admitted the existence of such suspicions was unworthy of her acceptance, and insufficient to secure the

happiness of either; but she sometimes doubted whether, in decilining any explanation of what seemed most censurable to him—the miniature—she had not secrificed his just claims to her pride and her resentment. On this miniature she had not looked for four years; not since the day on which she had ascaled it up at the convent, till some time after her residence with Mr. and Mrs. Elford. It was early in October that Mr. Elford mentioned having received a letter from France, from which he learned that a battle between the French and Austrian forces was daily expected.

That evening Louise unsealed the package, and with something of the awe with which we visit the dead, uncovered the miniature. As the eyes met hers, with the same truthfulness beaming from them which had so deeply impressed her in former times, and the smiling lips seemed ready to pour forth assurances of tender regard, the past, the present rushed upon her with overwhelming force; his desertion his danger—her chest grew light, her boson heaved, and, pressing her lips to the senseless lips before her, she burst into tears. The woman's heart was yet there, chastened, strengthened, elevated, but still unchanged in its tenderness. Again Louise wore the miniature, for she felt while De Montrevel was in danger she could not lay it said;

## CHAPTER XV

"Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty,
The second duty will already have become clearer."—Carlyle.

And where, and how had De Montrevel spent these four years? Launched at once into the very midst of action, at a a time when, dissastisfied with others, and scarce satisfied with himself, he found thought alike perplexing and painful, the habits of his life had given way to the necessities of his nature, and the Austrian camp held not a more vigorous and energetic officer-a more active and stirring soldier than he. De Ligne was with him, and side by side they marched and fought ; but De Ligne had his wife, his children, his parents in Austria; and whenever he could spare a few days or weeks from the actual duties of a soldier, he hastened to spend them in their society, while De Montrevel had nothing to dispute the claims of a camp upon him, and that which was sought at first as a refuge from painful thoughts, became a habit. In such a life, the passive emotions have little power-the pictures of memory grow fainter, and less lifelike, day by day; and thus would it have been with De Montrevel's feelings and memories in relation to Louise, had they not been kept alive by some extrancous influence. While she remained in Paris, his thoughts were ever attracted towards her by the dangers and horrors with which he knew her to be surrounded. The letters of the faithful vet discreet Jacques Brissot, always mentioned her, and generally in a manner which aroused his curiosity and stimulated his interest. He met Auguste Valancour in Vienna. and soon after learned from Mr. Elford the arrangement by which he was empowered to draw on him for half the amount held by him for Louisc. The quick, keen pang, the flash of indignation which this intelligence cost him, was scarcely consistent with what he had believed were his previous convictions of their relations. But before indignation had time to harden into contempt, came Mr. Elford's letter. consequent upon his first interview with Louise, in which he enclosed her order for the amount which yet remained in her power, and expressed her carnest wish that he could devise measures to regain what was so dishonestly held by Auguste Valancour. Yet Mr. Elford, in the same letter, acknowledged that there was much which Mademoiselle de la Valliere seemed either unwilling or unable to explain, and said that the instrument by which Auguste Valancour claimed what he held was witnessed by the honest Jacques Brissot, from whom De Montrevel had not heard since this transaction. De Montrevel re-enclosed the order to Mr.

Elford, making it payable to Louise herself, and requesting Mr. Elford to assure her that it was only the amount intended for her by Madame de St. Laurent, and should be regarded as a legacy from her. He would then gladly have dismissed the whole subject from his thoughts, but its very perplexity rendered this impossible. Again and again, in overy moment of rest, he found himself striving to unravel the tangled skein, while his feelings to Louise now melted into tenderness at the supposition that his suspicions had been wholly unjust to her, and now hardened into stone at the remembrance of the miniature, and the conviction that, if the tale its essemble too certainly to tell were untrue, her whole course towards him, as well as her asseverations to Mr. Elford, hab been deeply false.

October, 1793, was a month fatal to the hopes of the exiled Royalists of France. Scarcely had they recovered from the first stunning shock of the defeat at Boufflers by the Republican force under Jourdain, when they were struck to the earth by the terrible intelligence that Marie Antoinette-first in beauty and misfortune-the innocent and the maligned, to whom every heart among them had done homage - had suffered a cruel and ignominious death, Nothing could have so paralyzed their powers as this event. for in her had centred all of generous enthusiasm which they had brought to the struggle. Deprived of her, they fought but for selfish interests or cold abstractions, to recover their titles and possessions, or to uphold a monarchy. Desirous to be the first to communicate such painful intelligence to his wife, and feeling that some time must elapse before the Austrians would be prepared again for offensive measures, De Ligne obtained a short leave of absence, and rcturned to Vienna, accompanied by De Montrevel, who, feeling inaction just at that time insupportable, had voluntcered to become the bearer of important despatches from the Austrian commander to the court. The day after their arrival, as they sat together reading letters and papers which they had found awaiting them, De Montrevel startled for England as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements.

"For England?" exclaimed Dc Ligne : " what takes you

"One of my objects is to obtain an interview with Jacques Brissot, who writes me in his usual dubious style, from which I can only vaguely gather that he wishes to see me on important business, and that this wish is the real causo of his visit to England, though it has very different ostensible reasons."

"One of your letters was from Mr. Elford, I think," said De Ligne, inquiringly,

A simple affirmative was De Montrevel's only reply, unless his heightened colour might be supposed to convey more.

There was long silence : and when De Ligne spoke again his voice roused De Montrevel from a deep revery. "De Montrevel, I do not see how you can well be absent from the army for so long a period as you will require for a visit to England."

"I am not sure. De Ligne, that I shall ever rejoin tho army, for with the queen perished the strongest tie that connected me with it."

"Your queen's son still lives," said De Ligne.

"But will not live long. I have long felt, Louis, that French nobles were out of place in an Austrian camp ; but for the faint hope of rescuing my unfortunate queen from the wrotches who were pressing her life out by their cruelties, would I have remained there. Now she is beyond their power, and I am well convinced that this misled army will never do aught for her son."

"They may revenge his injuries," said the excited De Ligne, starting from his seat and pacing the floor rapidly.

"There spoke the trained soldier, not the Frenchman or the Christian. I took arms too late in life to sympathize with you there, Louis,"

"And you will relinquish all hope of restoration to your country-your estates ?"

"No, Louis, I do not relinquish all hope of this. I believe that we shall be restored to France, that France will one day be restored to herself : but I do not think it will be by the action of hostile armies."

"Why, then, have you hitherto fought."

" Because these convictions have been of gradual growth. and I have been impelled by the hope of rescuing my unfortunate king and queen from captivity and death. "Your king is now in captivity."

"And to liberate that innocent and hapless boy, Do Ligne, I would join the most desperate enterprise that man could plan or undertake; but you know too well that little is to be hoped for him from any movement contemplated at present. Considerations of the deepest personal nature take me to England, yet a summons from you shall outweigh them all; but do not give that summons. Louis, unless you have in view some really important design in which I may aid. My life belongs to my king, and it shall be cheerfully devoted to him whenever it can do him service : but I will not throw it away on a phantasm."

## CHAPTER XVI. Confess

What treason there is mingled with your love. Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust, Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love."

Merchant of Venice. A FEW weeks after this conversation with De Ligne, Do

Montrevel landed in England, having embarked at one of the Italian ports in an English man-of-war, to whose commander he had brought letters from the British minister at Vienna. This rapidly conceived and as rapidly executed voyage had not been caused only by the desire to meet Jacques Brissot. The letter from Mr. Elford to which De Ligne had alluded had probably at least as much influence on it. That letter was as follows:—

LONDON, October 20, 1793, "I am, perhaps, the only banker, my dear Marquis, who ever found it difficult to obtain an owner for money, to the reception of which neither disgrace nor peril was attached. Here am I with nearly £18000 sterling (for the accumulation of interest in my hands, and a profitable investment of part of it, which I will explain at my leisure, have brought the remainder, after the payment of Monsieur Auguste Valancour's moiety, up to that sum)-here am I, then, with £18000 of honest money, which nobody will own. What shall I do with it? Give it to Mademoiselle de la Valliere, you will say. Let me tell you, De Montrevel, that if it is to be offered to Mademoiselle de la Valliere again, it must be by yourself-certainly not by me-for at the slightest allusion to it her figure is erected with an air that would make the fortune of a tragedy queen, and her soft eye kindles with a spirit which I think young Lord - scarcely suspects, or he might not have sued so humbly to me for my interest with her a few days since. To speak more seriously -more as her feelings deserve-Louise de la Valliere

endured for months both toil and privation, yet refused to receive aid from this source; can you believe she will do so now, when no such necessity exists! My home is hers, and I hope will remain so till she exchanges it for a husband's. She is to my wife and myself a cherished daughter—to my grand-daughter she calls herself a governess; but by her

and by us she is regarded as her sister and friend.

"To return to business. I am not willing longer to retain property not mine, yet the disposal of which is left so absolutely to me. I am an old mun, as you know, and though I never was in better health, I may die soon, and suddenly and I would not leave such an embarrassment as this would prove to an honest, or such a templation as it might be to a dishonest successor. Could you come to England, an hour's personal interview between Mademoistelle de la Yalliero

and yourself would do more towards a just arrangement of this affair than volumes of correspondence. Come, then, if it be possible.

"Independently of business, De Montrevel, I should be rejoiced to veloceme you to England, and Mr. Elford would be truly gratified by seeing the brother of the kind Madame de St Laurent, to whose devoted attentions, we believe, our daughter owed her recovery from the illness that sent us to France with her, and we the ten years of happiness which intervened between that time and her death.

"On whatever you may decide, let me hear your decision soon. "Yours very truly," "S. Elford."

From Fortsmouth Do Montrevel wrote to Mr. Elford, and mentioned the hotel in London at which, by the advice of Captain H., he should put up. He entered London in the evening. At his hotel he found a note from Mr. Elford inviting him to his house, and saying that he had waited for him as long as it was possible to do without discourtesy to some friends who were engaged to dine with him. Ho added that he should delay dinner to the last possible moment, with the hope of having his company at it, and he hoped he would follow him without delay, if he were not too much fatigued.

Do Montrevel looked at his watch—it was an hour later than the date of his note. He examined the card of address Mr. Elford had enclosed, and muttering, "Eight miles from London—I shall be too late:" he threw the note aside, and walked slowly and thoughtfully across the room. Suddenly his countenance assumed an air of decision; he looked again at his watch, and, ringing his bell, ordered his trunks to be sent up, and a carriage to be in readness for him. In half an hour he was on the road to Mr. Elford's, while the west was still reddened with the dim twilight of a November evening.

When his name was announced at the door, the servant who received him said, "Mr. Elford is expecting you, sir. Shall I show you into the dining-room?" "I wish to see Mr. Elford alone for a few minutes first. Take my card to him."

"Then, sir, if you will please to walk this way, I will show you to Mr. Elford's library."

Onening the door of a room, which he supposed was without an occupant, the servant ushered De Montrevel in silently and closed the door. Mr. Elford's doors were too well arranged to give notice of an arrival, and De Montrevel's step on the soft carpet did not seem to disturb a lady, who stood with her back to him, intently regarding a map hung against the wall, on which she seemed to be tracing a line. There was but one light in the library, and that was on a stand near the lady, throwing its rays directly upon her. Habited in black velvet, fitting closely to the waist, and falling from thence to the feet in rich, soft folds, her figure displayed, in its fine proportions, its graceful outline, and full development, the perfection of womanhood. The lace which fell around her shoulders and bosom, veiled, without concealing, their beauty. Her head was thrown slightly back, and the only ornament discoverable on her person was the single white camelia, which glistened upon the glossy black braids twined around it. She stood near an angle of the wall, and as De Montrevel glanced from her figure to the shadowy profile cast upon the wall, he started with surprise. The features were those of Louise do la Valliere: but how unlike was her slight, bending form and timid air, to the commanding figure before him! He moved to get a view of the face, but his surprise made him heedless, and he stumbled against a chair just as he had brought himself within the better-lighted part of the room. The noise he made caused the lady to turn. There was a sudden flashing of the eye, a quick rush of blood to neck and face, and then, stiffing a cry, sho became deadly pale, and put out her hand as if to save herself from falling.

"Louise!" exclaimed De Montrevel, springing towards her with a transport, occasioned more, perhaps, by admiration of the present Louise, than by tender remembrance of the past. Before he could reach her—before, at least, he could offer his support to her, her weakness had vanished, and with a manner dignified, yet gentle—so kind that it left a friend nothing to desire—yet so quiet that it gave no hope of anything beyond friendship, she said, "I am wery glad to see you here in safety, Monsieur. I did not know you had arrived, and not having heard the door opened, I must pray you pardon for the strange reception my surprise made me give you."

His own hasty demonstration contrusted with her quicklyresumed self-possession; the bewildering resemblances and more bewildering differences between his memories and his experience, all served to embarrass De Montrevel, and he, whom Louise had always seen giving counternance and support to others, seemed, for almost the first time in his life, to need encouragement. He was relieved by the entrance of Mr. Elford, who welcomed him cordially to England and to his house, and then said, glancing at Louise, "You needed no introduction, I see."

- "No," replied De Montrevel, bowing to her: Time has added new charms to Mademoiselle de la Valliere, but my memory of her was beyond his power."

  "I thought you were gone, Louise; you will be late, I
- "I thought you were gone, Louise; you will be late, I think."

  "I have been waiting for my mother—and here she
- As she spoke. Madame de la Valliere entered, attired with
- As site spokes, mantame of as valuative cherees, actived with taste and elegance, but with less splendour than De Montrevel had been accustomed to see her display. She greeted him warmly, and, after chatting a few minutes with him, urged his accompanying Louise and herself to their evening engagement. "Come, your Austrian uniform will make you quite the lion of the evening."
  - "And you will be the lion's keeper," said Mr. Elford, playfully.
- "Yes, and so win the most profound gratitude of my friend, Lady Melville, for bringing him first to her soirée."
  - "I give my consent, De Montrevel, to your going with the

ladies, provided you will return with them and make this your home while you are in England."

"Thank you—thank you, my ind friend; it will at least, be my chief pleasure in England to visit you. I must return to my hotel for the night; but if the Duchesse will permit me first to pay my respects to Mrs. Elford, I will attend her and Mademoiselle de la Valliere with pleasure, and will see them safe again to your door."

"Oh no," said the Duchesse, "that last will not be necessary, for we shall have an escort when we return. Indeed, you shall have no more driving for me, for you have travelled to-day, and must be fatigued already."

"Oh no; I have lived the life of a soldier, you know, since we met, and to be driven along in a softly-cushioned carriage is to be quite at rest."
"Well, men grow tired of being at rest sometimes, and I will not have you drive about any more for us; and if you

only let me present you to Lady Melville, and show yourself a while in her rooms, I will help you to vanish whenever you please. But you must come without seeing Mrs. Elford, for she is not very well, and has retired to her own apartment already."

"And I will not tell her to-night," said Mr. Elford, "that

"And I will not tell her to-night," said Mr. Elford, "that you have been here, and left our house for a hotel. But you will dine with us to-morrow t"

"With pleasure; but now good-night, for I see I am detaining the ladies."

If De Montrevel had wondered at the change which time had wrought in the appearance of Louise, he was no less impressed by the different character conveyed in her social manifestations. He had known her a sensitive girl, appealing by her timidity and tenderness to the hearts of others; he saw her, with no less feminine gentleness, show a modest, unpresuming dignity and repose of manner—a something that seemed to say she had

"-The conscience of her worth
That would be wooed and not unsought be won."

Her countenance was serene, sometimes sportive, but, to his eye, her serenity was not that of one whose calm had never been disturbed; it bore the loftier aspect of one who had struggled and conquered. The whispered expressions of admiration, the frequent announcement of her name which he heard as he proceeded with her through the crowded rooms to the boudoir of Lady Melville, told him with how much éclat she was received in society ; yet neither embarrassment nor elation was visible in her looks or manner. In a word, he sought in vain for the convent recluse or Parisian belle. Again Louise gave proof that woman was but the "Cynthia of the minute;" and though De Montrevel might not be disposed to add, "And every change still lovelier than the last," he certainly felt that the being at his side awakened his interest more fully than any he had known before. Speculation was busy during this evening with her every manifestation. Should he find beneath that polished and calm exterior the tender heart he had once trusted, and which, even when most convinced of its treachery and falsehood to himself, he had believed capable of devoted affection for another? or had the experiences which had stilled the play of feature, checked the blood's quick ebb and flow, and changed the eve's joyous flash and glistening moisture into a steady, tranquil light, extended their influence to the heart, and taught that to throb with more lethargic movement ? These were questions which he could not answer, yet he felt that he could not rest satisfied while they remained unanswered. A thousand times, ere he slept that night, he said to himself, "What is it to me whether she is capable of love, since her love is not, probably never can be, mine?" and as often his heart responded, "Be it so: it will be much to find her worthy-to find that her nature has been regulated and chastened, not chilled or hardened."

In this De Montrevel gave proof that he was at last beginning to understand what love is; not the sport of an exuberant fancy, not the wild tumult of passion—though to these its pure name has been too often applied-but the deep, earnest emotion with which a spirit devotes itself to another spirit, seeks its happiness and rejoices in its excellence, willingly surrendering to these the attainment of its own personal desires. Such a love-and no other deserves the name-elevates and purifies the heart into which it enters, and, instead of the absorbing influence which passion exercises, it extends its view of its own obligations, and strengthens it for their performance. Such a love was now arising in the heart of De Montrevel for Louise ; the birth, not of an evening's admiration, as it may seem to the heedless reader, but of the confidence and respect tho present character of her countenance and manner almost irresistibly inspired-a confidence and respect that supplied the only clement wanting to make the feelings with which heretofore he regarded her-love. He had come to England determined not to leave it doubtful of her relations with Auguste Valancour, or of the true nature of her past and present feelings to himself; but, above all these considerations, now rose another, far higher, far dearer-the desire to know whether Louise was as good as she was beautiful, as happy as she was good.

De Montrevel saw Mr. Elford at his place of business the next day, and received there a letter from Jacques Brissot. In this, Jacques informed him that the public business which had been the estensible cause of his own journey to England had been postponed for some weeks, and requested that, if possible, De Montrevel would delay his departure until he should arrive, as he had very important reasons for desiring to see him. During these weeks of inaction, De Montrevel gave himself to the enjoyment of the society of Louise, and to the study of her character. And she was conscious of it. She saw the new feeling she had inspired, and she rejoiced in it. She knew not its extent—she dared not call it love; but it was a pure and worthy feeling—worthy of him—worthy of her—a right and true response to her own heart and far more variable than that he had once avowed for

her, and which they had both named love. This last, she had long felt, even had it been all it seemed to her, could not have met the necessities of her own awakened and developed nature : and she now saw that it would have been equally insufficient for the happiness of De Montrevel himself. In him she saw the qualities which, in their former period of intercourse, had been only visible to the eye of affection, developed into energetic and decided action; and she soon found that he had adopted Mr. Elford's philosophy, and that the wearied votary of pleasure had learned to find enjoyment ever new in the consciousness of duty performed -in the active exercise of his higher powers and more generous emotions. Had the feelings which now united De Montrevel and Louise been of a selfish character, their situation, while each remained doubtful of the preferring regard of the other, would have been both painful and embarrassing; but as it was, though perfect confidence alone could give them unalloyed happiness, they had much present enjoyment in each hour's unfolding of mind and heart; and if neither felt privileged to give full expression to their feelings, neither made any studious concealment of true, friendly regard. Their conversations were free and unrestrained on all subjects but one-their past relations. From any allnsion to these both shrank, while doubtful how they might be regarded by the other.

They walked together one evening to the brow of a hill in Mr. Elford's grounds, from which there was a fine view of the Thames and its banks. Louise pointed out, with enthusiasm, all the charms of the scene. De Montrevel looked more admiringly upon her than upon the prospect, as he said, "You are eloquent in your praise."

"We are always eloquent when we feel deeply; and I feel the charms of nature very deeply, especially of this view, for here I took one of my first lessons in what Mr. Elford calls the beautiful realities of life."

"Does he mean by that there is no reality in the moral world t"

"Oh no—far otherwise." She paused a moment, then added, with a smile, "To explain his meaning fully, I must talk a little of myself."

"You can speak of nothing more interesting to me," said De Montrevel, with an ardour which brought a slight flush into the check of Louise,

"You will not wonder that my experiences in France—I mean in Paris—among the terrible scenes of the Revolution, divested life of all charm in my eyes. I had learned even there, and perhaps from the moral exercise of those very scenes, something of its value. I had ceased to regard it wholly as a burden."

"Wholly as a burden : Did you ever so regard it!"

"Wholly as a Duruen: Uni you ever so regard it?"
Again Louise was slightly embarrassed, and she proceeded
without replying to his question. "I had learned to regard
it as a valuable gift for valuable ends—a school of discipline,
which was, by strengthening and developing our powers, to
fit us for a higher and happier condition of being—but it
had no beauty ig my eyes; and when Mr. Elford first talked
to me of its beautiful realities, he seemed as one who mocked
me. He saw that my sickly mind could not then appreciate
the beauty of our social life, and it was with nature's charms
that he first acquainted me, striving to attune my heart to
gladness by awakening its response to these; and here, as I
before said, he began to initiate me into the true philosophy
of life."

"And may I ask what was that philosophy? I, too, should like to take my first lesson here."

Louise looked smillingly up at him as she repeated, "Your first lesson it is a philosophy in which, if I mistake not, you have taken many lessons, though in a very different school from this; but you shall judge. Mr. Elford teaches that, as in the natural world our pleasures as well as our necessties are supplied, so life in the moral world ministers to our cheerful enjoyment as well as to our improvement; and that as in the one the dark cloud and rugged rock render yet more attractive the sun-beam and the smilling landscape, so

in the other, the sternest circumstances advance our highest happiness, if, instead of yielding supinely to them, we exert ourselves, with humble submission to Hcaven, in earnest contest or cheerful endurance."

"Ho is right," and De Montrevel, with energy. "My life, till within the last five years, had been a succession of pleasures: these years have been full of stern trial and bitter conflict, yet in these years only have I caught a glimpse of the true happiness which never shows itself to us unless associated with DUTY."

This did Do Montrevel and Louise daily unveil their minds to each other, and, in their allusions to the influences of the past, often approached the very point of that perfect confidence which would have given them knowledge of their perfect sympathy, and secured to them the happiness they most coveted; yet ever did they shrink back from that point—she, with the sensitive delicacy of woman, he, with the apprehension that, in striving for an uncertain future, he should lose the valued present. This apprehension also made De Montrévet delay to the last moment any conference with Louisè on the subject which had made Mr. Elford solicit his presence in England. Indeed, that subject was so associated with their separation that the one could scarcely be touched without leading to the other, and thus involving all which he longed, yet feared to say.

De Montrevel now limited his stay in England only by the arrival of a summons from De Ligne, and thought so seldom of the promised visit of Jacques Brissot, that it was with no slight surprise he saw him one day enter his room at the hotel.

"I am sorry, Monsieur, to have kept you waiting so long," said Jacques, after their first greetings were over, which were as respectful on the one side, and as cordial on the other, as in former times.

"Waiting!" repeated De Montrevel. "I have not waited for you, Jacques, for I did not know you were in England."

"It was waiting in England, I meant, sir-when you were,

before, for the people who sent me kept putting me off, and I did not dare to show by hurrying them that it was my own business, and not theirs, that brought me. Now they have only given me three days to stay in England."

"But why do you go back to them at all?" asked De Montrevel: "France seems to be at present no place for honest men."

" It never will be again, sir, if all the honest men leave it."

"That is true, Jacques-that is true; there was too much emigration, I fear, at first ; but I cannot afford to lose you in those butchers' shambles at Paris."

"Thank you, Monsieur, for saving so, but you cannot afford, I think, to keep me here. I do not know any one else to whom you can trust your interests in France. It is but little that the best disposed can do for you there now. You must have often wanted money, I fear, Monsieur."

" No, Jacques, never, thanks to your remittances, and to the jewels I carried with me."

" Well, Monsieur, I have done the best I could. Here"taking out a pocket-book as he spoke-" are most of the rents I have been able to collect in the last year from that part of your estate which was given to me. They are not half what they ought to be, but these are times when few are willing to work."

"But how will you live yourself, Jacques, if you give me this? You must keep up a style corresponding to your fortune, you know."

The Marquis spoke playfully, yet pressed back the pocketbook into the hand of Jacques.

" As to that Monsieur, the less style the better, if I would keep my fortune, and I have all I want for myself. What I mainly wanted to see you here for was to consult you and Mr. Elford, about some plan for sending you safely every year whatever I could raise for you. It must be so sccret that none can suspect it in France, for, if anybody there but dream of it, your estate and my head will go together."

- "Well, well, we will talk to Mr. Elford about it," replied Do Montrevel; "but remember, Jacques, to preserve the secret, you must not leave yourself impoverished."
  - " No fear of that, sir-no fear of that."
- "You must have a very difficult part to play in Paris, my poor Jacques. To see so many noble and excellent people executed, and seem to be the friend of their executioners."
- "Seem to be, Monsieur; but then I had the comfort of often doing them a kind act, and sometimes of letting them know they had a friend near. I think, Monsieur, it must have been in preparation for the part I was to play in Paris that I had such a face given me as people always said could look two ways at once."
- "Your face has doubtless had its uses, Jacques. And so you have been able to show your kindness to some of these unfortunates?"
- "Yes, Monsieur; and I think your sending me to Earis to look after the Duchesse de la Valliere and her daughter saved them from La Force, if not from the guillotine, for the Duc trusted everything to Monsieur Valancour, and did everything that he wished, and he was determined that Mademoiselle de la Valliere should nover leave France till sho had given him a claim to the little fortune you had secured to her. Mademoiselle could not be persuaded or forced into having anything to do with the fortune; so the only way for him to secure it was to marry her, and her choice lay between him and the guillotine—of which she seemed decidedly to prefer the last, when I came to her help."
- "I do not understand your saying that Mademoiselle do la Hullere would have nothing to do with the fortune, when Mr. Elford has in his hands an instrument by which Monsieur Valancour claims and has received half of it; which instrument is signed by Mademoisello de la Valliere, and witnessed by you."

While the Marquis was speaking, Jacques met his eye with a singular smile, and, as he ceased, he indulged for a moment in a low, chuckling laugh before he replied, "Pardon my laughing, Monsieur, but indeed I cannot help it, when I think how cleverly I managed that business; though it did hurt me too, to deceive the poor young lady, who trusted to me so that she was willing to sign what I wrote without reading it, and who seemed to think more of convincing the Marquis de Montrevel that she had never willingly taken his money, than of escaping the guillotine they threatened her with."

Proud of his skill in this sfinir, Jacques was easily led on to narrate the whole scene to Montrevel. He told the artful questions by which he enlightened Louise in relation to what she was doing—ekstehed simply, but strongly, her evident surprise and prompt decision—her firm and proud reply to the unmanly tanets and more unmanly threats of Auguste Valancour—her unequivocally expressed admiration of De Montrevel, and earnest solicitude for his just appreciation of her—and the perfect ignorance with which she had given her order in favour of Auguste Valancour. "I would not have given him so much, sir, but I knew he was a desperate man, and I was afraid to urge him too far. I knew, too, that terrible times were approaching in Paris, and the Duchesse, who was known to have valuable jewels, would not have been as fethered long."

Do Montrevel did not reply to Jacques, but sat long after he had ceased peaking, leaning his head upon his hand, and looking like one in a pleasant dream. Jacques shufiled his feet, coughed, hemmed, all in vain—he attracted no attention. At length he spoke. "Do you not think, sir, we had better see Mr. Elford about this arrangement, as I must return so soon!"

"Yes, you had better see Mr. Elford, and return here—I mean, let me see you again tonight: I have an engagement during the day;" and De Montrevel started from his chair, rang his bell quickly, and ordered his earriage. Wondering at a manner so unlike his master's former quickness, Jacques took his leave, promising to see Mr. Elford, and to inform

the Marquis in the evening of the arrangement which should be made.

It was yet early—searcely noon—when De Montrevel arrived at Mr. Elford's. He had been so frequent a visiter there, that he was quite au fait of the habits of the family, and knew that at this hour Louise would probably be reading in the library, and alone. He proceeded there immediately, and acting on the privilege conferred by intimacy, he entered unannounced. Louise was there, still in her simple morning-dress of white mustin, and the smille with which she received De Montrevel did not proclaim him an unwelcome intruder.

"Are you earlier than usual, or has my book made time pass more swiftly?" she asked, as she returned his greeting. "It is quite early. I wished to see you before there was

danger of interruption by other visiters."

Do Montrevel's tone, his looks, and manner, conveyed more than his words; and fearing to check his confidence by coldness—fearing yet more to force it by manifesting her interest—Louise vainly sought some unobjectionable mode to break the silence which susceeded. This silence did not continue long. '# Louise," said De Montrevel, in a voice, the depth of

whose tone made the heart of Louise bound and her frame tremble, "Jacques Brissot has arrived: I have seen him, and it now depends on you whether to-morrow I look not back from the sea on England—again an unconnected wanderer. I came here for the sole purpose of seeking your confidence, and entreating you to prove that you had pardoned my intemperate upbraidings in our last painful interview, by accepting the provision to which my sister's wishes entitled you—

"Pray spare me, Monsieur-"

"Nay, Louise, hear me, for I have much to say, and on this subject I will not now trouble you. Long befor I came to England, I had felt that in their full extent my upbraidings had been unjust, as well as intemperate. Bitterly had I condemned myself for suffering any disappointment to make me, even for an hour, suspect one so transparent in her simplicity of systematic treachery and mercenary designs. I speak these words with shame, Louise, and scarco dare ask your forgiveness for such injustice, for which the maddening circumstances of the hour are the only palliation I can offer; let me add that, before you left my presence on that morning, my heart had given the lie to my own words, and reproached me more bitterly than you ever can. But though thus acquitting you of my harsher accusations, I did not, and thought I could not, doubt your indifference to me— —your devotion to another—multi, since your abode in England, communications received from Mr. Elford have led me to think that even here I may have been mistaken."

A burning blush rose to the very temples of Louise, and De Montrevel hastened to explain.

"I mean that those communications made me doubt whether he whom I had supposed my successful rival had truly and permanently established himself in your regard. My interest in you suffered me not to leave this doubtful, and I hoped that the confidence I came to England to seek from you would extend to this subject. You may ask why I have so long dolayed to seek this confidence. Louise, my answor will unveil to you my whole heart. Our very first interview in England taught me that, though you had formerly pleased my faney and interested my feelings, it was only now that you commanded the full approval of my mind, and entire devotion of my heart. Louise, when first I sought you in your convent home, I said, I love you, and I was not consciously false: yet how much deeper meaning dwells now in those same words ! Louise, I love you with a love which makes your happiness, your excellence, dearer to me than all else-a love that would not owe life's most precious treasure-yourself-to the lightest sacrifice of these. Here I have seen you happy—I have received every day new proof of your excellence-and I have been happy. Can you wonder that I have hesitated to risk this happinesshesitated while blessed with your friendship, to urge a suit for more—a suit which, if unexcessful, must have banished me from your presence? But this morning I heard, Louise, what would have removed every fear—had any fear remained—that he whom I dreaded as a rival possessed an interest in your heart; and, Louise, before I heard this, I had sometimes dared to hope—may, you shall know all my boldness— I have felt—here—since I learned to estimate your native integrity of character, I have felt—dar Is ay it !—that once your love was mine; that when you allowed me to call you my own, you were my own indeed. Was it nots, Louise?

For an instant Louise lifted her eyes to De Montrevel's, and he caught the smile that played in them as she whis-

pered, "Have you forgotten the miniature?"

His heart bounded with hope as he replied, "No, Louise, Lave not forgotten it; but my trust in your truth is stronger now than even that memory. I do not understand it. I acknowledge that it perplexes me when I think of it, yet it has no power over my faith in you. I ask no explanation of that or anything else. Give me your simple avowal that the heart I wronged so deeply was mine—may be mine again—and I desire no more. Speak, Louise."

De Montrevel had drawn 'nara, and clasped her hand.

De Moutrevel had drawn near, and clasped her hand. Louise averted from him her crimsoned face, as with her other trembling hand she drew the miniature from her bosom, and holding it towards him, murmured, "Let that speak for me."

His emotions who can describe? Louise saw him not, but she full that he was at her feet; that his face was bowed upon her hands as he held them clasped in his. It was long ere either spoke. At length, De Montrevel, as he yet kneeled beside her, drew her towards him; till her head rested on his shoulder; and bending over her, said, tenderly, "My own again;" and as he gazed on the serene, trusting expression of the face—on her quick, bright blushes—on the eyes veiled by their snowy lids and long, dark lashes, and on the soft, sweet smile that played around her lips—the Louise of the

convent seemed, indeed, again before him. In the love impressed upon her features, there was no change—none in that which animated her heart. In the girl and the woman this love was alike spiritual and trusting. In both, the noble qualities imagined or manifested in the one beloved, was the object of regard—such is ever the love of the pure and truehearted woman. As memory thus turned to the past, De Montrevel exclaimed, "O, Louise I how can I ever pardon myself for having thrown away free years of happiness?"

"Say not so, my friend," said Louise, softly, as, disengaging herself from his embrace, she turned her eyes timidly upon him. "Call not those years thrown away which have taught us the depths of our own natures."

"As regards me, my Louise, you are right; the full sympathy with you, the pure and perfect happiness of this hour could never have been mine, but for the lessons of those five years; but you—you needed not to be purified by suffering." Such praise was too dear to be disputed, and Louise of

Such praise was too dear to be disputed, and Louise only replied, "But I needed to be strengthened, De Montrevel."

In after days, when the first agitating emotions of newlyawakened joy had subsided into "the sober certainty of waking bliss"-when they could reason as well as feel, she averred, and De Montrevel acknowledged, that to the development and perfect culture of her nature, as well as of his, trial had been necessary. A creature who lived in her affections, love had governed and guided her, directing every action, and moulding her whole character. At its bidding she had devoted herself to the gloom of the convent, or sported, the gayest of the gay, in a Parisian assembly; at its bidding she could have made great sacrifices and accomplished noble acts, but in all these her higher nature would have slept, the voice of God within her would have been silent; and though the purity of her taste and the influence of her early associations would have made evil revolting to her when presented in a gross or glaring form, she might have been led by "the one loved voice" into much insensible deviation from the right-deviation not the less certainly productive of suffering, because unconscious. Her strongest affection had been crushed, and while her heart yet lay prostrate beneath the blow, the uncompromising teacher, Life, had forced her into action, to which duty, a sense of the right, was the only incentive left. In obeying this, in following its guidance, she had first risen above the earth into the region of the spiritual, and as she attained to faith in the "Father of Spirits," a light broke into her soul, discovering there a fountain of peace and joy, whose deep waters are troubled by no earthly influence-over which only her own spirit had power. Her inconsistencies, what had they been ? the inconsistencies of woman-what are they but the vain efforts of a devoted heart to conform all its manifestations to another's nature? Her inconstancy-the mock of ages-how often is it but the heart's recoil from the base image of clay into which experience transmutes the golden idol of imagination? Would you have woman, then, consistent, constant, -teach her as she has never yet been taught, that her purest affections require the balance-wheel of principle, and should be made subservient to her higher reason,

#### CHAPTER X

'Por. First, go with me to church and call me wife, And then away; For never shall you lie by Portia's side With an unquiet soul."—Merchant of Venics

EARLY in January, 1794, Louise and De Montrevel stood side by side before the altar of God, and publicly recorded the vows their hearts land made. Their engagement land given unalloyed pleasure to her mother and to her English friends.

Some weeks before their marriage, De Montrevol restored to her the diamonds of Madame de St. Laurent, which, it may be remembered, he had formerly given her, but which she had returned to him through the kind physician who had accompanied her to the convent. De Montrevl's necessities lad compelled bim to part with many valuable jewels and family relies, but these diamonds his sister had specially designated as a gift to his wife; and they bad been placed, with all else that he could save from his wreck of fortune, in Mr. Elford's keeping. Louise opened the case of diamonds which he had placed on a table before ber, and gazed on them with tender memory of ber to whom they bad belonged.

" Louise," said De Montrevel, placing a splendid aigrette on her dark bair, "brilliant and beautiful as these are, they are scarcely so beautiful as that snowy flower you wore on the first evening we met in England."

"Then you would not admire me very much more in diamonds, would you?" asked Louise, with a soft blush rising to her cheeks.

"Admire you more! My admiration of you, my Louise, cannot be affected by such things; for it is the truthful, gentle, earnest spirit beaming from your face, and expressed in your every movement, that I admire and love."

"Then why should I wear diamonds?"

De Montrevel could not be insensible to the tender compliem to conveyed in this question, and he expressed bis gratitude for it; but he saw that Louise had a farther meaning, and he said, "I see, Louise, that you have some proposition to make in relation to these diamonds—you cannot hesitate to speak your wishes to me."

"You will promise, then, not to think me indifferent to your magnificent present, or to the dear memory of her to whom these jewels once belonged, if I should propose to part with them?"

"To part with them!" exclaimed De Montrevel.

"Yes; for what could I do with these splendid diamonds in our simple bome?"

That word "our" would have made De Montrevel listen with pleasure to any proposition. Pressing his lips to the

hand he held, he said, "Well, what shall we do with the diamonds!"

"This ring I will keep, and you shall wear that pin in memory of their beloved donor; the rest Mr. Elford shall sell for us, and, if it can be done, purchase with the money they bring that beautiful cottage you have been wishing to rent."

And so it was done. A cottage, beautifully situated within a mile of Mr. Elford's villa, was purchased; and there De Montrevel and Louise spent the first weeks of their wedded life in a happiness which had but one alloy—the knowledge that it was soon to be interrupted.

There may be young minds among my readers which suppose that with their marriage cease their trials; but they had not been so taught in the school of life. They knew that, while life endured, there were duties to be performed which must often demand the sacrifice of their strongest desires, and they knew, too, that no condition could ensure them happiness if the demands of DUTY were disregarded. . When De Montrevel informed Louise, but a fortnight after their marriage, that the English army, in which he had entered as a volunteer, would embark for France in the ensuing month, though her cheek grew pale for a moment, and she drew closer to his side, she pressed back the tears that trembled in her eyes, and, as soon as she could com-mand her voice, spoke cheerfully of the arrangements for their correspondence; of the employment she would have during his absence in carrying out the designs he had sketched for the improvement of their place; of everything except their parting, for of that she would not trust herself to speak—she would not add to his struggles by her sorrow. That parting we will not attempt to describe. Let those who have loved and parted-and who has not !- imagine it,

De Montrevel remained abroad for more than a year, till after the death of the unfortunate son of Louis XVI, in May, 1795. With the fall of Robespierre, almost a year before that event, had ceased the reign of the Furies in France, and De Montrevel had from that time acknowledged to Louise that his interest in that halpless boy, his desire to secure for him safety and freedom, alone bound him to a contest, in which he found himself ranged with foreigners in overthrowing the government chosen by his countrymen. The death of that unfortunate prince, therefore, was the signal for his return to happiness and home.

Ho was expected, and, as he sprang from the carriage, Louise was beside him—more beautiful, more dear than ever. Her infant son, bright, beaming, joyous as heresift, was in her arms. As De Montrevel folded them to his bosom, and looked around on his cottage home, its grounds now bright with the beauties of spring, his heart arose in thanksgiving to Him, who had made sharp trials his measurement of love, to awaken the pure affections and right principles, lulled to sleep amid the corrupting and enfeebling influences of selfish luxury, and who, when these trials had done their appointed work, had prepared for him, even in this world, so rich a reward.

De Montrevel and Louise never returned to France; for when the tolerant policy of Bonaparte would have permitted them to do so, their English associations had become too dear to be willingly relinquished, and no duty counselled their return, as De Montrevel could neither have engaged in public life under the existing government, nor brought back his scattered peasantry to their old homes. Jacques Brissot, who had weathered all the storms of the Revolution, now became the purchaser of the estate he had so long nominally held, and, in that era of new men, prospered as his honesty deserved. Madame de la Valliere returned to France when it became practicable, but only for a few weeks. She came back to her children, declaring that Paris was no

We leave De Montrevel and his Louise to a life of peace, but not of inaction. Earnestly did they engage in useful and benevolent efforts to advance the intelligence and increase the happiness of their race. In their own neighbourhood, the poor blessed them, and the sick and sorrowing welcomed their soothing accents.

Reader, thou too art in Life! With hushed, earnest spirit attend to its revealings, and thou will learn that "here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal; work it out therefrom, and working—believe—live—be free."

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