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THE  
BALANCE OF BEAUTY;

OR,

THE LOST IMAGE RESTORED.

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# THE BALANCE OF BEAUTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

“Perchance she died in age, surviving all  
Charms, kindred, children—with the silver grey  
Of her long tresses, which might yet recall,  
It may be, still a something of the day  
When they were braided—and her proud array  
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed.”

CHILDE HAROLD.

NEVER was there a more charming old lady than Mrs. Stuart. Would that I had the gift of pathetic eloquence, that I could write with the pen of the prophets of old ! How attractive and thrilling would be the memoir of this aged saint. For saint she was, though her whole life was tinged with the winning weaknesses of woman. She was sweet tempered to a degree that left little scope for stern justice ; and though so humble that she never could forgive even a momentary deviation from the path of daily duty in herself, yet it was always with the utmost difficulty her eyes could be opened to the faults of others.

In her enthusiasm, if she loved, it was so tenaciously, she could not believe that the person whom she looked on with affection, could be capable of error; and when their judgments were not in unison, she invariably said, "I suppose it is because I am an old woman that I cannot view objects in the same light."

We are taught in Scripture, that the saints of old were not perfect; and their manifold transgressions are pointed out to us, that we may look up to our Saviour only as the model for our imitation. It was thus with Mrs. Stuart. She knew that fallen man could not but err; that nothing we can say or do is faultless in the eye of Him in whose presence we ever are; and this made her so humble, and yet so lenient. "God is the judge," she would reply: "to his own master let every one stand or fall."

This dear old lady was, at the time I became acquainted with her, upwards of seventy years of age, but the most lovely picture imaginable of an aged woman. I always felt inclined to sit opposite to her, that I might contemplate her. Her dress was exceedingly becoming,—of a rich black silk material, with a book-muslin kerchief folded underneath the open bodice, so as to give an exquisite air of neatness and freshness. Her grey hair was combed smoothly across her forehead; and she wore a cap that suited her matronly face so exactly, that no one could, for one moment, dwell upon the thought, if it were *fashionable*, or not.

There was an appropriateness in her whole appearance that at once excited in the beholders the idea, that the inner and outward woman composed "one harmonious whole." To see her, certainly was to love her; and one could not but feel an anxious desire to be loved by her in return. At the door, when ushered into the room where she was, already was one met with the pleasing aspect of welcome; and when she held out her pretty, lady-like hand, the gesture was so indicative of kindness, and the wish to oblige, that the visitor grasped it with reverential gladness. Her health was good; and although her life had been so chequered with deep sorrows,—misfortunes coming like lightning over her, and petty vexations, that are to the heart like the continual dropping of water on a stone,—in her smile, and in her bright, intelligent countenance, there was a softness that reminded one of the setting sun in a northern climate; glorious and glowing, yet casting a subdued light over the surrounding clouds, tinged with the silver grey of approaching night.

Mrs. Stuart was the personification of cheerfulness. She was so convinced that the Lord of all can do only what is right, and that all His decrees, even in the minutest detail, are the emanations of boundless wisdom, and of a compassion and love that never fail, even towards the grossest sinners,—for, had not Christ died for each individual of the human race?—that she considered it a duty to Him to show forth at all times a

grateful spirit. She used to be particularly thankful that, in the hour of calamity, whether of prolonged and unceasing anxiety, or of any heart-breaking event, she might say, with the apostle Paul, "Now, no chastening for the *present* seemeth to be *joyous*, but *grievous*;" and thus, since she could not but weep, she was comforted that there was no sin in pouring out the afflictions of her soul; and that she might rest all her burden upon the Lord; for that He cared for her; and even His great care was shown in afflicting as much as in blessing.

The principal beauty of her mind and manners consisted in her thorough unselfishness. Her conversation never had reference to herself; one might almost have fancied that she forgot there was such a being in the world. She sought not the praise of men and women, feeling intuitively that their opinion altered not the reality, the intrinsic value of what she said or did; praise made her not better, nor blame worse; and she was so full of kindness, that she had not a vacant space in her spirit which could admit conceit, or pride, or vanity, which are differing degrees of selfishness. What she had been in her youth, whether what is termed a beauty, or not, I never knew.

On the subject of beauty, she had a theory of her own. She averred that no one need necessarily be ugly; that man was made in the image of God, and that, though so many generations of sinful creatures have marred that image till it is no longer resplendent with the beauty of holiness, yet that the more the mind

and heart are cultivated, the more perfect the simple piety—that love to God and man on which hang all the law and the prophets, with the intelligence useful in this work-a-day world—the more beautiful would be the face. Feature and complexion have very much less to do with real beauty than is commonly imagined. A man resolved to do right, living by prayer in communion with his Maker, striving to improve the talent intrusted to him, and fearlessly “going about doing good” to every one who crosses his path, whether friend, relative, or stranger—the man who thinks humbly of himself, and is upright and virtuous in all his transactions—will ever be a handsome man, whatever the moulding of the earthly casing. But there must be harmony,—a false balance,—too little of that most uncommon thing, common sense, or too much fanaticism on one subject, will destroy the equilibrium which constitutes the perfection of beauty.

Mrs. Stuart’s own beauty wanted that entire equilibrium which she described as indispensable, for she had not sufficient firmness. Gentleness preponderated. She was only a charming, amiable, pious, old lady, when I saw so much of her. She is now an angel, though, doubtless, it will not be till our Lord come again, that we shall be restored to His image; “for when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.”

When I was first introduced to Mrs. Stuart’s notice, which occurrence (the source of so much happiness to me) took place at a railway-station, I was won by that

courteous dignity which accompanied all her gestures, and by the intonations of her voice.

It so happened that we were going north, to a pretty place in Yorkshire. Bound for the same destination, we entered into conversation, and, observing that I was wearied, like a good Samaritan she offered me some wine, and, bidding her servant bring me some soda-water, her unobtrusive kindness left me to rest till our journeying recommenced. She had bespoken a carriage "through," and, when the bell rang, she approached me, and with her sweet, persuasive accents, begged me to take a seat with her and her party, as, then, I should not be fatigued by having to change carriages frequently on the way ; and, with the utmost consideration, mentioned to me that my servants would assuredly find room with hers.

From that moment we were firm friends. She ever felt towards me that gratifying sensation of having done a most opportune act of good nature ; for, it is most certain, that the individual who feels the greatest pleasure in matters of courtesy is the obliger, and not the obliged. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Surly human nature, more especially the nature of the English, is to be disquieted, rather than pleased, by an obligation. I cannot say, however, that I felt Mrs. Stuart's timely kindness as an obligation. It seemed to me more like a permission to love her—

an excuse, to my reserved disposition, for accepting all her other charities and courtesies.

The group in the railway-carriage, as I first saw it, I shall never forget. Besides this remarkable lady, there were three young girls; they did not call her mother, nor grandmother; they had a pet-name for her, which at first I did not catch, but which later I discovered to be Cara. From some association of ideas with her youthful days, she took pleasure in this cognomen, and sweetly did it sound from the pretty lips of these dear girls. I often think, now that the group is so dispersed, how it was I loved them all with such sincerity, such cordiality. I believe the great bond of union was, the unaffectedness of the whole party; for I had much reason, afterwards, for disapproving of very much that was said and done. At the time, I felt pity for those from whom I differed, but a pity so strangely akin to love, that, like Mrs. Stuart, I could not, did not blame. Yet is my disposition totally unlike hers. The equilibrium is even less correct in me than in her; for while she was gentle to a fault, I have ever been just to the exclusion of a due share of forbearance. Perhaps, these varied traits of character bound us to each other more closely than would have been the case, had we had more affinity.

We made out our journey very pleasantly, and arrived in good time at the quaint old town of Whitby. Here we passed the summer, although not under the



same roof. It is better, unless the ties are indissoluble, either naturally, or through circumstances that have arisen, to be perfectly independent. When once a member of the family has chosen another set of relations and friends; when once marriage has thrown a different view of life over every-day details; when once we have accustomed ourselves to look out of the painted window of existence, through a differently-coloured pane, from that moment, if we would not gradually learn to dislike each other, we should live apart; and this, in order to make frequent meetings and family gatherings an ever-renewed source of pleasure.

This is a digression; for I was in no wise connected with Mrs. Stuart; but she and I could not have met so gladly, had we not been often separated. She felt when she wished for my company she could send me an invitation; and that when she could dispense with it, or do better without me, I had no cause for being *huffy* and vexed, if she did not invite me.

It was in this way I enjoyed the happiness of her friendship during many years. We were often in the same place during the summer, and often she invited me to her country-seat in Kent. She invited me much oftener than I accepted; for I have always been fond of solitude; and have frequently preferred a correspondence with her, and her young friends, to the trouble of joining them at Somerhurst.

This first summer was very pleasant. The air was cool, the sea-breezes delightful, and our country drives and walks most exhilarating.

We passed a great part of our day, when within doors, gazing out on the ocean. The numbers of vessels passing to the north and the south were beyond computation ; and we soon learned to distinguish the different sorts of craft, and praised or criticised with a sailor's discrimination. Our fears were possibly rather too womanish ; but then we did not profess to be gallant tars, only to laud those that were.

One day, soon after our arrival, as Mrs. Stuart was not quite well, and the young ladies did not like to leave her alone while they went to sketch, they begged me to take my work, and sit with their "Cara" during their absence.

They were merry-hearted, amiable girls ; and somehow had made themselves so at home with me, that they always called me Sprite, and, at last, except when they directed a letter to me, my name was never used by them.

Mrs. Stuart was rather of the old school in her manner,—a little precise ; and she could not have been induced to address any one otherwise than with the full title ; so, to the end of her days, she remained unchanged ; and, in joy or in sorrow, with tears or smiles, she ever pronounced my name in the same soft way, and addressed me invariably as Lady Ingoldspier.

I shall not, however, use it myself as often as she did: it is too long, and to me is connected with so many painful reminiscences—for I am left alone, the last of a numerous family—that the sound often jars on my nervous system. Besides, these are to be the memoirs of Mrs. Stuart, and of her young friends. The reader cares not for what concerns my insignificant wayward self.

I found Mrs. Stuart absorbed in the contemplation of a magnificent ship, of a size most unusual in those waters: it looked indeed a “thing of life,” with all its sails set, and scudding before the light side-wind, which scarcely sufficiently filled them. It was indeed a splendid sight.

Mrs. Stuart was pale and grave, as I had never seen her. She did not notice my presence at first; but when a slight noise that I unwittingly made in placing the chair opposite her at the little work table, had roused her attention, her brilliant smile, and her pretty white hand extended towards me, gave me the usual welcome.

“Lady Ingoldspier, I am very glad to see you; we shall have a nice, cozy morning: those giddy girls are out on a sketching, and I fear, in some degree, an exploring expedition. They would not take a guide, though they mean to spend most of their time on the Scar. However, I am not uneasy about them. Mary Douglas, although the youngest, has contrived to obtain

such influence over them by her quiet common sense, that Antonia St. Maur and Matilda Leslie obey her implicitly, without themselves being aware that they do so."

Mrs. Stuart never looked forward to ulterior consequences; and happy in the conviction that they were essentially good girls, she did not fear that Antonia and Matilda might be as easily led to evil, as they were then by Mary Douglas led to be discreet and wise.

We were alone, Mrs. Stuart and I, and she did not fail to experience in herself that power, innate in me, and which I needed not to use intentionally, of eliciting another person's sentiments. I wonder if many Roman Catholic priests have received such numerous, genuine, open-hearted, full, and unasked-for confessions as I have. I have never been able to account for it, but I suppose my countenance is indicative of sympathy, and where there is a good listener voluble talkers are seldom wanting. It was, however, the only time I ever heard Mrs. Stuart speak of herself. Events crowded on our little circle, soon after this, ever to be remembered, and to me most interesting conversation. Mrs. Stuart turned away from me, to gaze again upon that splendid ship. The sun was shining on her, so that she looked like a superstructure of carved ivory on an ebony stand. She glided slowly by; and as she passed, though far from us, before the

window where we were seated, Mrs. Stuart seemed for a moment quite overcome, and bowed her head, covering her face with her hands, and the tears trickled down between and over her taper fingers. She looked again: the vessel had disappeared, the cliff hiding her from our sight. Mrs. Stuart breathed more freely, wiped the pearly drops away, and with her most winning, beaming smile, she said, "Lady Ingoldspier, shall I tell you the history of my life?" No miser could have felt more joy on opening the trunks which contained his countless treasures than I did. I almost jumped with delight. "Dear Lady Ingoldspier, how pleased you seem. I fear you will be greatly disappointed, when you have heard the every-day tale.

"It seems as if it scarcely needed the wisdom of Solomon to tell us there is 'no new thing under the sun.' 'The thing that hath been, is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done.' And yet, how good is our heavenly Father to permit that each time the thing is done, the sense of enjoyment should be as keen to the individual to whom it occurs, by whom it is done, as if it were the first time since the creation it had taken place. To know a matter in and for ourselves, is as sweet to each one of us, as if the many thousands who are around us—the millions that inhabit the earth—were not as cognisant of the especial sensation. Take, for instance, the love that is so strong, that it will induce us to go

cheerfully through fire and water,—will enable us to bear any persecution, or opposition,—will give us patience to wait for any length of time, courage to bid adieu cheerfully to father, and mother, and all we have held dear till now, provided we, at length, may go away with the one dearer than life. Since Eve was given to Adam, and sweet companionship thus began, *that* love is as fresh as it was then. In the Indian wigwam, the Swiss cottage, the Irish cabin, the peasant's hut in northern climes, or the tent of the Arab tribes,—anywhere, everywhere,—in the palace, in the merchant's comfortable home, in the tiny parsonage, this love is as sweet as it was then. Or, maternal love—can anything be compared to that? Is it not with each mother, amongst the myriads that have lived, that do live, will live in generations yet to come, is it not with each, in the burning climes of the south—in the icy regions of Greenland, whether the children be white or black, small or robust, dull or sprightly—is it not with each individual mother, as if no child had yet been born that could be compared to hers? I have known mothers hug their idiot son, or imprint a kiss on features that seemed all but shapeless, yet with such a wealth of love as if that poor child were dearer than all the world—more lovely, more lovable.

“Time would, indeed, fail me to show forth our Creator's praise in the truth, that, though there is

actually nothing new under the sun, yet the priceless boon of love and friendship is still as much in its pristine beauty and sweetness, as when it was formed in the heart of the first man and woman. Faith and hope will cease with fruition, but love never faileth; throughout eternity love will be all pervading, for 'God is love.' I was brought up entirely in London, amongst Indian folk. I knew nothing of England; all our conversation was of what was passing in India; all that related to Indian affairs delighted or depressed us, according to circumstances. What was taking place in France, or even in Ireland, affected us not in the least. My parents never read any but Indian local newspapers; and, though it was before the days of steam, I had learnt to consider India as near as I now do York. When I was about nineteen years of age, the son of a friend of my father's, Mr. Lionel Stuart, was appointed to a high post in the civil service, at Madras; and, one day, it struck him he could not go out without a wife. He asked my father if he might be allowed to propose marriage to me. He said, he must be married immediately, and, in all the circle of his acquaintance, I was the only young woman whose mind and manners were sufficiently well known to him, to induce him to believe that he should not find his wife a very different person from the woman he had wooed and won. Mr. Stuart was twice my age—very handsome, very agreeable, wonderfully

clever, and well informed. I had always, from my childhood, heard him talked of with esteem and respect; and though possibly, a year later, when once launched into the world, I should have preferred a younger man; at that time, I felt too proud, and too honoured, by being the chosen partner of Mr. Lionel Stuart, to hesitate; so that when my father asked me, if I should like to marry him directly, and go off with him to India, I surprised him very much by saying, —‘ Oh, of all things, papa, I am longing to go to India, and Mr. Stuart will take such care of me.’ The preparations were made without loss of time, and, so speedily, that, when my mother came to say the days for the wedding and for my departure were fixed, I, for the first time, seemed to believe in the coming events. The suddenness of the news so overcame me, that I burst into tears, for, then only, did I realise the sad truth that I was leaving my loved home for ever. I threw myself into my mother’s arms, and wept till I was quite exhausted. There was, however, in fact, no time for weeping. I was married, and, in less than three weeks from the hour my mother announced that all was finally arranged, I was sailing away with Mr. Lionel Stuart, as his bride, in a ship exactly like that which we have just seen. Several newly-married couples were on board, and, although they seemed to wish us to believe they were deeply in love, their manners towards each other were so



peculiarly distasteful to me, that I always fancied they were only shamming ; such exaggerated expressions of passionate attachment, such enthusiastic encomiums upon each other's personal appearance, such a constant exchange of loving glances on the deck, and in the cabin, at meals, made me quite uncomfortable ;— everything seemed so hollow, so unreal. Lionel and I sat far away from the rest of the passengers usually, and, I often thought, I could as easily have climbed the mast, as have told him that I admired his hair, which was really beautiful, or his eyes, which were the most brilliant I had ever seen. He talked to me in the most affectionate way ; there was a manliness and a softness in his tone, and looks that seemed to draw my heart out of its very depths ; and I listened to every word, as if an angel from heaven were instructing me. Ah ! I thank God, that I have known such love as he felt for me, and I for him. It is the one earthly prize I have valued above all others. It never altered, it never swerved ; all our sorrows his fond sympathy enabled me to bear ; nothing was a pleasure to me, unless I could share it with him. He had many trials, for his employment was one which made him many enemies, when he endeavoured to do his duty. To convince those under him that he watched and saw all their crooked ways, and would not tolerate them, was a daily, and a very hard, task. They who acted according to his notions of uprightness

—and his notions were, I confess, rather rigid—all but adored him. I was a little queen—everybody tried to please and amuse me; things of which I had heard during all the days of my childhood, I now saw with my own eyes; and, verily, oriental fashions surpassed in grandeur, state, and magnificence, all of which I had dreamed or read.

“The warm climate made me very inert, and I soon learned to be waited on, until I seemed to have lost all power or wish to act for myself. If I dropped my<sup>7</sup> handkerchief I clapped my hands till a servant came and picked it up for me. If I felt overcome with heat, I tingled a little bell, and, in an instant, the slaves of my will and of my caprices glided in to fan me. I would not chase a fly from my brow for myself. I was carried about in a palanquin, and became as listless as if I had been Cleopatra herself. I was rowed about in barges elaborately decorated, and lay, full length, on cushions of the softest kind. Every look was watched, to enable those about me to fulfil my wishes, even before they were expressed. I confess, I only acted thus when I was very young, and then only while Lionel was occupied with lengthy and harassing duties. When he came home, I was as active to please him, and bestirred myself for his sake, as my people had done for me during his absence. Many a time has he smiled, and declared my care of him so revived him, that he forgot, when with me, all the toil and vexation of the day. My

husband allowed me to lead this idle life for a year or two, and then began to educate me. I had learned the usual routine of studies with a governess and masters; but Mr. Stuart declared I was a mere child still. I had shaken off the labour and practice of what I had acquired, and it was with some trouble, and to please him, I returned to all my old occupations. ‘Of what use is it,’ he said, ‘for parents to spend so much money in the instruction of their children, depriving themselves of their society, by allowing them to be away all day from them, if, as soon as they are fitted by age for the world, they are launched into it, to think only of frivolous amusements—to be out the greater part of the night in hot rooms—to rise long after the sun, thus losing all the invigorating morning air—to forget, as soon as possible, all they have learned with so much reluctance? My little wife has been a child and a school-girl long enough; she must now learn to be a woman.’ I was really glad of all this: for I was quite tired of doing nothing. The only duties I had yet performed were those of receiving my husband’s friends, and of giving evening parties. I had not even taken the trouble of making out the lists of guests, nor of issuing the invitations, nor of giving the orders for the necessary preparations for their entertainment. Mr. Stuart had wished me, first, to be inured to the climate.”

Mrs. Stuart seemed quite to live this life over again

while relating this history of her youthful married days. She ever pronounced her husband's name with an intonation of most fervent regard. I remarked to her, that it was not given to many women to meet with a companion like hers. "No," she said, "I think Providence had fitted me peculiarly for wedded love; I feel sure that we are all made for the certain calling in which He intends our path to be; and, that those who are not happy in the position in which they are placed by Him, would not be more so in any sphere of their own choice. How appropriate is that prayer, to the contented spirit—'Give us this day our daily bread!' Whatever God portions out for the day, is the only good way in which things can occur. It is the not saying with all our hearts, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' which causes the most of our crosses; for, did we obey God with the alacrity, the love, with which the angels serve Him, we should be always pleased,—we should be able to say with St. Paul—'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.' " "It is easy," I replied, "to be content when all our wishes are conjectured and fulfilled, as yours were, dear Mrs. Stuart." "There is a time," she answered, "in everybody's life, when all things seem to go smoothly; when, like a child's tears, our own are of such short duration, and leave so slight an impression, that a few hours, often a few moments, suffice to make us quite forget their cause. It is the

spring time of our mortal existence. None pass through the world without experiencing this, sooner or later ; but, we are heedless beings ; instead of enjoying our present happiness, we are ever looking ahead for breakers. We do not allow the evils of each day to be sufficient, but carp upon possible contingencies, which often never take place at all. I do not suppose it ever happened to any persons to meet with the precise trials and vexations, which, in their imagination, they had looked upon as unavoidable."

"Did you ever see any of those couples again, with whom you made the voyage ?" I asked.

"Yes, they came to Madras, likewise."

"And how did their married life turn out ?"

"Just as might have been expected. Their love, which was so extravagantly expressed, was like the fire of stubble—it soon dried out ; the giddiness of the wives, and the sorely-tried tempers of the husbands soon made sad work ; and bound together for life, they never ceased bitterly to repent the day that joined them. One of them, Mrs. Joyce, however, after many a hard struggle, at last pursued the only method likely to be productive of happiness. She determined to do all in the spirit of true piety, and, though for many years her husband was most tyrannical and unfaithful, he likewise became subdued—won, as St. Peter says, by the conversation of his wife, to obey the word."

Mrs. Stuart observed that I frequently listened and turned to the door.

“Do not fear interruption from our young friends ; they have taken a basket full of provisions, and will be absent the greatest part of the day ; and, as yet, we have made no acquaintance at Whitby.”

From that moment I gave myself up to the fascination of my dear Mrs. Stuart’s story. She resumed it. The interest was occasioned, I think, more by her manner of relating her history, than by anything she imparted.

“Mr. Stuart induced me to recommence all the accomplishments of which, as yet, I had only an unmeaning smattering. I had lessons in music and drawing. We found the widow of an old friend in destitute circumstances, who, tried both in adversity and prosperity, had come unscathed out of the fire, and was a most suitable companion for me. Her polar star was the Bible, and, certainly, she was a living exemplification of obedience to its precepts. I owe much of the stability of my character to her guidance. She held a sway over me as strong as that of my husband’s, and as she and he had the same book for their rule, they never contradicted each other in their instructions to me. Mrs. Gardiner supplied my mother’s place. All this time I kept up an active correspondence with my parents—as active as it could be in those days : for it was long before the so-called overland-journey to India was made.

“When my two elder children were born, and had attained the ages of three and four years, I yearned so to show them to my father and mother, that they actually consented to pay me a visit. How happy Lionel and I were to have them! Fully did I enjoy that year of my life. It flew too quickly by. When my parents returned to Europe, they took my little darlings with them. It was, and still is, the fashion to send children away from India, away from their parents, away from all the habits and customs which they have to learn, and to which they have to conform on their return to that country, when they have imbibed quite different tastes. It does not seem to me a wise plan; but I submit to the wisdom and experience of others, now, as I did then. What a day that was to me, when I parted from my parents again, and from my little ones for the first time! I thought my heart would break. I little knew, then, how much it takes to break a young heart, and how much I could endure, and still live on.”

Here, Mrs. Stuart paused. I began to feel myself very selfish in causing her to live over such painful hours; for the remembrance of them was evidently not a whit less sorrowful than the reality; but it was to be the first and the last time in which Mrs. Stuart spoke of herself; and my peculiar, mesmeric power of opening the sluices of the heart was in full force that day.

“Another little girl soon was born, which in some

measure beguiled away my depression of spirits—a dejection which, perhaps, lasted longer than it otherwise would have done, had I not always entirely suppressed it before Mr. Stuart. It is peculiar to some people to smile and speak on different subjects with a cheerful voice, whilst they are longing to retire to their own room to weep and pray. I was always able to command my tone and manner, when with my husband. How glad I now am that I did so! I can look back on those times with great peace, when I reflect that never once did I shorten his enjoyment of my society by one sigh. Time wore on. I had another set of little ones old enough for their English education, but I could not tax my dear parents with the trouble and expense of fetching them. I was therefore obliged to make them over to a kind invalid friend, who was going to England for change of air. Oh! the weary months that elapsed before I could hear of their safe arrival!—And, when any letter came, I could not refrain, even with my cheerful and sanguine disposition, thinking my darlings were well when this letter was written; are they so still, when I am reading it for the first time? I say advisedly for the first time; for I read, and re-read them, until they were almost worn out by the folding and unfolding, and refolding of them. Mr. Stuart was now at the height of his ambition, all under him and his guidance was in perfect order. He had made me a useful helpmate,



and my household, and accounts, and dinners, and evening parties were quite renowned; and I was held up as a pattern by all husbands to their wives, who, no doubt, bore me many a grudge for the remonstrances I thus caused them.

“ We went on very smoothly for some years. I fear my husband was my idol, and I thought more of him, and of his comfort, than of the Giver of all the blessings bestowed on me. The hour was not far away when all was to be reclaimed. My elder children returned to me, after an absence of thirteen years. Flora was very pretty, very graceful, and inherited her father’s sweet disposition. Donald was a fine, impetuous lad; and he soon obtained a commission in the native Light Infantry. My daughter married early; alas! cholera tore her from her adoring husband, and from the parents who had only just learned to know and love her, when she was taken from them. I need not dwell on that. Who does not know the bitterness of the first bereavement? My son distinguished himself greatly, and was reaping honours worthy of the son of his father, when he was mortally wounded in a fiercely-contested battle; and was brought home to linger in agony, and to die, at the expiration of a month. It was then I first began to turn in earnestness to my Heavenly Father. It was then I first began to see that what I had hitherto called religious duties were, in truth, *sacred privileges*.

I threw off the chains of habit and routine, and became the humble, docile child, full of love and heart-worship. I had, till then, read my Bible, and repeated my prayers; I had attended church, and had had family-prayers very regularly. To man's eye I was all that a devout woman should be. I learned henceforward to seek for the praise of God only—for His love, His rich consolations; and to 'cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.' I did not omit any of my religious exercises, as hitherto performed, but I drew nearer and nearer to God, and He drew nearer and nearer to me. Oh! how blessed, that this change took place before my greater trials. I rested in the 'everlasting arms,' and there I found support, comfort, nay, even hope. I did not love my husband less, but my God more. One day, I heard a great noise in the street under my window. It was not my custom to rise on such occasions, for I have never been troubled by curiosity, nor by a petty desire for the news of the day; probably, because I always heard, every evening, from Mr. Stuart, all that had occurred of any interest to him or me; but something indefinite—a feeling for which I could not account—made me throw on the floor the book which I had been reading with intense interest, and rush to the window. Shall I, can I ever forget that moment! It turned my hair quite grey! There was my beloved husband, lying lifeless on a stretcher! The men who were bearing him, were

weeping in the most uncontrolled, passionate manner, and exclaiming, in loud tones, and with great swaying of their bodies, that their only friend, their father, their guardian, their protector, was dead. Who would, now, ever care for them? Who would, now, ever see justice done them? Who would employ them? Who would visit them when sick? Who would feed their wives and little ones? The crowd gathered denser and denser, and as each person approached the bier, the sobs and ejaculations of woe, the weeping and wailing, were augmented. I saw all this as if in a dream. I seemed to have lost consciousness—to be turned to stone. The minister of the church which I attended, opened the door of the room where I was, and, coming softly up to me, took both my hands in his, and pressed them gently, while the scalding tears, which ran down his cheeks, fell on my hands in a shower. ‘“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!” Turn, dear Mrs. Stuart, to the Man of sorrows, who bore our griefs on the cross; He sympathises with you; and will send the Comforter to you, if you ask Him.’ I remember all the words of that man of God, as if I had only heard them an hour ago. Truly, he was apostolic in all he said and did; a remarkably sunny-minded, dear old man. His heart was so brimful of love, he had won the cognomen of St. John. He repeated, falteringly,—‘If you ask Him— Come with

me, and see the form of him who was, one short quarter-of-an-hour ago, so full of earthly life ; his spirit is now free from the trammels of that form of clay.' He led me to the bed on which my idolised husband had been placed. 'He is happy, oh ! so happy ; his task here below was done ; his appointed hour had arrived ; and, without one moment of suffering, he has passed away.' Mr. Archer then knelt down, and I mechanically knelt by him. He prayed beautifully, simply, fervently, scripturally—not for Lionel ; he was past praying for ; but, for me. We rose. 'When you can listen to me, my dear mourner,' he said, 'I will tell you how he died.' Even Mr. Archer could not pronounce the name.

"I sat in a chair, and laid my hand on Lionel's heart : it was still, but there I kept my hand while Mr. Archer spoke ; for I had turned towards him with that anxious, inquiring look of anguish, that such only as had lost what I had lost could express.

"'Most providentially, I had some business,' he began, 'with Mr. Stuart, this afternoon. I knew I should find him at his office ; so I went there, and explained my errand. He answered, "Quite right, sir ; I have given the necessary orders, already, this morning."' He paused, drew a long breath, smiled, and, in a clear whisper that sounded like the silver tone of a bell slightly touched, he said, "Bless my darling wife, my gracious God ! comfort her, and

let her feel how blessed are those who die in the Lord from henceforth." He seated himself without any apparent effort, smiled again most sweetly, looked up, and, in another instant, was in heaven !'

"Mr. Archer then led me to my own bed-room door, called my maidens, and slipped away, to send the doctor to me.

"I was long ill, in bed ; and, when I was able to leave my room, I received such kindness, such attentions, that I gloried in the idea how much my husband had been, and was still, beloved."

Mrs. Stuart never imagined she could herself be the object of affection to any out of her family circle. She liked to attribute every act, word of love, and of kindness, as homage to her husband's many virtues. " 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' How often," the dear old lady resumed, "have I repeated those precious words to myself. I knew so well what Lionel meant by living and dying in the Lord. To be of one mind with the Lord Jesus,—to place sole reliance on the full efficacy of the atonement once made,—to know that he could be saved only by the merits of his Saviour ; had been the pure, bright faith which had guided and guarded him through life, and which had comforted him and made him supremely happy in the moment of death. This reflection was, indeed, a balm to my broken heart. It tamed the wildness of my still girlish spirit, and made a Christian

woman of me. To look, as he did, to our Lord only, has since been the happiness which has so replaced my husband's love and companionship to me; that while the hour of death is not dreaded by me, and will even be welcome, I am resigned to live as long as God wills I should. I was so long ill and unable to make any arrangements for my future existence, that I thought it better to wait till my parents should decide for me what I had best do. I solaced myself much in the society of dear Mrs. Gardiner, and her engaging little grandchild, Mary Douglas. I tried to keep up all charities my husband had instituted and fostered; and, save in the matter of receiving or going into society, I endeavoured to do all I used to do with him. I was like a bird without its mate, still he had always taught me to do the duty of the moment, whatever it might be; and that duty was so clear to me, as I am persuaded our duties ever are, and if we strive earnestly to walk in the path set before us, that I had no hesitation. I was neither halt nor maimed, but went on my way, if not rejoicing, at least with patience and serenity of spirit. In due time a letter came from my beloved mother, to which my dear kind father had added a precious postscript. What a treasure that double letter is to me! I never part from it, but always carry it about me. This letter told me that, in a few months, they would sail from England, and bring their young charges with them; that they

deemed it better both for my children and myself that I should finish their education, and, aware how much Lionel had done to perfect mine, they felt I was fully capable of the pleasing task. They added that, though a mother, I had never had the enjoyment of maternal love, and maternal care and forethought, and they looked forward to seeing me once more as happy as I ever had been, even in Lionel's lifetime. The mutual affection between my parents, my children, and myself, was so pure and legitimate a source of happiness, that I could not but echo this sentiment, and my heart was full of placid hope. Mary Douglas was the greater part of each day with me. Her grandmother was in a declining state of health, and preferred her absence, as, noiseless as the dear little creature was, she still was too young not to be somewhat of an annoyance to an invalid; and Mrs. Gardiner knew that she was already in the path of duty if her little ways and endearing prattle amused me. Two years passed in this manner; at the expiration of that time I began to look for the ship that was freighted with so many of my earthly possessions. At first, I felt no alarm; but gradually, I began to feel more and more that the vessel was a sad long time on her way. Month after month passed, and no appearance, no tidings of her. They only who have their dear ones in the hapless Arctic expedition, or in the trenches in the time of war, —they only, who have waited with agony till the lists

of the killed and wounded have come in, after a fearful battle, can feel for me. Oh! the agonising suspense! When I laid my head on my pillow I seemed to hear shrieks of dire suffering; if I slept, I woke up after awful dreams of ships on fire, or of the shipwrecked being killed by savage natives; every imaginable horror presented itself to my imagination, and, when the day dawned, after a restless night, I arose and went about as if some heavy chain weighed down my spirits and my energies. I passed the day in inquiring of every one likely to give me news—if there were yet any of the ‘Bengal.’ None, none, was the answer I received, in tones of deep feeling, or manly sympathy, or of rough kindness. Of course many, many hearts were aching as mine was; many mothers were expecting the return of their children, many husbands looking for their wives, many young men for their betrothed—all looked, all expected in vain. At last came the intelligence that the Bengal had foundered in a gale of wind off the Cape! What a horrible day that was in Madras! How vividly the sounds of woe of that time recur to my heart’s memory! No one, however, had lost as much as I had—father, mother, children, all at the bottom of the deep, deep sea, never to be seen or heard of more till the last trump awakens the myriads of the dead; until then the sea will hold its own.

“As soon as I was able to act, I determined to



settle my affairs, and leave India. I thought that a change so absolute would be good for me, and, as my kind friend Mrs. Gardiner died about that time, I adopted her little Mary. Dear child! she is as my own to me; indeed, I love her with more fervour than I ever loved my own; for they and I had never lived together to wind round each other's hearts as Mary and I have done."

Mrs. Stuart ceased. I felt as if I wished she could go on for days, for weeks, so absorbed was I in the soul-penetrating narrative. I cunningly bethought me of a little prolongation, and asked how the other two girls were so fortunate as likewise to be taken to her care.

"It was several years after, that I returned to England. They became orphans, and as I had known their relatives intimately in India, my heart yearned towards the forlorn little beings, and I thought, besides, it would be good for Mary to have young companions about her, as the disparity of her age and mine was so great. However, though I am very fond both of Antonia St. Maur and of Matilda Leslie, yet they are not so dear to me as Mary Douglas, for they came to me from such different schooling, and their minds are so differently trained from Mary's, that I cannot be one with them as I am with her."

The conversation was concluded. Mrs. Stuart was not, as will be readily supposed, the better for it, and she retired to her room for the rest of the day, or,

rather, for the evening, for we had actually heard the clock strike six ; and I felt so deserving of a rebuff for my want of prudence, in allowing Mrs. Stuart to talk so much upon such sad and deeply-touching reminiscences, that I glided away like a culprit to my own lodgings.

## CHAPTER II.

Puisque Lord Anglesey mourut sans remords,  
J'avoue que mon deuil n'est qu'en dehors.

*On a picture in Mulgrave Castle.*

SOME description must be given of my young friends, in order that the reader may be as well acquainted with them as I am,—as I was, I should say.

Antonia St. Maur was the eldest. I believe I should not portray them all as lovely girls; and, yet, what can I do? The truth must be spoken, and very pretty the three were.

Antonia was tall, with a brilliant complexion, black glossy hair, and a quiet, subdued manner; though she joined ever heartily in a laugh when any one gave cause for merriment by a witty joke. She had not been well brought up; there was an under current of self-will that made her carry out any project of her own with an obstinacy that was not pleasing. As she never argued, one had no means of convincing her that she was wrong. She had been left too much to her own devices during her girlhood. Living in the country, she rambled about all day as she liked, and her mother never questioned

her as to her occupations or companions. With maternal weakness she fondly imagined her child could not deceive her. This was, however, not very apparent in her countenance, and the equilibrium was supposed to be greater than it was. People, unaccustomed to reading minds, would have been contented to think hers was all that so young a girl's should be.

To me the most remarkable trait in the whole group was, the sweetness of tone and manner which every one had. I do not recollect ever to have heard them wrangle, or say a sharp word one to the other. There was not, perhaps, I may say certainly, not that strong tie of affection which binds mothers and sisters; but the courtesy of well-bred women supplied its place outwardly; and there was a total absence of that pettishness and jealousy, and "it's my sister, I need not treat her as if she were a stranger," which so often makes unpleasantness in the family circle.

I have heard only-sisters, in the midst of a number of brothers, say—they were not spoiled by their brothers, for it appeared as if brothers were born only to find fault with sisters. If children saw more deference exercised between their parents, it is probable the manners of the drawing-room would be carried to the nursery and the school-room. Example does, indeed, go before precept: one sees this every hour of one's life.

With truth, I may also say, there was a greater amount of good temper, rarer even than good sense, than I ever met with. Altogether, we were very happy, and were sincerely attached to each other.

Matilda Leslie was the most childish of the party,—a little plump, bright, young thing. There were no angles, no corners, either in her mind or her person ; she was to be compared rather to a sugar-plum than to anything else. One always felt ready to devour her. She was as artless as it was possible to be. In her open countenance one read every passing thought ; and when, afterwards, she was induced by those she deemed her superiors in judgment and wisdom, to work silently in matters of a serious kind, she became so wayward and unsettled, that she puzzled us extremely. We could not understand her, and began to fear she was going backward in the scale of intellect.

Mary Douglas is my model of perfection. In her the equilibrium is as complete as it ever has been since the days of Eve. I never saw her equal. Of a moderate height, she is formed faultlessly ; her hair is beautiful, such as one fancies angels' golden locks must be ; and her eyes are of the purest, softest, liquid brown. Her hands and feet, neither large nor small, seem to be of the exact size to suit the rest of her frame. Neither should I say her hands are very white ; they do not vie with ivory for hue, nor with

alabaster for transparency. Madame de Stael says, "*tout dépend de la circulation du sang*;" if so, Mary's must be just as it should be, for her complexion even shows good birth, good manners, and good principles, if any complexion ever did. Perfectly lady-like, she seems as if she were neither young, nor old, nor middle-aged; the harmony is so unparalleled in her, no one ever pauses to analyse her perfections,—we acknowledge them.

At Whitby we gave ourselves up to a do-nothing kind of life, which was delicious. We rode, or drove, or sailed, or fished, or sketched, or worked, or sauntered, or sat still listlessly, without any pre-formed plans. They inspired me with their Indian inertness. I almost learned that summer to speak in the same slow measured way peculiar to ladies who have lived long in India.

I, the Sprite, have been all my days like a *Flibberty-gibbet* in my speech and gestures. One of my friends has the same energetic spirit as myself. Her sister remarked, one day, when hearing us plan all kinds of works of the head and fingers, that, did we live together, the roof would be carried off the top of the house, it could not resist such energy.

This recurrence to my friend's observation makes me think this a fitting opportunity to mention Mary's love and aptitude for needlework. She calls it a blessed invention; and so it is. Look back to the

Old Testament, and there you will see it was inspired by God himself. Women learnt to spin in wisdom ; God put it into their hearts. Even the use of the various materials was inspired, and not a stitch, nor a ring, nor a bolt, nor a tissue, was put into the composition of the tabernacle, but we are expressly told the device was God's. Blessed invention, indeed ! How many poor have been clothed, how many weary hours have been beguiled, how many wrong thoughts have been driven away, by the mere exercise of woman's industry ? A man, when tortured by pain, has no such resource. Within doors he must bear it, and, alas ! his wife and all his family, generally, must bear it likewise, for seldom are men patient and submissive to the sufferings of the hour. If able to leave the house, they have a thousand diversions for the mind, but woman has none greater than that of needlework. Let not fancy work be despised, it is at least an agreeable pastime, and only wrong when it induces an expense beyond the means of the worker.

Mary is an adept in all kinds of plain and imaginative work. She even patronises bazaars, and says that she verily believes she owes much of the cheerfulness and steadiness of her disposition to the constant and quiet occupation they afford her.

All my young friends drew more or less cleverly. Antonia and Matilda were too easily swayed to excel in any particular branch of talent. The new comer,

or new acquaintance, called off their attention to a novel, and, therefore, in their estimation, more approved method, and the old one was no longer prized.

One morning when the letters were brought in, we were, as we were usually at the post-hour, assembled in the drawing-room, employed, as we often so laudably were—for I had come in to breakfast with them—gazing out of the window at the passing vessels. Mrs. Stuart opened her letters—they were, generally, of dry matter-of-fact business, and none thought of them with any eagerness. This morning, however, in her gentle, joking way, she said—“ Ah! young ladies, put on your best bibs and tuckers; we have one of the rougher sex coming amongst us, though he scarcely deserves to be so classed. He is sent to your tender mercies, for his mother tells me he is much out of health and spirits.”

I cannot say this piece of news was welcome. “ Cara!” they all exclaimed, “ what a bore! We shall not be half as happy as when we are perfectly independent of the genus *homo*. We must be polite, especially as he is not quite well, and consult his tastes and powers. Sometimes it will be hot, and he cannot walk; or there will be too much wind, and he dares not stir out. Dear! dear! why could he not go elsewhere? Do, Cara, write and tell him Whitby is just the place not to agree with him.” “ I cannot,” said Mrs. Stuart, “ for he will be here to-morrow.” “ And



who is he?" I asked, for I saw my young friends were too genuinely vexed to care whether he had a name or not. "Sir Alfred Velasquez. I knew his parents well, in India. Once upon a time they came to Madras from the Portuguese settlement of Goa, and his grandfather was made a baronet by George the Fourth. He had not done anything to deserve it, but in India folks are so far off it is difficult for the government at home to know who is really a person of merit."

The young ladies went about that day as if they were to lose everything the next. They could not enjoy themselves, from the excessive wish to do so. They felt that they must return immediately to the conventional existence which mixed society and a town life required. The day came, and the expected event took place. Sir Alfred had passed the night at York, and was therefore early with them. He called at the door, sent up his card, and was immediately admitted. I was not present at the introduction; but Mary told me afterwards that he made a most favourable impression. They saw in a glance that he was not conceited, and his every tone showed a wish to please, not from vanity but from real good nature. He started and turned pale, she added, when introduced to Antonia St. Maur.

He was certainly an agreeable, rather than a disagreeable, addition to our party. He had a rare

combination of French politeness and accomplishments; for he played on the piano and the guitar, and sang most melodiously; yet he had the manly bearing of a well-born and well-bred Englishman. He seemed to be a very hero of romance, with his curly black hair, dark complexion, and an eye that was only too soft; for it gave him, notwithstanding his oriental features, rather an effeminate expression.

We soon found he was of the romantic, mediæval school, very fond of bygone times, ecclesiastical buildings, painted windows, and the many things that now-a-days feed young people's minds, who are not over-strong in the intellectual faculties. He amused us, and as we had none of us ever thought of these things in our idle hours at Whitby, we liked to sit as near as safety allowed to the beautiful ruins of the old abbey, and listen to his conversation. Little did we dream, that while we thus avoided too great a proximity to the falling stones, he was in greater danger, drinking in superstitions from those muddy, mediæval streams, imbibing them as if they had been the pure waters of the soul.

I confess that he was attractive in these moods. His melodious voice harmonised beautifully with all which he either spoke or read to us; and the listlessness which had come over us in the unprecedented heat of the summer made all very delightful. Naturally he was full of St. Hilda's praises, and read her history

in Marmion to us beautifully ; and though he smiled when talking of her miraculous powers, he had repeated so often to himself that the Ammonites\* were, in truth, serpents petrified by her holy will, that he finished by believing it.

We did not discuss the matter. Controversy was not permitted by Mrs. Stuart. She had heard so much of jesuitical cunning, that she would not allow discussions on religious subjects, and never imagined, with her sweet, strong, pure faith, that tradition could for a moment supply a reader of the Bible with more relishable food than the narratives of the sacred writers. She was very eloquent when warmed by a conversation on sacred lore ; and often related that though there was no power in the printed letter to open the heart to belief ; yet, so poetical was the imagery of the prophets, so interesting the narrations, and so sublime and simple the style of the gospels, she had known a very clever woman say she preferred the perusal of it to any work of fiction, though it had been to her a sealed book the greater part of her life.

Mrs. Stuart never read it without a prayer for the thorough understanding of it, and an earnest supplication, that what was applicable to herself in the furtherance of her salvation, might be brought home to her own heart, and be made to shine forth in her practice.

\* A pebble found in the Scar.

Once we went up the river, the lovely Esk, as far as Ruswarp, in one of the Whitby Cobles (as certain made boats are there called), capital craft, so steady, and yet not difficult to row. Sir Alfred sang for us, and, as the weather was splendid, the air clear, and the passage of the coble up and down the stream perfectly noiseless, it added greatly to the charms of the day. The scenery is lovely; Sir Alfred seemed wrapt in admiration; and a sudden view of the Abbey made him burst forth in a hymn to the Virgin Mary, which so entranced us all, that the boatmen ceased to row; and we sat, as if to breathe would be to break the spell.

“Sir Alfred Velasquez,” said Mrs. Stuart, “I should much prefer songs of a less sublime melody just now; something more earthly. I delight in sacred music, but it must be, if sung with words, to the praise and glory of God.” He understood what she meant, and sang some pretty Spanish ballads, descriptive of life on the waters.

He had a habit of always dwelling on Antonia’s face, with his large, soft, melancholy eyes, whenever he could do so, as he thought, without being observed. When she turned towards him, he turned them slowly away, and looked into vacancy. Their eyes never met; still she felt his quiet gaze, and knew not if it were gratifying, for never once was there an expression of fondness in it.

Sir Alfred was not often too ill to accompany us in our various expeditions. It was, I confess, rather a relief, when he passed a day or two in the neighbourhood by himself, seeking for rest from the busy turmoil of a sea-place. I liked him, but did not feel sympathy with him. His discourses were eloquent, but, harping continually upon the same subjects, there was a great want of strength in the tone of his mind, as of his bodily health; and I had my misgivings that he would steal away Antonia's heart without giving his own in return.

On our visit to Mulgrave Castle, he stood, as if spell-bound, before the picture of the Duchess of Buckingham in her weeds, and repeated mechanically the lines written on it :—

Puisque le Comte d'Anglesey mourut sans remords,  
J'avoue que mon deuil n'est qu'en dehors.

“How different,” he muttered, “from myself! My mournings must not be outward—I have no privilege to wear it longer in the sight of man—it is here, here!” and he touched his heart. His reverie lasted some moments. Antonia had his arm, and I could see, she fancied there was some allusion to herself in his musings; for she turned, rather abruptly for her, to me, and said—“Sprite, don't you find a resemblance between the Duchess and me?” At this question he looked her full in the face, as if he did not see her, but something, or some one else, and said rapidly, but

scarcely above his breath, "Yes, yes; her mouth—Ah! those sweet lips;" and then, withdrawing his arm from Antonia's, he went to the window, and was lost in thought.

Mrs. Stuart asked me one day—"Lady Ingoldspier, do you think Sir Alfred Velasquez is not a little moon-stricken? I really fancy, at times, he has a softening of the brain. I quite fear Lady Velasquez will soon lose him." "Oh! I hope not," I answered; "his mind is certainly not in a very vigorous state;—just in such a state as makes me always suspect that the parents, for some generations back, have been first cousins, and that, for centuries, no new ideas had been engrafted on the old stock." "You are right, dear Lady Ingoldspier, the Velasquez have ever considered themselves as a race apart; and they have married, and intermarried, till some of them are quite insane; and, for years, there has always been one of the family in a lunatic asylum. How easily we trace the goodness of God in every ordination; and that the very punishment allotted to our sins is for our good! It must have been to avoid this, that our first parents were sent out into the world to form distinct races, and to propagate ideas a thousand fold. Just as good was it, that man was ordained to labour in the sweat of his brow,—a most needful and wholesome requisition. The Tower of Babel was destroyed in the same gracious view. The different languages obliged the

various speakers of them to scatter themselves over the face of the earth. How expressive is that short sentence, 'And God saw all that he had made; and behold it was very good'! Ah! everything is good, and worketh together for good to them who love God."

It was thus Mrs. Stuart was a living commentary upon the Bible.

Sir Alfred Velasquez's style was so entirely that of the author of *Scenes behind the Grilles*, and of *Flemish Interiors*, that, as I cannot remember his words, I shall often quote those of this author. I wish I knew his name, as it is difficult not to confound him with the members of my story. This gentleman remarks, that Catholics do not boast of the number of converts that are added daily to their church. It is not likely they should do so: genuine Roman Catholics of the elder branch have no pleasure in these converts. They consider them not as ornaments to their persuasion. They rake up too much the errors of the church, to which they themselves are so fondly attached, to which they adhere with such blind faith, that they cannot bear to probe its wounds, and would rather, like the ostrich in the sand, hide their faces in the depth of them, than turn and meet them.

Sir Alfred Velasquez, sentimental as he was, would have delighted in that pretty little scene of flirtation between Father Ignatius and the Sub-Prioress of the

Carmelites, told so naïvely in the *Flemish Interiors* : it would have been just after his taste. I do not know that even he would have called *abbesses*, *reverend mothers* ! The word *mother*, so applicable in an institution where vows of celibacy are so stringently made, if not always as stringently kept ! Reverend mother !—how absurd !—thus giving a woman a priest's title.

One morning, when Sir Alfred felt rather more overcome with the heat than usual, he chose for conversation the topic of conventual silence. Even Mrs. Stuart was amused by the apropos ; for I had just dropped in to know if we should make an excursion to Robin Hood's Bay ; and the pros and cons had been so multifarious, that we supposed our valetudinarian was rather oppressed by the general volubility.

"In one convent, in Belgium," he began, "where I was admitted to see the inner working of the institution—for if we show that we do not scoff, but are anxious to be convinced, we may see everything—one of the nuns was my guide. The sisters themselves there, as well as in all religious houses where silence is a rule, converse by signs when they have anything absolutely necessary to communicate to one another."

I could not help thinking of the French proverb, at this description of talking with the fingers instead of the tongue, "*Il y a avec le ciel des accommodemens* ;" but as I only thought this, Sir Alfred met with no interruption.



“They are so particular,” he said, “in not breaking this rule, that, before conducting me over the house, the sister who accompanied me begged me to excuse her if she did not always answer me, as there were certain portions of the house where silence was enjoined, and when, therefore, she should be unable to reply.”

Mrs. Stuart turned to me, and said, “What a perversion of that magnificent exordium of Zechariah, ‘Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for He is raised up out of His holy habitation.’ I have heard,” she added, “that women are enjoined to keep silence in the church, but this idea of silence in particular parts of an unconsecrated building is new to me.” Much, indeed, was new to Mrs. Stuart. In her young days, and, indeed, in mine also, religion, and religious principles, forms, and ceremonies, were not considered admissible subjects of conversation. I do not suppose any man of our age ever heard them mentioned out of the nursery, or out of the church. Once big boys, they were sent to school; once young men, they went to the universities, from thence to their professions; and religion was supposed to be so a part of themselves, learnt from their mothers, that to teach it to them, or to speak about it, was considered a work of supererogation, and those who did so were scouted and called methodistical.

Then came a reaction. About twenty years ago,

religion became *fashionable*, and we were allowed to think such subjects not quite irrelevant. The day was dawning for us, the mists were dispersing, still the clouds were on our hearts and our understandings; and then, all of a sudden, there came a clear, dazzling light; and young and old, male and female, rose up to seek the truth. As yet, alas! how few have found it! The time will come when all shall be acquainted with the truth, when every one, from the least to the greatest, shall know the Lord. Blessed time!

After all our consultations, we decided on taking the drive the next day, and made ourselves ready to go down, and sit on the pier. Mrs. Stuart was able to do that much with us, so that we all considered the arrangement a little treat.

Just as we reached the pier, the steamer from Scarborough entered the harbour, and a gentleman bowed to us from on board. "Who is it? Who is it?" we all asked eagerly. I really was quite pleased to think Sir Alfred Velasqu  z would not be alone of the unfair sex, and that we should have some one to help us to entertain him. I had just arrived at that turning-point in my acquaintance with him, when the novelty of his peculiarities had worn off, and I had begun to wish for some intellectual refreshment. It was, no doubt, otherwise with the young ladies. They had just learnt to think his society all but indis-

pensable ; such is the difference of tastes, which the difference of age and of opinions causes.

Matilda, with her sharp eyes, was the first to recognise him. "It is Mr. Elyott, Cara, Mary's guardian." It was Mr. Elyott, and handkerchiefs were waved, hands were kissed ;—every demonstration of welcome was given.

We went on to the landing-place, and remained at the head of the stairs, each wishing to be the first to greet him. He was not long in making his way up ; for he was a stout, hale, middle-aged man, and rather prided himself upon his agility. Not in vain, for he seldom walked less than ten miles in the day ; often, much more.

It so happened, that we were all more or less acquainted with him ; and, when he was fairly amongst us, he spoke to us each in turn. "Mary, my lass, how dost ?" "You here, Quiz ?"—It was thus he shortened Sir Alfred's name. "Ah ! my Lady Ingoldspier, ready to flirt with me, as in days of yore ?" "How do, children, how do ?" holding out one finger of each hand to Antonia and Matilda. "Where am I to drive ?" he asked, as he hailed the omnibus. "To the Royal Hotel," we all exclaimed at once. "Let your luggage be sent there, sir," said Sir Alfred. "If you will come a few steps this way, you will see Mrs. Stuart." "Mrs. Stuart ! ay, that is good for sair e'en, any day. I love the very ground

on which she treads—Where is she, where?” “Here I am,” answered the sweet, silver voice. “I have hobbled up as fast as I could to meet you, these young ones have outstripped me; but if not the first to have a hearty shake of the hand with you, the old woman’s welcome will be as cordial as theirs.” “That it will, dear Mrs. Stuart; when did you ever fail to be kind, whether to an old friend like me, or the little crying beggar-boy in the streets?”

Mr. Elyott gave Mrs. Stuart his arm, and we returned to the cliff. We sat on a bench on the cliff, and talked over absent friends.

When we had heard all the news Mr. Elyott had to give, we remarked that Sir Alfred and Antonia were walking up and down before us in earnest conversation.

“I did not know,” said Mr. Elyott, “that poor Velasquez was at Whitby.” Mrs. Stuart told him that Lady Velasquez had induced him to come to it, by the hope of dwelling much amongst the ruins of the fine old Abbey.

“So like her, and him! They are so bitten with these newly-hashed up notions of by-gone times, that my lady has been known to put a richly ornamented bracelet on the plate of that semi-papistical church in Pimlico, being, for the moment, unprovided with coin, in order to help the incumbent to pay for the floral decorations in the Church.” Mrs. Stuart listened as

if she heard a fairy tale : it was quite as mysterious to her. "I will lay any wager," continued Mr. Elyott, "that he is now pouring into Antonia's ear a long list of marvels of the ancient, and surely only true, church, as he has learnt to call the Roman Catholic system. We will ask her when she comes home." Mary observed, that Antonia was not likely to repeat what she had heard; she was extremely reserved; and,

late, had become so more than ever, if that were possible. "Ve'll ask Quiz—he will be more open;" this was a favourite pun of Mr. Elyott's. He was rather fond of a good joke, not at all times pleasing to the subjects of them; but his favourite was, what he called his cockney pun. He had contented himself with adopting the last syllable of Sir Alfred's name, and called him "Quiz." When he wanted to know anything about mediæval times, he usually said, "Ve'll ask Quiz,"—which meant to say, "Velasquez;" and Sir Alfred invariably answered the appeal. He did so this time.

"What's that you're prosing about to that pretty lassie, Quiz?"

"I was telling her of the charming effect of the way some nuns prepare to leave the church."

Sir Alfred was very serious about these matters, and Mr. Elyott might have smiled in mockery for ever, he unfailingly imagined it was pleasure he thus showed.

The benediction had been given. After the interval of a few moments, during which each nun extended her arms in the form of a cross, all rose simultaneously, and folding, with most surprising rapidity, and with a sudden rustling sound, their white coverings, laid them in a small square at the top of their heads, and then returned to their homes.

“ And you actually saw that, Quiz ? ”

“ Yes, sir ? ”

“ And approved of it ? ”

“ The effect was sweetly pretty, sir. ”

“ Go, go, Quiz ; Miss St. Maur is waiting for you. It would be a great waste of breath to argue with Quiz, so I don't even attempt it. I like to draw him out, and to leave him to his own reflections. You, of course, know his pitiable story, do you not, Mrs. Stuart ? ” With one accord, we denied having heard it, and expressed a great desire to be enlightened. “ Velasquez has just recovered from a long-continued fever, occasioned by sorrow. He was engaged to a very charming young woman. I don't know a girl, except our Mary Douglas, to whom I could compare her. She was much too good for him ; yet I had hoped his attachment would prove a source of much benefit to him ; for the silly education his silly mother had given him could only be amended by the silent influence of such a woman as Miss Morleigh. But it was not to be. She went out for a stroll on the top of a cliff jutting

out into the sea, one morning, early before breakfast—it was the day before that fixed for the wedding—and, it is supposed, she leaned over to look at a fishing-boat just come into the harbour, must have lost her balance, and fallen over the cliff. \* She was immediately missed: her friends and relatives, Velasquez, everybody, rushed out, regardless of breakfast; remained out, regardless of dinner. The whole day was spent in vain endeavours to discover her; for all felt persuaded some serious injury alone prevented her from returning to the house. Night came on—nothing had been heard of her—no one had seen her. Velasquez went out, at the next flowing tide, and was in such a state of frenzied despair, that his friends feared he would drown himself, and two or three of them accompanied him. Just as they reached the shore, a wave cast a burden on it. Instinctively they knew what it was. They were not mistaken: it was the lifeless body of Miss Morleigh, with her own sweet smile, looking as calm, as fresh, as happy as if only in a light slumber. Velasquez seized upon it—he would let none but himself touch it—he carried it up the steep cliff with almost superhuman strength, and deposited it on the sofa of the drawing-room. His senses left him, and he was led away from the fearful yet most beautiful sight. His mother, ever true to her whimsical nature, imagined that nothing would be more soothing to him than to visit foreign religious houses; so she engaged

a travelling jesuit as his companion, and they made the tour of France and Belgium. The jesuit was enabled to have all doors opened for him; and taking care to warn the inmates that he hoped to bring a wavering child to the bosom of Mother Church, the best side of everything was brought to his notice, and fully pointed out to him. Miss St. Maur is something like Miss Morleigh, though she has not the same sensible countenance."

The murmuring of the ocean, and the low tone of Mr. Elyott's voice, had put Mrs. Stuart to sleep, and, afraid to disturb her abruptly, we sat still.

"Sprite," said Matilda—her joyous voice subdued by the sadness of the tale we had just heard—"shall we tell Antonia about Sir Alfred?" "No, my dear," I replied, "I think not. She already finds him far too interesting: this would complete the fascination."

We looked up, and saw that he and Antonia, tired of their quarter-deck walk, had seated themselves on the grass before us. He was so lost in his reminiscences, that he did not perceive our tranquillity, and, turning to Antonia, with that childlike, eager way of his, asked her, if he should recount to her what he saw at the convent of the Redemptorists. Could she answer otherwise than yes? He made a movement, as if he would touch something, and then recoiled, and shuddered. I saw what it meant, though had I not just been told his history, I should undoubtedly not have



been so wise. He thought she parted her lips to say, YES, exactly as Miss Morleigh would have done.

“After a short interval of waiting at the door, the porter, who had at first opened it to me, returned, followed by the Father-superior, who very politely led the way to the chapel, which is partly open to the public. The brethren enter by a private door, and sit separately. Mass was over for the day, and as it was the vigil of the *fête* of St. Alphonso Liguori, founder of the order, they were preparing to celebrate the anniversary-octave with great pomp. From the Baldiquin over the altar were suspended long, broad strips of alternate crimson and white calico, looped up in festoons; and one of the Brothers was decorating the altar with unusual care. He had a vast number of flower-pots containing roses and other plants in full bloom, and seemed very fastidious about placing them. He fixed and unfixed, arranged and re-arranged, them again and again, getting down from the steps on which he was mounted, and viewing his performance from a little distance, each time, to judge of the effect. This was no slight labour, especially as, every time he passed the tabernacle, he dropped on one knee in front of it.

“This being done, he brought out some large and handsome candlesticks, containing tall *cierges*, and spent much time and thought on their disposal, likewise. Then, the space within the open rails was filled with flowers,

in all the open corners among them, around, in front, and behind the altar in unlimited profusion. Over the high altar stands a carved stone statue of the founder, painted and gilt. Above this, at the extremity of the north aisle, on a bracket, is a beautiful group of a Holy Family, executed in *terra cotta*, and supported on each side by two canopied figures, representing St. Teresa and St. Francis. These exquisite designs are the work of one of the Brothers, and are wonderful specimens of true Christian art."

"That is a complete specimen of the popish church," said Mr. Elyott. "What a raree-show! 'Thou shalt not make any graven image,' is totally and entirely forgotten. Even a writer of their own church, Cardinal Bellarmine, gives a statement of the representation of the crucifixion, the cross, and the crucifix, as not having been completed as now used, with the dead Christ, till the tenth or eleventh century. It was not till the sixth century representations of the virgin and child were made. Thus long did it take the monks to complete this total oblivion of the sacred commandment. And, then, the folly of representing our Lord and Saviour as a baby! Was He not as man fully grown before He commenced His ministry? He was then thirty years old; and, as man, did He die for us; as the man Christ Jesus, is He our sole Mediator. Hark!" he added, "our friend is again narrating."

Sir Alfred had paused, lost in contemplation of the beautiful imagery he had recalled to his memory.

“This brings to my mind the little chapel of the Petit Séminaire; there, mass is occasionally celebrated, and offices are said. A *chapelle ardente* always burns within it before a *sainte face*. This hangs in a little recess, and is one of those impressions *sur toile* from the original ‘Veronica,’ at Rome, of which the Pope allows two hundred to be taken each year for presents.

“Whenever one of them is presented, it is understood that a perpetual lamp will be entertained in honour of it. This oratory is richly decorated, and has stained windows.”

Mr. Elyott thought we had had enough of this kind of sad nonsense—for, how sad to think anything of the sort can be pleasing to the great God of heaven and earth! So he arose, and gently touching Mrs. Stuart’s arm, she awoke, and we all hastened to return to tea.

We were to pass the evening with Mrs. Stuart. Matilda took Mrs. Stuart under her particular charge; Sir Alfred and Antonia walked side by side, as usual; Mr. Elyott stepped between Mary and me.

“A pretty saint, indeed, to have those flowers and handsome candlesticks was Alphonse de Liguori—de Liguor-i he ought to have been called—for could any man in his *sober* senses have given such a code

for different sorts of lying, without sin, as he does? and pretty freely must they have drunk of the holy water, bestowed by the priests, who have any belief in such a system. I really have no patience with them, and if poor Quiz were not already half a fool I should be angry with him : but that would be of no use."

We walked to the house, our group composed of—

Credulity, believing herself to be Faith.

Zeal, without knowledge.

Undiscriminating love.

A sound judgment, with a little alloy of that "wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God."

Charity, that is long-suffering, and hopeth all things.

Faith and works, in beautiful harmony.

The sequel will enable the reader to place the allegories rightly. I do not allude to myself—I am only a thread that binds the flowers into a bouquet.

## CHAPTER III.

“England ! with all thy faults, I love thee still.”

THE party went, next day, to Robin Hood's Bay. I was not of it, for I found that by staying away, I enabled them to make one vehicle serve to convey them.

I gathered, from their various accounts of the expedition, what had occurred of note. It became now a settled thing, that Sir Alfred and Antonia St. Maur should be companions. They were on the box together, Sir Alfred as coachman ; for he was most skilful and expert in all manly accomplishments, and drove them so inimitably, that Mr. Elyott declared he should like to engage him as his Master of the Horse, provided he would condescend to drive him in every case of difficulty. “Mind,” he added, “you are to be only my body-guard. I would not trust my understanding in the charge of such a thimble-rig.”

The Bay was voted, unanimously, to be very beautiful ; the town so old, it seemed to have belonged to an ante-diluvian race,—very picturesque,—though the

olfactory nerves were too *highly* gratified, according to Mr. Elyott.

Robin Hood's Bay is a fishing-place; and they who do not relish the smell of fish, and of its concomitants, would do well not to descend the cliff on a hot day, but to leave the romance of its historical associations, and its various beauties, to remain undiminished and sweet.

One of the hardy mariners, standing by, told all he knew respecting the pretty spot. He spoke of the cobbles, and, in Yorkshire pronunciation, the word sounded like *cobbles*. Mr. Elyott could not resist the joke, and asked the man if he guessed why people would like to trust their old shoes to the care of Yorkshire boatmen, rather than to any other?

"Na, na," he replied with a merry laugh; "I canna, na, I canna."

"Why! because you are such excellent hands at a cobble, skilful cobblers every one."

This delighted the good-natured man; and he went away chuckling, and saying to himself, "I wull tell that to my missus, that I wull; it's a good un, however. I munna forget it afore I git to the hoose."

I dare say a half-crown that Mr. Elyott gave him made him overlook the affront of comparing sea-faring folk to landsmen. Sir Alfred seemed at one time very energetic about something,—he could be so in his own peculiar away.

Mr. Elyott asked Mary what the lackadaisical lad had been prating about. Mary told him, Sir Alfred had expressed a wish that he had been born a fisherman, like the blessed Peter.

“Has he? What a silly fellow it is. I must put a spoke in that wheel, though I am as tender with the poor boy as I know how to be; for I really feel very much for him.”

“Eh, Quiz, what’s that I hear about your wish to have been born a fisherman? You mistake the matter altogether—monks and nuns are not born monks and nuns; no, you must leave the station to which God has called you, of which he intended you to fulfil the duties. You must give yourself up to the church; lie on an uncomfortable bed; let the priest tell you how many eggs you may eat a day; you must pay for a dispensation for eating a cutlet after your herring; you must drink cold water, if the rest of your party do, even though your stomach, like Timothy’s, should require a little wine. You must not think of employing your wealth according to the wants of your own people, your own tenants, your own poor; you must let the priest bestow it as the church, alias himself, directs. No, Velasquez; you must not be born a menial, according to popish systems, you must become such. Go, and find a fisherman willing to take you into partnership, I have no doubt you will succeed; and when you return to Whitby, you can consecrate

your property to some saint or other, even if St. Hilda be out of fashion."

Sir Alfred was proof against satire and banter. He answered, "I have, at least, high authority for the wish to become poor, sir. Did not our Lord desire the young man in the Gospel to sell all that he had to give to the poor? Vows of poverty are, then, not only sanctioned, but enjoined."

"It won't do, Quiz; that argument won't hold water, though indeed you have been well taught, and your memory is tenacious of your friend the jesuit's sophistry. That young man, in the Gospel, prided himself upon his many virtues, his strict obedience to the law and the prophets; but God sees not as man sees; he was sordid and covetous; what was easy to do from lack of propensity and temptation, from the rules of the good society in which he moved, he did; the routine of his childhood, he continued in riper years; but, to do good and to distribute did not accord with his love of riches. It is a Jewish inclination, which is become proverbial, to amass riches,—rich as a Jew, exacting as a Jew, raising large sums by usury like a Jew,—all these things we hear every day.

"And remark, that our Saviour said, it was not because he was rich, but because he trusted in his riches, had set his heart upon them, that he demanded this sacrifice, as a proof that he really served God.



David tells us that, with the riches which God sends there is no sorrow; and, yet, even then, we are enjoined to take heed lest we set our hearts upon them."

They had been standing by the side of the carriage during this discourse. Mrs. Stuart had not yet engaged in it; but, when it was finished, she remarked:—

"I feel so obliged to Lord Nugent for having explained to us what appeared, till then, a metaphor of an extraordinary nature, 'that of the camel passing through a needle's eye.' Our Lord always made his comparisons with something passing before him at the time:—The hen with her chickens, how sublime he makes that familiar sight by comparing it with his own tender love for Jerusalem! The milkman passing with his yoke; the well of water at Samaria. So, may we imagine he saw, at that time, a loaded camel in vain endeavouring to struggle through the small gate of the town known as the Needle's Eye."

Mary Douglas extracted large nuggets of gold from all these discourses. She reflected on them afterwards; and Mrs. Stuart's simple, childlike, loving faith became her own. She stored her remarks up in her memory, and, in after days, it became a shield against the envenomed darts of casuistry.

"Velasquez," said Mr. Elyott, "do you not see how much all papists trust in riches? Money is able

to pay a passage from purgatory to heaven. Masses are paid for the souls of the dead. Money is required for everything. How the poor amongst Roman Catholics ever get to heaven, upon the Romish system, I cannot understand. How thankful I am, that I have been taught, in answer to fervent prayer, to know that the Lord my God has paid all debts for my soul."

While they were absent on their expedition, I had a peep into Antonia's heart, which I little expected to have had. She had promised to return me a book,<sup>g</sup> which I had lent to her before having read it myself. She forgot, however, to do so, and I went to her room to look for it. A draught of air had blown open her portfolio, and scattered about her drawings and sketches. As I picked them up to replace them in the portfolio, I could not help looking at them. They represented the various scenes in convents, and of legends, which Sir Alfred had portrayed to her, and there were his features, his expression, his coloured hair, in every possible variety of size and costume, to be easily recognised in the picture of a saint or saintess. It was unmistakable. He was ever present to her imagination, even though one saw, evidently, that she had taken pains to try and give the lineaments a totally different appearance. It would not do ;—there the likeness was.

I said nothing upon this subject to any one but to

herself. If her heart had spoken so loudly, I could not undo what had been done ; nor, indeed, did I wish to do so. We have, very fortunately, each a different taste from the other. What a sadly confused world it would be were it otherwise ! I was too old to be smitten with Sir Alfred Velasquez, but could very well understand a young person being captivated by so much attractiveness, for he really was very winning ; that is, to those who did not care for superior understanding. He seemed to possess every other charm ; and his devotion to Antonia was unfailing.

When they returned, that evening, from their excursion, I told Antonia what had occurred ; she blushed, and said in her soft way, “ I must pack my daubs away more carefully another time.”

Our sojourn at Whitby was drawing to a close. I had enjoyed it very much beyond all my anticipation. Those dear people had made it so pleasant to me ; yet I was not sorry to leave. I like more quietness of mind and body, than I had been able to obtain there. Although in a different house, I was seldom alone ; I had neglected all my absent friends, and had not directed my own private affairs with that regularity to which I had accustomed myself ; still, to have made such an acquaintance was worth these sacrifices, and I did not in the least regret the weeks spent in this pretty place, so unlike anything which I had hitherto ever seen.

In our last walk, Mr. Elyott gave me some history of his own life—even he could not resist the magic of my sympathy.

Mary Douglas was with us; she took great pleasure in her guardian's society: he seemed to be more what is called "of her own way of thinking" than any of the others.

"Lady Ingoldspier, I am afraid you will find me very ungallant. The proof of love for man or woman is, I believe, to be absent from one's self, and to be entirely in the presence of the loved one,—to think of the many sweetnesses of character of the charmer,—and to talk solely of them. I am, therefore, about to commit a great breach in the manners of an admirer, for I want to tell you of myself, and of some of my adventures."

I reassured him on this point, and begged him to believe I was still more desirous of listening, than he was of discoursing; that, possibly, my own mind would be much improved by the outpourings of his; and that the more sentimental feelings of our youth, when we danced and sang together, had softened into a mellow friendship; and he need not fear a revival of them for either of us.

We had seen very little of each other since our young days. Whether he had remained single on my account I do not know. Paley has said that love is an epoch in a man's life, but the history of woman. It

may be so. I was not aware of the depth of Mr. Elyott's attachment to me, until some time after I was married. A friend injudiciously betrayed it to me.

Should we have been happy together? I cannot say. There are, possibly, many nooks and corners in the disposition of each, that our union would have discovered, and which might not have dovetailed into each other. The give-and-take system is very necessary in daily and hourly intercourse. Would he have commanded gently? Should I have obeyed implicitly? His was a hurly-burly kind of love-making; more that of a man of fifty, than of five-and-twenty; and I looked upon him merely as a very affectionate, but somewhat too authoritative, elder brother.

My marriage was not a happy one. I have already said, that the lack of forbearance in my disposition prevented me from possessing Mrs. Stuart's favourite beauty of equilibrium. The head and the heart were seldom in unison with me. I could not, and even now cannot, bear the companionship of a selfish and ill-tempered being. I discovered too late, that my husband was such. In my inexperience of the human heart, of its moods, and expressions, I laid all the violence of his courtship to the uncontrollable strength of his love for me. His promises of undying affection,—his mad fits of jealousy,—his threats to destroy himself, if I would not consent to marry him forthwith,—

his persuasions to give up parents, sisters, brothers, friends, for his sake, all appeared to my foolish self, as proofs of a passion which I had inspired. I soon found my mistake. It was long, long before my love for him waxed cold. To love, honour, and obey him was a hard task ; but I performed it to the very letter, as long as I could ; I never ceased to be the obedient, faithful wife ; no other image ever presented itself to my imagination, as being more attractive. But, alas ! I kicked against the pricks. That was my besetting sin,—anxiety to be far, far away from my hard lot for ever.

Possibly had we had any children, his nature might have been softened. The lively prattle, the engaging ways of a child of his own might have won even him to more kindness of manner ; but that was not to be. I had to drink the full cup of bitterness. It tamed my unruly spirit, and has taught me self-control—has brought out the latent charity of my disposition. I have, since then, devoted myself to the happiness of others, and endeavoured in every way to forget myself. My husband did not fail to twit me for ever with that usual unmanly, and ungentlemanly, and, as in my case, most untrue assertion, that had I not made all the advances, and insisted upon having him, he should never have thought of linking his fate with mine. However, he is no more, peace be to his ashes.

Mr. Elyott has contented himself, since my free-

dom, with assurances of undiminished regard. He can talk calmly of the time when he was in love with me, and how, after laughing and joking with me, he has gone home and wept like a child, because I had danced his favourite dance, or sung his favourite song with another; while I, totally unconscious of having given him pain, only recommenced the next day to flirt with his supposed rival.

“ Since those days, Lady Ingoldspier, I have half a mind,” he said, “ to call you ‘ dear little woman,’ as I used to do in talking to you, or ‘ my Emma,’ as I did when talking of you. Since those days, I have wandered through many lands. I have toiled, and trudged, and steamed away, or coached it. I have reclined in Venetian gondolas, or lost my temper with Italian vetturini. I have even been simpleton enough to go up in a balloon once. I have tried every variety of transit, and, sooth to say, I do not know which I prefer. When I was young, everything seemed equally agreeable. Now that I am a bandy-legged, bald-pated, bilious old beggar, as a woman once called her loving mate, I am contented with railway-locomotion; and, indeed, it seems to have been invented expressly to suit my impatient spirit, and my wearied old limbs.”

Mary and I exchanged smiles at this description of himself; for he then was, as he now is, a tolerably tough piece of humanity, which will bear still much

wear and tear, without being materially the worse for it.

“It was just when I set out on my travels, that the spirit of inquiry was hovering over us with respect to religious truth. People were unsettled ; some were for believing everything, some for believing nothing. Infidelity was fast springing up, and credulity overshooting its mark. Protestants were awaking from their lethargy. Romanists looking ahead for proselytes. I was not much engaged in these matters, still I had heard of so many, who called themselves of the English church, doing fierce battle with Jesuits, and invariably succumbing ; that I determined, before I left England, I would set to work, and make myself master of the Thirty-nine Articles. I read my Bible with increasing anxiety, to know ‘if these things were so,’ and prayed so earnestly for enlightenment, that I am satisfied that, through grace alone, I am what I am in doctrine. I am of a reflective disposition, not easily swayed ; and when once I have come to a decision, I hold it fast as a rock.

“A rock ! that puts me in mind that I have searched the Scriptures through and through, to find some basis for the papal error of St. Peter being *the* Rock. Nowhere can I find a word to corroborate the views the Romanists hold. ‘Rock,’ when figuratively used in Scripture, invariably, without any exception, means God. I could enumerate many pages, but, at present,



I am not confuting St. Peterites. I am only talking of myself, though, I must say, before I go on, that, did the dead see what was passing on earth, even St. Peter could not be happy, though in heaven; for, to one so humbled by his own sins, how dreadful would be the sight of thousands kissing the toe of that old statue of Jupiter, in St. Peter's, at Rome, by way of doing homage to St. Peter, making him equal to his Master. The guilt would be of the deepest dye in his eyes. It was lucky for me, I had set out forearmed; for, hardly had I crossed the Channel, before I was laid hold of by the Jesuits. One came to me in the guise of a courier. I attributed his polished manners to that courteous and respectful demeanour foreign servants have; and, let me tell you, I was not a little pleased to think I should have a quasi-gentleman to deal with, and that there would be no necessity for calling him blockhead every time I spoke to him, or he to me; nor, for threatening him with the stick, or the police, when he would not understand a jargon almost incomprehensible to myself."

Mr. Elyott had never been able to learn modern languages. He was not born in time to learn them in childhood, as the present wise plan is, and very laughable, indeed, were the mistakes he made.

"I was charmed with my new domestic. He seemed to have read a great deal. I could not well understand where he had been brought up, nor how he was

a menial, who seemed so fitted for a superior station in life. I finally concluded that he had learnt the various languages he spoke by reading books of general information, and I had much pleasure in conversing with him. We had travelled for some time; I had seen enshrined saints that have as many heads as Hydra, and as many arms as Briareus, meeting in every town with the upper or lower stratum of the holy men. I had seen nearly all the forty-two vestments of our Lord; the holy coat at Trèves, of course. My courier did not at first suspect my heresy, and showed me these wonderful and multifold old relics with a bonhommie that often elicited a smile. I was in no crusade, and therefore looked, and listened, and made no remarks. I bethought me I would go to Munich and see how that old sinner, the ex-king of Bavaria, had thrown the superabundance of his power of love over the arts and sciences in the embellishments of his city.

“In one of the minor churches I met with a charming old gentleman; he saw I was a foreigner, and came to my assistance when I went blundering on with my excruciatingly bad German, and could neither comprehend my own questions, nor my guide’s answers. He was such a dear old man, so ready with every necessary explanation, so patient in translating into the purest English all that the guide said; and, when we left the chapel, he invited me to his house, and begged

I would make it my own as long as I was in Munich. To accept, did not coincide with my truly British ideas of independence ; I thanked him very gratefully, and promised to call on him the following morning. This did not satisfy him, so he made the arrangement that I should take him with me to all the various sights, that he might be my friend and guide. To this I most willingly consented, for, certainly, no one could be more agreeable than he, or impart information in a more lucid manner. I owe very much to him, and should be truly glad to welcome him to Old England, and to make him as comfortable as our fogs and smoke would enable me.

“ After two or three days spent in entwining himself round my heart, I began to think his conversation very logical and very serious. Educated as a lawyer, I had no difficulty in proving myself a match for him, and, little by little, I discovered he was a Jesuit, bent upon making a convert of me. I was fully armed for the contest, and parried his strokes so skilfully, he was perfectly astonished. At last he avowed his aim and wish, and he confessed that it was the first time he had ever been baffled ; that he had had the happiness of bringing several English men and women back to Mother Church, and he had fully hoped, in the beginning of our intercourse, to have added me to the number of souls he had saved. He wept bitterly when he found his mistake, and embraced me tenderly when

we parted. ‘O ! my son, my son, my wandering son, why will you not believe ?’ ‘Because, kind friend, you want me to believe in the Pope, while I, on the contrary, should be too happy if I could persuade you to believe in God.’ He started at these words. ‘It is you,’ he said, ‘who do not believe ; you, who have not the right faith.’ I replied, ‘I have searched the Scriptures and found light ; you have rested on tradition, and cannot but be groping in the dark ; but recriminations only embitter, they do not convince. Let us pray for each other, not that we should be converted to each other’s opinions and creed, but that our Heavenly Father may so send his Spirit to enlighten us that we may both be found, at the last great day, on the right hand of our Judge.’ ”

“And so,” said Mary, “you did not try to bring him over to our church ?”

“No, Mary : I pretend to no infallibility either for my church, or for myself. God has permitted these various sects throughout the world, from the beginning of it. There are still millions of heathen,—there are Turks and Jews,—there are Roman Catholics. I have not the ordering of the universe ; my part is, to obey my Master, and to let the influence of my example induce others to go and do likewise. The time is, perhaps, not far distant when we shall all worship in spirit and in truth—when we shall all bow the knee to Christ, and be members of his kingdom ; but

if my particular denomination be destined to prevail, I know not. I judge no man; I only pray, night and day, that we may all be saved, and I leave to Him the path in which each one of us shall walk. It was, perhaps, owing to my conversations with this dear, mild, earnest old man, that I had a dream, one night. I dreamt that the awful day of judgment was come, and that our Lord, with his radiant smile of welcome, addressed us in this way—‘ Roman Catholics, you will praise me throughout eternity, that, notwithstanding the adulteration of your faith, notwithstanding those grave errors which caused you to have so many objects of worship, I yet forgive and receive you; while you, Protestants, will adore me in profound humility; your love has been often weakened by your reasoning faculties. I have oftener been in your understanding than in your hearts,—yet I admit you into Paradise, where all is love; for God is love, and God is all in all.’

“ I discovered that my courier was a member of the same college as my dear old friend; and having failed to draw me out, himself, he had planned the meeting in the church, that his superior might try what he could do with me.

“ I have, contrary to my wont, talked of such various matters, that I must finish the history of my travels some other time.”

He kissed my hand, blessed Mary, and left us at Mrs. Stuart’s door.

Mr. Elyott is a gentleman at heart, a profound scholar, a most unaffected, sincere man, and, above all, a true Christian ; but he is bluff in manner, and often expresses himself in a way that shows want of refinement, though never a want of kindly feeling.

As he has brought the Thirty-nine Articles into view, I cannot help quoting Dr. Hellmuth's most interesting account of his own conversion by means of the "Book of Common Prayer." I shall give it in his own words. I quote from a speech of his at a meeting of the Prayer Book and Homily Society :—

"In making a few remarks on the importance of this society, my words shall indeed be few ; yet, if I were not to speak in its behalf, I should indeed be deserting its cause. I have reason to be thankful for this society ; not that I have directly derived any personal benefit from it myself, yet I feel a deep interest in it, having been directly benefited by that Prayer Book which it circulates. I love the Prayer Book for many reasons ; for, I think, in looking through that beautiful ritual, we see that Christ crucified is set before the people ; in all its prayers and articles we find nothing else is set forth than Christ, and Him crucified ; and, therefore, I identify a society, which offers such a boon to the world at large, immediately with the work of Christ. But I said that I had derived great advantage myself from the Prayer Book. I read the Prayer Book when I

was at college, at Breslau, in Germany ; and, I assure you, it is with deep gratitude to my Heavenly Father that I look back to the period, when He was graciously pleased to incline the hearts of his people, in this country, to translate the Prayer Book into different languages. I could not then read English, but I heard, when I was at college, of a Prayer Book that was translated into the Hebrew tongue. Having been brought up in a Roman Catholic country and with the prejudices of a Jew, I could scarcely believe it possible that Christians should have prayers in the sacred tongue. I was curious to see this Prayer Book, and with great anxiety I tried to purchase one. At last, I succeeded ; and how great was my surprise when I opened that beautiful book ! The first words that met my eye were the words of the living God—the words from the Prophets and the Psalms. I could hardly believe what was before me. Does there, I thought, exist a community that believes in the words of the living God ? Does there exist a community that sends up its prayers with such holy feelings to the God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ? And, when I further proceeded and saw its holy aspirations, I said, ‘ This must be the people of God.’ And, let me tell you, whilst certainly it is through the word of the living God itself, and through the efforts of a missionary that I have been brought to the truth of the Gospel ; it was the Prayer Book which

was the glad means of making me think there is something in Christianity worth investigating.

“ But, further, I do not love this Prayer Book simply because, as I have already mentioned, I found it in the Hebrew tongue, and merely from the association of the sacred language ; and, certainly, I cannot be accused that I love the Prayer Book, and its Articles, and the Church of England, because I have been brought up to revere that book from my early childhood. I have for not less than six years, when a secret believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, investigated every system, and wanted to find every reason Christians could give for trusting in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in Jesus the Christ. In vain did I search any system : indeed, I found no system, except that beautiful system laid down in our Prayer Book. But more, I went to various chapels, and various churches ; but, whilst I have heard Christ crucified preached, I looked in vain for something which would, in some measure, lead me to know what were their articles of faith—what were their professions. It may be so, that one man may preach the truth, and another may preach theology, another the vain philosophy of man, and there is nothing to guide them that they may continue in God’s truth ; but, let a clergyman of the Church of England even be in error, he cannot, certainly, nay he dares not, omit to read those beautiful prayers, so long as he continues in the Church of Eng-



land. Let him preach Tractarianism, and Popery itself: here is the Word of the living God, here are its beautiful prayers; and there is nothing in these prayers which teaches us to submit our minds to priestcraft; nothing that would lead us to acknowledge a man, like the Pope, to be the vicar of Christ; nothing in any portion of the Prayer Book to countenance, in any way, that which the Tractarians are now doing, in forming a bridge over to Popery. On this ground I love the Prayer Book. I have also been abroad, working in the colonies, travelled through the United States, and seen the various systems that have been introduced there; and I find that, singular to say, Unitarianism, and Universalism, that soul-destroying doctrine, has been introduced into the United States by the Congregational body, certainly unconsciously to themselves; but, why? Because they had nothing to bring forward on that doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, no Athanasian creed, no Article showing the Divinity of Christ, no Article showing that men can only be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, preaching the unity as well as the plurality of the persons in the Godhead; it is owing to this, that superstition has spread far and wide through the United States. And I have spoken with several faithful men of other churches, in the United States, and said, ‘To what do you trace the errors of Unitarianism?’ They have admitted that it is, in a great degree, due to the absence of For-

mularies and Articles, by which clergymen should be bound.

“These are some of my own convictions ; and I could bring forward many striking instances where the Prayer Book has been the means of rousing the people from their lethargy in the back-woods and wild forests of Canada ; and whilst, in the absence of missionaries and teachers, they were not certainly qualified, either by knowledge, or not having received the grace of God in their heart, to offer up prayers in their families, or to congregate together in those vast territories ; it was the Prayer Book which united them, which taught them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that their prayers could only be heard through His mediation, and that they must believe that in Jesus alone they had salvation. At Montreal, I was requested by the Germans, as they had no minister there, to preach to them. I said, ‘ Well, you know that I am a minister of the Church of England, and in order to do so, we must have Prayer Books, according to the form of the Church of England. I will, therefore, procure you some, and, during the college vacation, I will preach to you several times in your own tongue, and we shall unite, I trust, in pouring out our hearts before God, according to the ritual of the Church of England.’ They immediately assented. But, before we met for divine worship, I explained to them the manner of using the Common Prayer Book ; and I cannot

describe to you the mingled feelings of gratitude and deep emotion which penetrated my heart, when I heard those Germans responding most heartily in the language in which I had been brought up, joining with heart and soul in these beautiful prayers. And they would have gladly supported at once a clergyman of the Church of England to preach to them in the German language. Now this speaks volumes. And when a society like this is in existence, which is endeavouring, in a missionary spirit, to send forth the Prayer Book, and those beautiful homilies which I have read frequently to my own congregations,—for I verily believe they contain the salt of the Gospel,—can we withhold our hearty support from it ?

“And, indeed, my heart was gladdened when I heard also a reference to my own dear country, Poland. Though I grieve that the Prayer Book has not been so received as it ought to have been, and as I trust it will be, yet I am glad that it is translated into that language. There are a great many Polish refugees in this country ; and if there is anything calculated to inspire them with admiration of the English Church, it is because they can refer to the Prayer Book and see its articles, and its principal object and aim ; and I have no doubt that many of these, my countrymen, have found that this Prayer Book was just the very thing they needed, in order to bring them from the superstitions of Rome to be members of a true branch

of Christ's Church. But I cannot indulge, as I should like to have done, in bringing many instances forward. For my part, next to the Bible, I love the Prayer Book ; for I have experienced its blessed influence, and witnessed what it has accomplished in others, and I believe there are great things which it will yet accomplish, in God's gracious providence."

I have, since, talked this history over with Mary ; I knew she would delight in every word of it—it speaks the sentiments of her own heart. And it was so doubly precious to us, as being true in every detail, and giving so great an amount of religious experience in so short a compass. We felt none could weary or yawn over it.

Mary told me, at the time, that she herself could bear witness of the wonderful blessing God had made the Prayer Book to a dear friend of her father's.

Mary's father had died while she was very young ; but Mr. Elyott had preserved all that he had found worthy of preservation amongst his papers, and had given her a fragment of one, which she thought so touching, that she had preserved the general outline of it in her memory.

It related, that a friend of his, a distant kinsman, had led a very wild life, and, through long habits of indulgence, had wasted his constitution. This brought him into a lingering state of health, and his last illness was of several years' duration. One morning, Colonel

Douglas had gone into the invalid's room early, to inquire how he had slept. He found him sitting up in his dressing-gown, a little table, with the Prayer Book open upon it, before him,—he was weeping bitterly. Colonel Douglas was much moved, and asked, with anxious solicitude, what had occurred to distress him so very much. “Distress me !” the sick man replied, “these are tears of joy, that God has provided such a Saviour for such a sinner.”

## CHAPTER III.

Oh Constantine ! to how much ill gave birth  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower  
Which the first wealthy Fathers gained from thee.

DANTE.

WE left Whitby together.

All had enjoyed the sojourn there, yet all were glad to leave.

“Coming events cast their shadows before them.” I felt, and I have no doubt the rest of the party felt likewise, that changes were about to take place. I always have forebodings, perhaps owing to the peculiarities of my nervous system ; it is usual, that those who have suffered much, either physically or mentally, should be acutely sensible of moral, as well as of atmospherical, transitions.

My life has been one of intense suffering. Indeed, I am as unable to bear joy as to bear sorrow. There is to me an amount of pain in either : in both.

What these changes were to be, I did not attempt to conjecture, whether sad or gay, many or few. I knew, for a certainty, that every event, small or great, would be under the control of our Heavenly Father ;

either direct emanations of His will, or permitted and over-ruled by Him, and that "all things work together for good to those who love God." Still, my heart beat, for I could not but be aware that there was a material difference in the views and character of each one of the group, since we had first met at York ; and as, there, Matilda Leslie was to meet an aunt, to whom she was to pay a visit of a couple of months' duration, even in our number there was a change made thus early in our journeyings.

Not to take the direct road to London, Mrs. Stuart had settled to sleep at Leamington, to pass a few days there, in order to see Warwick Castle and Kenilworth, and from thence to go to her own place in Kent. As I had frequently visited that part of the country, and had some shopping to do in London, I also separated from them at York. We were quite moved in bidding each other adieu.

I had great difficulty in parting from our young favourite, Matilda Leslie. She was so like a little fluttering dove, so caressing, so charming in her little infantine ways. Yet I knew she would be the same wherever she was, and that her kisses and endearing epithets would, an hour after she had quitted us, be lavished on those with whom she might be, though acquaintances of ever so short a date. Had she not been thus sudden in her outbursts of friendship for me? Volatile she was, and volatile she would be.

I was much pleased with the way in which Matilda took leave of Mrs. Stuart. She showed a depth of feeling in her tone words, that was a fitting demonstration of gratitude and reverent regard towards one to whom she owed so much.

Mr. Elyott purposed to go on to Liverpool. He had not yet seen Ireland, and was most anxious to do so.

Sir Alfred Velasquez promised Mrs. Stuart to take charge of her while she was at Leamington, and do all the sight-seeing with her; on the day she set out for Somerhurst he should go to Oscott. By this means I did not see anything that passed during that time between Sir Alfred and Antonia St. Maur. I can fancy it, for I had watched them with great anxiety.

It was plain that Sir Alfred Velasquez was of the number of those young gentlemen who think that winning hearts is a pretty and allowable pastime, while Antonia's pity for him, when she saw how sad and sickly he was when they first became acquainted, had ripened, unknown to herself, into a warm attachment. This prevented her from having any ulterior views. Whether she were to be Lady Velasquez did not enter her mind. She was no flirt, no heartless seeker of a position in the world, but a dreamer; to be near *him*, to cheer *him*, was all she ever sought or wished; but the moment a woman says *him*, instead of mentioning the name, that moment her heart flies away from its nest; it is fledged, and it is not long before it ceases to



return to it. She is no longer herself, she lives in and for another.

A woman's quiet home-life tends to foster this devotion ; a man, on the contrary, thinks of a thousand other matters ; his love is only a secondary feeling ; it may sometimes be an all-engrossing, selfish passion, which, for a time, absorbs every other taste or pursuit, but only in an idle man, or in one usually much occupied, who, for awhile, has nothing else to do : but that living and moving in another being is not a part of man's nature. He may be affectionate, he may delight in working for, in casting the shield of protection over, feeble woman, over unreflecting childhood, but he is never anyone but himself. When, perchance, he is otherwise, we call him effeminate ; when he ceases to be woman's guardian, he is brutal. How seldom is the equilibrium of manliness to be found !

When I had finished my little London transactions I returned to my own tiny cottage near Ilfracombe, from thence keeping up an active correspondence with Mary Douglas ; I will give extracts of her letters, in order to make the thread of my discourse continuous. I need not copy them verbatim,—at least, though I use her own words, I shall only give important passages.

Letters, exchanged with friends, are of much greater interest to the writers and receivers than to third persons. There is so much addressed to the

peculiarities of the mind, or emanating from them, that intimacy and a knowledge of the various individuals mentioned, create the gist of pleasure they afford.

Some people write letters that are so descriptive, so graphic, that any one may be gratified by the perusal, but, in a general way, we are more pleased with accounts of localities and persons with whom we are familiar; and such letters cannot give general satisfaction.

In former days, when postage and stationery formed great items in weekly bills, correspondents took pains to gather all the news within reach, and a letter was a source of family interest. Since, however, distance is a word nearly obsolete, and that a penny will take a letter from one end of the British Isles to the other, our friends content themselves too generally with telling us just nothing at all.

The public press is also one cause that letters are no longer of the value they used to be, for everything important and unimportant finds its way into one or all of the London newspapers, and very little intelligence is left to be conveyed in private correspondence.

In the times, however, that I am writing about, friends had not quite left off the old habit of pouring out the spirit on paper; and Mary Douglas was very communicative. Perhaps, a little of this was owing to the peculiarity of my mesmeric sympathy.

“Dear Sprite,” she wrote, once,—“I need not detail to you all the history of our journey, since we parted at York. I will tell you that we arrived in Somerhurst in time to find the park and grounds in full luxuriance. Kent is, you know, the garden of England, and decidedly a very beautiful garden it is. All around Somerhurst seems almost to be as much so as our own cultivated grounds. Cara seems so happy to be here once more. She is so wrapt up in all the sayings and doings of the willagers; every child that cries she likes to comfort, though she weeps when the tale of suffering is told by the old and young, and is so grieved when she finds she cannot alleviate their sufferings. When sin has occasioned the disaster, she is quite unhappy, while she yet pities the sinner, for she feels sure that the erring have the greater burden of life to bear. The love of intoxicating drinks she considers the root of most of the evils in the world, and the too great love of money the fellow sin. I am quite astonished at her skill in grappling with these passions; I do believe that, in a year or two, a tipsy man will be a phenomenon at Somerhurst,—a tipsy woman is a sight to which we are perfectly unused; and, yet, Cara does not at all approve of teetotalism, and encourages the moderate use of beer.”

At another time Mary says:—

“We have had a village fête; it took place

three days before the children returned to the schools, and the teachers to their tasks. Antonia asked leave to decorate the most deserving, giving the little warriors in the battle of life a medal and chain as she termed it—to bid them look to the Great Captain of their salvation. Cara, considering that she meant nothing more than what she candidly proposed, gave full leave. A distinction of Christianity, she thought meekly, could do no harm; but dear Cara is you know so guileless—‘She thinks no evil,’—her gift is not that of a discerning of spirits; and so she let Antonia have her way. What then was our surprise, to see each child presented with a rosary of great glass beads of different colours, and a large cross hanging to it. The boys were to have them fastened to their wrists, for the day, and to wear them under their coats ever after. Poor dear Cara! how horrified she was when she found what was done! She could not allow the children to keep them, and yet, unused to the wiles of jesuitism, she did not know how to address them, and to combat any erroneous doctrine they might have imbibed from any information on the subject. She wisely asked Mr. Ormsville, our excellent, earnest clergyman, to speak to the children. He is almost like St. Paul, so zealous, so fervent, so learned, but he can speak simply as well as eloquently, and, in this respect, is indeed ‘all things to all men.’ He called all the

children around him who had retained this order of merit, and requested their parents and teachers to listen to what he had to say to them. ‘Little ones,’ he began, ‘a great mistake has been committed. Miss St. Maur, in her love for little children, has not sufficiently considered, when she wished to give them pleasure, that she might be doing what would be a great and irreparable mischief. You must all remember, that, whatever you learn, you should learn so as fully to understand it. In regard to what concerns your precious souls, you must be ever on your guard. These presents, toys to you only, are made use of by ignorant, uneducated people in a way most hurtful. Christians, who love Christ their Saviour, as their only Mediator with their Heavenly Father, who for his Son’s sake, and his Son’s alone, forgives our sins, and for his sake gives us all the good things, all the blessings we have ; Christians in heart pray to God, without any secondary object placed between them and the worship due to Him ;—but I grieve to say, there are those, who pray to the Virgin Mary, and who, having ceased to go straight to God, use many graven images, and pictures, and even these beads, with great injury to their souls. These beads are to help their memories : when they have done wrong, and are sorry for it, and at many other times, they take up these beads, and say the creed over, so many times,—the Lord’s Prayer so many more,—and then salute the

Virgin Mary with addresses suitable only to their Saviour and her Saviour. You must all of you see plainly, that our Saviour thought of such unmeaning devotions, when he said to his disciples,—“ Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.”’

“ The children looked up anxiously into Mr. Ormsville’s face, for they did not like to part with the pretty ornaments, and yet they felt he wished them to do so. He perceived why they hesitated, and said, ‘ Return them with grateful thanks to Miss St. Maur, and, instead of them, I will give you each a sixpence, that you may lay it up as a little beginning to a fund, always at hand, with which you can do kind acts to friends and neighbours poorer than yourselves.’

“ They were delighted with this proposition, and looked round for Antonia, but she was not amongst us ; so they gave them to Mr. Ormsville, who had to go about, changing shillings and half-crowns for sixpences, until he had enough to redeem the rosaries.

“ I strongly suspect, Antonia had received instructions from Sir Alfred in this matter. Cara has unfortunately permitted her to correspond with him, and, as she never cares to know the contents of letters which do not immediately concern her, she has placed full confidence in Antonia, that she will do and write nothing derogatory to womanly dignity. Cara told me she had consented, because she hoped Antonia’s

kind words would cheer and comfort the poor young man."

The next extract I shall give from Mary's letter, is one that occupied my mind many days ; and indeed has, I think, elevated my thoughts to a great degree :—

"Dear Sprite,—How I wish you were with me just now. You love England so much, and are so patriotic, that I am sure you would be charmed with a book I am now reading, and I should just like to see you warming up, and warming up, at the noble thought that we are indeed, perhaps, the chosen children of God—haughty, disobedient, stiff-necked still as of old. I am reading Wilson's work : *Our Israelitish Origin*. And, oh ! darling Sprite, how beautiful, how invigorating, how ennobling the hope, that we are indeed those, who were to go out amongst all nations to preach to them the glad tidings of the blessed Gospel ! And yet how sorrowful, when we reflect how we have hitherto failed in exerting this glorious privilege ! There is scarcely a spot in the universe, where the English are not to be found ; the United States are peopled by us ; so also is Canada, in a great measure ; and when we look around, we are breathless when we contemplate the extent of our sovereign's dominions, embracing such thousands and thousands of miles by sea and by land.—And yet where, where, have we shown ourselves as children of God ? The god of this world has blinded us ; Satan, under every guise of glory and

ambition, and a love for adventure, a thirst for gold, a longing for independence, in many, many ways, beckons us on and on, but how very few have as yet gone out to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? I am not learned enough to follow Mr. Wilson's explanations of different texts. I can only understand the a, b, c, as it were, of biblical history; I am, I fear, still amongst the babes, who must be fed with milk, still unable to digest strong meat; yet I bow to the wise and the deeply read. Mr. Ormsville tells me, he is personally acquainted with Mr. Wilson; and that he is so thoroughly imbued with scriptural knowledge, that, give him only the first line of any passage you would like to quote, and he will repeat it, did it consist of a whole chapter, or even more. He is sure Mr. Wilson is himself deeply impressed with the idea, that what he asserts is the truth, is fact; and says, he has the appearance of a man wrapt up in pious thought.

“The more I dwell upon the subject in my own mind, the more am I convinced there is much reality in the supposition. It is, perhaps, now only seen through a glass darkly, but the clear light will be more and more apparent. It is to me a great corroboration, that we have, indeed, migrated from the East—that the Welch—the *Cymri*—have their forefathers buried in the southern part of European Russia, called the Crimea: this you know is undoubted.



“There is one objection, I am sure you will make, that your sunny-haired Mary Douglas, with her Grecian nose, has nothing to do with the dark-haired damsels of Judea, with their prominent features. Even this, however, can be over-ruled. We are Ephraimites, and, as such, need not to have the Jewish cast of countenance. Joseph’s brethren did not in the least recognise him, though they had their sin towards him brought so forcibly to their recollection, to their conscience, by the treatment they received from the governor of Egypt. They saw no likeness in him to any of themselves, and it was only, after several prolonged interviews, that he himself made known to them his identity. He, besides, married an Egyptian woman, a daughter of the priest of On ; and, thus, the Jewish resemblance was less likely to belong to his children. Since I have been so engaged with this work, I have been much struck with our characteristic traits, as English and Americans, bearing upon this point. Did any nation ever murmur as the Israelites ? and are not the English proverbial for grumbling ? Then, continually we read in the history of our forefathers, that they lifted up their voice, and wept ; and how remarkable is it in the inhabitants of the United States, that, in joy or in sorrow,—everything that even remotely touches their feelings, opens the flood-gates of their tears ! How continually do the heroines of their novels (see the *Wide, Wide World* and

*Queechey*) sit down and weep as if their hearts would break ; and would this have been written, were it not a peculiarity of the nation ? Dear Sprite, decidedly we are Israelites. If you have not read Mr. Wilson's book, get it immediately ; and then we can compare notes, when we meet, as to the various objections started against the truth of the good news brought before us. We know how long a truth slumbers ere it is made plain to all understandings. The little acorn is a hundred years in growth before it has attained maturity. The little mustard-seed is long before it becomes the largest of bushes. How tiny the man, at his birth, who yet may be a giant, ere he die ! Few, who enunciate a truth hitherto dormant, are believed at first, and their system is often vehemently combated ; but it is ordained in wisdom, otherwise it would immediately fall again into the darkness from which it is just emerging. And, often, those who most forcibly object, from mistaken notions of piety, are, later, the most staunch workers out of the newly-opened vein. For my part, I would rather dig in Mr. Wilson's mine of Scripture treasure, than in those of Australia and California. The gold is purer, and much more durable. Mr. Ormsville tells me that the search for the Ten Tribes has been made in divers places. Some suppose that they have found them among the Red Indians ; some among the Afghans ; but I like best to think *we* may be accounted Israelites

—it is so delicious a thought that *we* may be numbered amongst the children of God, that *we* may form a part of his chosen people. I own that it should make us careful, in a hundred-fold degree, to live worthy of such a calling. Oh ! if a thousand men of apostolic feelings, amongst the Anglo-Saxons, would profit by their birthright, and rise up, and go forth to teach all nations ! I feel in myself that we must each begin in our own hearts ; but though Charity, that is, Love, according to the proverb, begins *at* home, yet were we fully imbued with the spirit which God giveth liberally to all who ask in faith for it, far from rejecting our petition and upbraiding us for presumption, how materially altered would be the aspect of the whole world ! This splendid epoch will yet appear in a full blaze of light, but I fear that you and I, dear Sprite, shall not witness it : we shall have returned to our primitive dust. Still it is inexpressibly delightful to think such a time will assuredly come. I thank Mr. Wilson very cordially for his work. They who tell me tales of woe, of sin, knock off a large piece of my happiness by the narration. How grateful do I feel to those who give me a fresh stimulus for working in God's vineyard, and for lending a helping hand to the extension of Christ's kingdom !”\*

\* Everard, the Leveller, began his discourse to Cromwell, in 1649, by saying, that he was of the race of the Jews, as most men called Saxons, and others, properly are.

One of Mary's letters gave me very much pain. It ran thus :—

“How sorry you will be, dear Sprite, to learn the news I have to communicate to you. Have you heard from Matilda lately? Her letters to Cara were, at first, very numerous and very entertaining. We were quite glad when the post came in with a long budget from her. Her aunt and her cousins seemed to be vying with each other which could do most to contribute to her amusement. It certainly is not a hard task; for no one is of so joyous and contented a nature. Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw, may be applied to her almost infantine disposition. There is something so ingenuous in her, one longs to fold her to one's heart and kiss the tears away when any vexation has momentarily sway over her, clouding her brow. It is seldom this occurs. When the two months were out, she asked leave to remain on till we went to London. Cara consented. Cara and I have so much employment in the village and the garden,—she likes so much to sit quietly and knit muffetees for the school-children while I read to her, that, in the evening or a rainy day, we almost forget we have seen no one but each other for hours. Antonia has taken to spending the greater part of her time alone. She says the books of travels, or of biography, which we read, are so prejudiced, and we are so determined not to look on the poetic and imaginative side of life, that

she finds us dull, and prefers her own studies and her own company. Cara, as you know, never thwarts any one's taste and inclinations, and this made her unhesitatingly prolong Matilda's leave of absence. Matilda began at length to write less often. This did not surprise me, as we all are aware that the novelty of a new position soon wears off, and that which becomes familiar and of daily occurrence we cease to describe. But, little by little, her tone changed. With her accustomed childishness at first, she narrated that it was the habit where she was to make, or buy, or gather flowers with which to decorate the church. She was then persuaded that she ought to courtesy as she passed the communion-table, and she sketched in her letter the various ways in which all the party did it,—her aunt's stateliness, her cousin's awkwardness, the governess's deep humility. It seemed to her all very right, because they told her it was. Why she should bend the knee, except in prayer;—why reverence was due to any one part of the edifice;—why “the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity” was supposed to have concentrated His Essence in one small spot of the Temple which was dedicated to Him, she did not inquire: she saw what was done and imitated what she saw. From one thing to another, this falsely-called high tone of religion, which, in fact, is so very low, making God, who is a Spirit, and everywhere present, to be materi-

ally near us on the Altar, to be pleased with oblations and ceremonies, which a child of earth, a sinful mortal, would scarcely notice—led her on to be in love with the tinsel of this party; and she has written to us, that Miss Cavendish has persuaded her to join Miss Nolles' Protestant convent at Portdown. You may imagine how overcome Cara was on reading this. 'What can the foolish child mean?' she said; 'there is no such thing as Protestantism in a convent. What does she say, Mary? read that over again.' 'Dear Cara,—Happy as I was with you, I am going to be happier still. I am going to lead a religious life, wear a brown-stuff gown without any flowers, so plain and becoming, and saintly! and I am to change my name from Matilda to Sister Seraphina; to sing psalms and hymns continually; to say some certain prayer at a certain hour, every day; to get up, at night, to go out for the Mother Superior—only it is queer that our Mother should be a Miss still, but she is so staid, so holy, that I can fancy her as good as married. And then, I am to help to sweep before the street door, and to make the bread, and to be so useful, so very useful; you would not know your idle, wayward little Matilda, could you see her so employed.' 'Is the child crazy?' asked Cara. 'Is that a religious life—to leave the station in which God has placed her to become a maid of all work?' Dear Cara did not for one moment see that Miss Nolles

was to be considered so much more holy and staid than herself. 'Go on, Mary.' I obeyed. 'One duty is, that I am called on to renounce the world and all its pomps and vanities, as my godmother promised, at my baptism, that I would do; and Miss Nolles will sell all my fine and useless clothes to make money for the poor of Portdown, and to help to carry on the schools. She has already the key of my trinket-box; and she said, so lovingly, 'My sweet child will willingly give me up the paper that assures her her quarterly allowance,' and kissed, and embraced me with tears of joy running down her cheeks when I gave it up, because I was so docile. Miss Nolles is here. It seems my cousin's governess wrote to tell her how desirous she found me of doing my duty, and consecrating myself entirely to a life of sacred actions, and of good deeds; and so she came up directly, and is to take me home with her. Is it not kind of her? One restriction I do not like, which is, that I am never to write to dear Cara, or any one of you again, without showing my letter to be corrected by the better judgment of Mother Superior. I shall be so ashamed, for, you know, I am no scribe. Adieu, darling Cara; I shall pray for you so fervently, that you, and Antonia, and Mary, may be fully enlightened by the truth, and see things in their holy aspect. I believe Antonia is already nearly converted.' Dear Sprits, I felt choking all the time I was reading this, and, when it was

finished, I hid my face in my hands, and wept uncontrollably.

“Antonia was present. She said, ‘Foolish Matilda, as if she could not have remained amongst us!’ I thought to myself, Antonia will not go into a convent, openly avowed as Roman Catholic, or really such under false pretences, for there Sir Alfred Velasquez could not enter. How little, dear Sprite, there is of love to God in all this! Poor Matilda, in giving up all her worldly goods to Miss Nolles, does not perceive she is acting from childish wilfulness. Her obedience is now to be centred in unmeaning acts, at the command of her who professes one religion, and is secretly of another; for, indeed, the Roman Catholic religion is become a thing apart from the religion of the Bible.”

This news was, indeed, afflictive. I was too well acquainted with Matilda's character not to feel sure she would not be six months in that incarceration without flapping her little wings against the bars of her cage. Poor, silly child! I pitied her from the bottom of my heart. To be angry with her was impossible.



## CHAPTER V.

Yet conquest, by that meanness won,  
He almost loathed to think upon,  
Led him at times to hate the cause,  
Which made him burst thro' honour's laws.  
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,  
Who died within that vault of stone.

MARMION.

THE London season arrived, and we were in town again.

I missed Matilda very much; for, though Mary Douglas was my prime favourite, yet she was so engrossed in her duties with Mrs. Stuart, that when I went to Eaton-place, I was, most frequently, ushered into an empty drawing-room. Matilda I had hitherto always found ready to receive me; and though we did complain, that when she threw her arms round our necks, she had no compassion upon our dresses and collars, yet gladly would I have been crushed by this dear girl's pretty boisterousness. I confess, I am not very forbearing, usually, when such things occur. It is tantalising, when one has taken pains to be what is called "fit to be seen"—which, in fact, I always make my-

self before I leave my room, in early morning—to be made to look, in a moment, as if one's clothes had been thrown on by a pitchfork. And I own, that Matilda had had many a rebuff from me for her school-girlish salutations. Perhaps, in the midst of London morning society, I should have been less forbearing, had she so unmercifully tumbled my finery; but, all this I totally forgot, when I entered the room in Eaton-place, and found no one.

Whether one attends balls and late parties or not, one is in a state of continual turmoil in London, especially after Easter, when the town is full. The great distances one has to traverse, in a measure causes this. It is a continual running to and fro. To obviate this, I always rise at my country-hours; and, as I content myself with dinner-parties, eschewing all crowds, I find I can lead as natural a life there, as anywhere.

Such is not the lot of many; nor would it be to the taste of those who go to town to launch forth into all its gaieties.

It is hard, however, upon those who like the country in summer, when it is most lovely and healthy, to be obliged to go to bed at cock-crow, and to get up when the sun has run a large portion of his daily round.

Shall we ever return to the habits of our forefathers? rise with the lark, dine at noon, and return to Somnus before the clock has tolled eleven? enjoying the hour of beauty sleep before midnight, which

is so invigorating? Thousands, did they hear this question, would answer,—Truly, I hope not.

I do not agree with those who see sin in dancing and music.

Solomon has said, there is a time for all things, even a time to dance ; and a greater than Solomon has sanctioned these recreations, by mentioning them as a part of family rejoicings. In this, as in all employments, we should endeavour to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove.

I am now an old woman, and, therefore, my dancing days are over ; and I cannot say that I ever was much addicted to this mode of passing an evening. It has always been my wont, to prefer agreeable conversation to this, to me, fatiguing amusement ; and, as the dialogues, interrupted by the mazes of a dance, are not very entertaining, do not afford much food for after-thought, I cared not to attend balls ; though, being of a lively disposition, whenever I was seen so employed, it has been supposed that I was fully enjoying myself. But, though this has not been one of my favourite pleasures—and though I have not given myself to music, having literally not the least talent for it,—yet I shall never be hasty to condemn those recreations.

We have all our gifts ; and it is the diversity of them which composes the grand harmony, the beautiful balance in the moral and intellectual world ; and

to me few things are more displeasing, than to hear people inveigh against amusements, or accomplishments, which they themselves, from age, have ceased to practise, or, in which, from total want of talent, or of inclination, they never have indulged.

Old people are very apt to forget they once were young ; the married, that they were once single ; and all of us are far too much disposed to square all temperaments, wishes, and employments to our own.

The great deficiency in our education is, the not urging upon us self-control, and a tender consideration for the tastes, and comfort, and happiness of others.

It is wonderful what a balm it is to the sorrows of after-life, to turn from ourselves to aid those dear to us, or around us, in their woes and difficulties.

“Love thy neighbour as thyself.” What a world of true felicity to ourselves there is in that injunction !—our own selfish, evil passions subdued by the constant exercise of love to our neighbour ! How sublime is our Lord’s condensed code of religion and morality ! In two short sentences, He sums up all we need know and do in this world, from the cradle to the grave. Love to God, and love to man, pervading the whole system ; the latter measured by the golden rule, of doing to others as we would have others do to us.

I had much opportunity, during my stay in London, of seeing how completely folks throw away their own happiness by self-indulgence. Not having any ties of

my own, to keep my mind bent on the performance of my own duties, I had full leisure to watch all that was passing around me, and to see how happy all persons might be, but that they will not. St. Paul's injunction, to be in the world and yet not of it, is the way to pass through life profitably and agreeably.

Duty first, pleasure afterwards, is an excellent maxim.

The struggle, usually carried on in the world, is not—as it should be—with our own evil tempers and selfish dispositions,—but how to square religion and self-will. Not, how much shall we do to the glory of God, and for the good of our neighbour; but, how much may we amuse ourselves, if we go to church regularly on Sunday, and have family and closet-prayers in the week. The struggle is occasioned by the misconstruction we put on amusement.

I believe, all will agree that nothing is less productive of pleasure and gratification, than the rush after novelty, and the constant endeavour to seek amusement.

Nothing is so fatiguing as idleness. Which is the young man who yawns most? He who is studying for a profession, or he who, having that dangerous portion, “just enough to live on,” spends his income in boat-racing, betting on the turf, smoking, billiards, and every accomplishment of a “fast man?”

I am perfectly persuaded, no young man, who thus spends his nights and days, has one hour of real, substantial happiness.

Nor does the young lady, who is solely occupied, in the middle of the day, in talking over the delights of the last charming ball, or in preparing for another,—who expends her strength in hunting, or in any such unwomanly exercise,—ever feel truly happy.

Verily, there is a time for all things. The secret of happiness consists in waiting upon the Lord, hour by hour—doing the duty of the moment. Should that duty be, accompanying our parents to social assemblies, even there God will meet us; for He is everywhere present. Provided we do nothing that He has forbidden, we do not err; we may ask a blessing on every act of our lives, and should ever go forth from our closets with His seal upon us.

I do not mean with solemnity of countenance, that is not a duty, but the contrary. We should ever be cheerful, and though often in laughter the heart is heavy, we know—for who has not felt it?—still, it is our positive duty to rejoice with those that do rejoice, and to be of good courage ourselves.

Why a sad, depressed look should be a sign of religious feeling I cannot understand. The psalmist, likewise, marvelled at it; even in himself he could not see it was right; though, as the heart knows its own bitterness, he must have felt that he had cause

for it; and he twice soliloquises:—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

That we may honour God in our festivities, is certain, since Zechariah says—"For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids."

St. Paul enjoins, "Whether we eat, or drink, to do all to the glory of God."

If people are wickedly inclined, their thoughts, even when they are lying, in the dark, on their beds, may be evil. God is about our bed, and about our path, and knows our thoughts long before; and lo! there is not a word in our tongues, but He knows it altogether.

However, although I make these reflections, it is not as an excuse for anything our party did, this spring, in the way of balls, or of attendance at theatres; for we had fallen into the turmoil of religious changes and chances of the day, and all the acquaintances we made, as well as the old friends with whom we met, were entirely absorbed by them.

Mr. Elyott and Sir Arthur Velasquez soon joined us, in London.

I happened to be present when Sir Alfred and

Antonia met. Her eyes betrayed all her inward feeling, as a woman's eyes always do. Tears of emotion were in them, with a look of unutterable affection, whilst he—it pained me to the heart to see it—fully betrayed to me, that he was acting a part. The tone, the words, and the expression of the mouth and of the eyes were totally at variance: but she perceived it not.

There is nothing, in which a woman so deceives herself, as in the amount of love felt for her.

Sir Alfred reminded me, at that time, of a theory I once heard propounded—that the harmony of our system is so perfect, that we mar it, even when we merely speak in opposition to our knowledge.

A gentleman told me, he was conversing with a friend, when some one entered to call this friend to the further end of the room, to relate to him some fact of importance. The two retired to the recess of the window. When the dialogue was concluded, and the stranger had left the room, the spectator warned his friend not to believe one word of what had been told him.

“Why not?” he replied; “the facts speak for themselves: they cannot but be true.”

“They are not true. I watched you both the whole time, and I am persuaded that every syllable was a falsehood. I did not catch even the sound of his voice, but the man was inhaling all the time he



was speaking to you, and even our breathing must be in accordance with the sentiments we emit."

He who had been listening deemed this to be nonsense, and was rather offended that his perspicacity should be considered so much at fault.

A year afterwards, the friends met again. "You were right," said the deceived; "every word that man said was a falsehood; and by believing him, I have fallen into a snare, from which I shall have great difficulty to extricate myself."

I saw it was so with Sir Alfred; and was the more convinced I was right, when I overheard him, in a fit of absence, say to himself, "Why, why was this task imposed on me? it is hateful to me."

We passed almost every evening at Mrs. Stuart's. Now ~~that~~ Sir Alfred was returned, Antonia became once more an inmate of the drawing-room.

They often played at chess together. Mary Douglas sang two or three pretty little ballads usually; she had a very sweet though not a very powerful voice. Mr. Elyott used to say, it could not be otherwise; for there could be no deep, no *base* intonation where dear Mary's voice was concerned.

Of course we heard nothing of Matilda. They who had carried her off, put a very decided bar to all intercourse. How evident that "the *mystery*" of the ~~Revelation~~ applies to the Roman Catholic Church.

All is *mystery*. The wiles of the popish church

are beyond compute. All conversion is done in an underhand way. Innumerable are the disguises which Jesuits wear to make proselytes; disguised as masons, as Protestant clergymen, in every form they insinuate themselves into silly folks' houses and bosoms.

The words, when the elements of the Communion are administered, "the *mystery of faith*" shows that Papists themselves consider their religion a *mystery*. They use the word *chalice* in their tradition instead of that of *cup*, which doubtless would make the *mystery* to appertain too apparently to their faith; the MYSTERY so accurately described in the Bible. Did we obey Christ's simple injunction to "search the Scriptures," we should find the truth of His words; for the Jews believe, as we do, that they contain all the doctrines of "eternal life." Jesus says of them: "They are they which testify of me." Legal disquisitions, subtle reasonings, traditions, the opinions of erring men, are the resting-places of faith to them who do not go to the only source of truth. Where would be the doctrine of Transubstantiation, of the Real Presence, did men calmly consider that our Lord was at table with the disciples, when he instituted the Holy Communion, to be observed, in remembrance of his death, until he came again—and of a death which had not yet taken place—for the Lord was in full health before them. They sang

a hymn, and all went out together to the Mount of Olives. After his resurrection, he passed forty days on earth before he ascended to heaven, where, as St. Mark is the first to observe, "He sat on the right hand of God." After his resurrection, he again communed with his disciples, and was known of them in the breaking of bread." Until that time, it would appear, those disciples had not had the assurance of his resurrection; that he was really in the flesh on earth again, after they had seen him crucified, dead, and buried. St. Luke relates, that the Redeemer ate a piece of broiled fish and of a honeycomb, and explained to them, when he had done so, that all had been fulfilled concerning himself that was written in the law of Moses, and the Psalms, and the Prophets. If we are not to take the words spiritually that he was "that bread which came down from heaven," that we "drink his blood," and "eat his flesh"—words which he himself tells us are *spirit* and *life*—what are we to think of the entrance of the devil into the heart of Judas, after he had received the sop? Did he enter in as a serpent, or a roaring lion, or an angel of light? The very fact of this assertion, that "Satan entered into him," proves that all who communicate do not receive the body of our Lord even spiritually. It is very strange, that in the Roman Catholic Church the bread is given to the laity in the very manner re-

corded as that in which our Lord gave the sop to Judas.

Mr. Elyott used to be more particularly unhappy about the *confessional*, to which we knew poor Matilda would be subjected. "How completely at variance," he would say, "that abominable practice is to the beautiful injunction of St. Paul! In the confessional, the pure, feminine mind of a young girl is filled with all evil suggestions, while the Apostle says to her, and to all of us, 'Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'

"What has a sinful man to do with our thoughts, with a confession of our sins against God? He and we should carry them all to a higher tribunal; to the man who was without sin; to 'Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.'

"I have no doubt that Miss Nolles exacts, that a confession should be made to her likewise. Indeed, I know it is customary to give an account to the superior of their spiritual condition, laying open to her with fidelity, simplicity, and confidence, the inmost recesses of the heart. Lady abbesses have a way of their own of 'keeping silence in the church;' for, surely, this is an arrogation of *priestly* rule."

And, then, on the chapter of penances, how explicit and irate he was !

“ Fancy,” he would sometimes say, “ that plump, pretty little thing lying on a dirty brick-floor, which, of course, she is only allowed to scrub, when she herself has desecrated it by rubbing off her sins, making the sign of the cross on it with her tongue, till that little tongue is almost scarified ; and for what, forsooth ? Because, perhaps, she may have dared to say, ‘ Good morning,’ to a sister, at the time Mrs. Mother Superior had enjoined perfect silence. If Miss Leslie had any sense, of which, I am happy to say, for her conscience’ sake, she is totally deficient, she would go mad, like that poor young lady in a similar institution in the Regent’s Park, who described herself to her uncle as fearfully deceived and miserable, and who yet could not, then, mount into his carriage, and drive away with him ; because she had gone too far, and taken all the vows, which it was impossible for her to break, and so she died of a broken heart, raving mad. Miss Leslie is too childish to feel these things so vehemently, I hope. Penance, indeed ! Self-inflicted mortifications ! As if the Lord of all did not chasten us for our good, sufficiently. How apt we are to take the law into our own hands, and out of His. Let those so-called renouncers of sin and of the world only abide in the world, and, I warrant them, they will meet with mortification of the flesh, and of the spirit, to their

heart's content; not austerities of their own seeking, which become at last such regular work, that they cannot do without them—as those nuns, who had accustomed themselves, in their convent, to sleep in a perpendicular position, so that when they came to London they could not sleep at all, until they had placed their mattresses bolt upright against the wall. They should have followed out their system, and have obliged themselves to do penance by going to bed like ordinary folk, instead of saints, as they deemed themselves to be. What is the use of getting up in the night to say their prayers? ‘God gives his beloved sleep’; and they would do their duty to him much better if, when they have opportunity, they would use the night and day for their respective ends. In the world, in the prosecution of duty, vigils must be kept: soldiers and sailors have their night watches; the shepherds had at the time our Lord was born;—such penances are righteously enjoined. St. Paul, who was pre-eminently anti-papistical, enumerates the chastenings which he endured in the world,—mortification enough when he was scourged and beaten with many stripes. He did not seek these things; they were not self-inflicted; on the contrary, he seems not to have relished them at all, but asks, after warning people not to be ‘beguiled of their reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels,’—‘Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world,

why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) *after the commandments and doctrines of men?* Mark that these ordinances 'are after the commandments and doctrines of men; which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.' And the next chapter tells us what we are to mortify—our sins; and what we are to love—Christ, and heavenly things.

"Poor Matilda! These ordinances of man are those she is now following. She has left her Bible, the true Christian's sole code, and, as our Lord said to the Jews, who made away with their money, as she has done, at the bidding of the priests, 'Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions.' Roman Catholics, who have been so from generation to generation, and who thus brought up in error, still continue in the darkness of their education, are much to be respected; for they do their duty, as they have been taught it, with much zeal, and are a bright example to those who read their Bible, and yet do not obey its precepts. As to penances, I know of none greater than one which fell to my lot to-day. I wanted to speak to some one on business, and went purposely very early, not to miss him; and there I found such a din,—I was made half crazy.

Through the thin wall between his and his neighbour's house, we heard two pianos,—a singing lesson was going on, on the first floor; we heard, on the other piano, badly executed exercises, on the second floor; an organ was playing an old French air under the windows; and two children were running round the breakfast table, screaming at the top of their voices. I wonder if the pain of flagellation, self-inflicted by some monk, was ever more harrowing to the flesh, than all this uproarious discord to my spirit. You know I am not patient, dear Lady Ingoldspier; and, I assure you, I had really to practise self-denial to the utmost, not to burst out in vehement language; but I did deny myself, and bore the cross meekly; for I am determined to quell all the risings of the Evil One within me, with that strength from above which is always given in answer to prayer. You remember how Nehemiah looked up to heaven, and immediately was aided. And do you not think, that with such sacrifices God is better pleased than with the offerings of wax tapers, or floral decorations, or by lying in impossible postures, or by kneeling to images of the Virgin Mary?"

Of course, I could not but say "Yes" to sentiments which are, in fact, my own; so like mine are they.

I became acquainted with a most interesting fact about this time. A very happy old maid had been



introduced to me, with whom I struck up a great friendship ; and we took, often, long morning walks together, nearly about the time the dissipated were going to bed, and the industrious beginning the affairs of the day. Miss Cholmley was a person who had seen a great deal of life,—a vast o' things, as the Yorkshire folk say—and was ever most willing to talk over men, manners, and customs of foreign parts, and of those of our little island. We had scarcely any mutual acquaintances, and our conversation was all the more agreeable ; for the general run of discourse upon the puerile events of the preceding day,—when Mrs. So-and-so went to the opera, or that Mr. Such-a-one had his wig awry at his grandmother's dinner-table,—was avoided. Similar topics form usually the staple commodity of the next morning's chatter,—I cannot dignify it with the name of conversation.

Miss Cholmley and I naturally fell upon the subject of the great stir in the religious world. We felt that the changes taking place were the rumblings of the earthquake which would lay low so many preconceived ideas,—that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, without any visible agency, would soon show itself ; the stone to the Jews such a stumbling-block, to the Greeks, foolishness, and that all would eventually acknowledge one Lord. The process, we know, must be slow ; and before peace—the bequest of the Saviour to his sorrowing disciples—reigned in

all hearts, and love to God and love to man would be the predominant feeling and stimulus, we should have much to undergo, both in the moral and in the spiritual world.

We are all aiming at Catholicity. Whatever the creed of individuals, we strive to the utmost to make that the universal faith. Satan is, indeed, busy, and catches men in nets of such wonderful texture, that those who are not of this persuasion, are lost in astonishment that such folly can gain belief.

We of the English Church, Miss Cholmley would say, seem to turn our attention solely to the encroachments of the Papal see. How small, however, are the numbers leaving us for Roman errors in comparison of the deluded thousands that take up with views infinitely more derogatory to the reverence due to God alone. Look at the Mormonites! Can Pagan rites be less pleasing to the Almighty? The heathens are a law unto themselves, and by the light given unto them they will be judged; but that thousands in a land where Christ crucified for us is preached, where the Bible is read, can be carried away by doctrines so offensive to God and man as those of these people, is a marvel to me much more incredible than the propagation of Mohammedanism.

Do not think either, she would add, that deceit and Jesuitism are solely synonymous: Infidelity is as backward to come to the light, and as prone to hide

itself under the mask of Protestantism, as the followers of any Miss Nolles that ever existed.

What would you think of an organised band, going about the country deluding people, in the names of noblemen and gentlemen of the religious world,—men of high repute, and so generally known, that one would have thought it impossible to use their names in print, in a cause which they would rather die than forward? And yet such is the case; and young men of good families belong to this association—an association so appallingly numerous, that I am afraid to say how many, many thousands are members of it. Ah! indeed, if we truly loved Christ more than ourselves, we should be deeply anxious so to act and speak, that we do not ourselves disgrace this badge, but that we strain every nerve to keep down sin within ourselves, and to encourage others to come to Him, and Him alone, to be saved.

One morning we took a long walk. The spring was then in all its beauty; the verdure of the grass—the luxuriant foliage of the trees—the murmuring of the water—the chirping of the birds; and the glorious sun, high in the heavens, gilding everything animate and inanimate with its beauteous rays—the fleecy clouds, which the light breeze drove in playfulness before it—the balmy air of the country, for we had wandered far away from the town and the trains,—all contributed to make us so happy that we

spontaneously burst forth in a hymn of praise to the great Creator and Renewer of all these beauties, and thanked Him from the inmost soul that He had added to all these wondrous gifts to man, the revelation in his Word of the work of Redemption.

We talked much of the new heavens, where we should need no such material sources of gratification, but where God would be all in all.

Miss Cholmley sighed, and her lips moved in prayer.

"Ah," she said, "on days such as these the tide of memory is too strong for me; it almost makes me sick at heart. Dear Lady Ingoldspier, shall I tell you the history of this heart of mine?"

There it was again! The mesmeric sympathy had been called forth by our mutual feeling of admiration.

"Dear Miss Cholmley, it will be an immense treat to me. The inner workings of the mind laid bare, are more delightful to me than reading the newest book of the day."

"It was," she began, "the allusion to the unspeakable goodness of God in the work of Redemption that roused within me all the deep feelings of my past years. You think me happy; you see that I am cheerful; and you, no doubt, believe me to be good."

"Good!" I exclaimed; "I have not the least doubt that you are so. Are not all your sentiments those of a mind profoundly pious? Are not all your actions emanations of a boundless benevolence? How

true it is, that God sees not as man sees; that the innermost recesses of our heart are clear to him, to whom the light and darkness are both alike."

"I do not feel flattered by your kind and far too lenient judgment; for if I appear such as you describe, it is the outward woman only that is thus attractive—'The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy.' Well did David say, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart;'—for it is, indeed, in our own hearts we hear the echo of wicked words, and wicked thoughts. We call ourselves Christians, and exceedingly irate are we when any one doubts the fact of our being so; but how little do we rely upon the full atonement of the sacrifice once made! We are for adding to this perfect work some imperfect works of our own; and while with the lips we acknowledge the fulness of the merits of our Lord, our hearts instigate us to work out our salvation by deeds of our own. There is a romance in the life of every man, and of every woman. Some of us feel it more acutely than others. With some there is a depth, an ocean of affection within us, that makes the torrent pour forth its tide with irresistible power, at one time or another. Voltaire was but too correct when he wrote on the statue of Love—

Qui que tu sois, vois ici ton maître;  
Il l'est, ou le fut, ou le doit être.

I do not aver that, to all, this comes alike. On the

contrary, it is like any disease to which the human body is liable. Some have it in a more virulent, some in a milder, form. I fear, mine was of that kind which, like an insidious poison, runs through all the veins, permeating the whole system ;—it was, in short, that worship of the creature, which is due to the Creator alone. It was like the genial warmth which pervades a stove,—it was as sap to the trunk of a tree, as the fibres in a leaf, as the atmosphere we breathe, as the sun which brightens all things, or, in its fluctuations, like the darkness of a heavy cloud. In one word, it was my religion. The object of this attachment was worthy of it, if a man can be esteemed worthy of that entire subjugation of soul, and he loved me as I loved him. Now, then, comes the confession of my great sin. My father was not so strict in his conduct as he ought to have been ; and I was so cut to the heart by thinking how my beloved mother was neglected, and how he was perilling his own soul, that, in an unguarded moment, I vowed to God, if He would grant me my father's salvation, I would renounce all hope of a union with the man of my heart. Dear Lady Ingoldspier, none, but the God who made me, has ever fathomed the anguish of my life ; my spirit writhed within me ; I knew that I had sinned, that I had dared to make an offering to complete that all-sufficient sacrifice made on the cross. I was punished as I deserved to be. Whenever I saw my father

straying, Satan whispered,—His soul will be lost, but what matters it? you will yet have the companionship of the man you love. See how he clings to you ; how in absence he writes ; how your silence causes him to send letters to friends and relations, to know what has become of you. All will yet be well.

“ Then when, in fact, these letters of hope of the fulfilment of my earthly wishes came I shuddered with a fearful tremor, lest my dear father should not be saved ; and thus years went on. My friend never spoke or wrote to me of his love for me, but I heard it from all quarters ; and, as he would not marry, and could not make up his mind to renounce the outpourings of my spirit in my letters to him,—any one of which, he used to assure me, was worth fifty of those from any one else,—he contented himself with telling merely of his admiration. To one, he would say he never knew my equal for doing the duty of the hour as it came ; to another, that I was an angel ; and to a third, that he felt he should be the true copy of a picture he had seen, of a monk in Spain, who, to the day of his death, sat in contemplation of the shoe of his lady-love,—with this difference, however, that the object of his veneration would be, my work of a pair of slippers which I had sent him. We often met. He would even take a journey, by sea and land, of many thousand miles to spend a few days with me, but, instead of declaring his love, he would fondly shake

hands with me, and say, Good-by : there is nothing on earth one cannot resist, with a firm determination to do so. He was my senior by many years. He wrote to me only three days before he died. He survived my father but a short time. Both died with a blessing on their lips for me, and both in penitence and faith.

“The terrific struggles are over, and now all is peace with me. I feel that I am forgiven, and that I have already undergone the punishment for my sin, or, rather, the correction necessary to bring it fully to my conscience ; for the penalty was paid for me in all its fulness on the cross.”

I could not resist, in a moment of wilfulness, observing to her, “Had you, dear Miss Cholmley, been a Catholic, I mean a Roman Catholic, you might still be enjoying daily intercourse with your love. I have a widowed friend, who sets apart an hour or two of every day for communing with her husband.”

“And how does she know,” asked Miss Cholmley, “where he now is? She has, doubtless, had many hundreds of masses said for the repose of his soul, and for his liberation from purgatory ; but, what intimation has she had, that enough money has been paid, that enough prayers have been said? How does she know whether he be still in purgatory, or whether he may have been passed on into Paradise ; or, if he have been a rigid papist, he may by his own merits, and



with the help of the works of supererogation of a few other saintly adherents of the papacy, have entered heaven at once at his death? To make the matter sure, she has, perhaps, gone to the fountain-head at once ; for at Rome, at the church of Santa Maria della Pace, a mass to save a soul costs from three to four paoli only ; and the inscription at the Mamertine prisons concludes with this sentence :— ‘ The altar of this church of St. Pietro in Carcere is privileged, every day, for ever, with the liberation of one soul from purgatory, for every mass which shall be celebrated at the same.’ Can anything be plainer than that the doom of destruction to fall on Babylon, is intended for Rome? St. John expressly mentions, amongst the merchandise of that great city, *the souls of men*. Slaves, also, are they, who thus believe in the reality of this traffic,—slaves to priestcraft.”

Miss Cholmley had wandered away from her own history to observations made in her travels. “ It is very remarkable,” she observed, “ that the Roman Catholic writers themselves say that Babylon is the mystical name for Rome. They cannot otherwise prove that St. Peter ever was at Rome ; and they are compelled to this, because he says in his Epistle,—‘ The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you.’ And they do not, or will not see, that this implies equality in churches ; for St. Peter, laying no claim to infallibility for himself, or for the

Church at Babylon, says to those to whom he writes —“*elected with you;*” claiming no superiority for either.

We conversed in this way for a little while longer, and then our walk was concluded. We lived next door to each other.

I did not, of course, repeat to Mary Douglas what Miss Cholmley had told me of herself, but I could not help telling her what she had said about St. Peter, and the merchandise, in the Papal Church, of the souls of men.

Mary then told me there was a foreign nobleman who had, for some time, been paying his court to her; who had tried to persuade her of the stern necessity there was for her to renounce Protestant errors, and to enter the bosom of the only true church. He wished her very much to become a saint on earth, that she might be canonized, and might figure in the calendar, when she was dead. One of the conditions was, to give up all her property to the Church of Rome, that it might be spent for her in saving the souls of her parents, and of her friends, and of other relatives. One lady of high rank had already given up £80,000 for this meritorious work. She had, likewise, been a heretic, but now saw the precipice on which she had been standing, and had turned away in humility and contrition. She was so amiable, that she spent her time in working altar-

cloths and priests' garments, and beautiful dresses for the statues of the Virgin Mary, and of her patron saint. According to the saint's day, she decorated her table with the coloured cloth he preferred, and wore always a scapular to save her from a violent death, or from any bodily harm.

Her reverence for holy men is so great, that when Cardinal Sapienthomo comes to her house, she makes her household kneel down in the entry to receive him; and none dare speak, not even to crave his blessing, or bid him welcome, till he has spoken.

This clever foreigner is wonderfully eloquent. There is such a fire in his words, such a tone of fervour in his voice, such a look of earnestness in his large liquid eye, that it is impossible to doubt his sincerity. "But, Sprite," Mary added; "how can any one be so blinded to common sense?"

"Mary, dear, it is a horrible state of things; yet God has permitted that Satan, the father of lies, should thus have sway over men's minds for a season; and those who are willingly led captive by Satan's agent, who thus, in his power, works signs and lying wonders, have a strong delusion sent to them to believe all that is told them."

Mary bowed her head in silent sorrow. I knew she was thinking of Antonia St. Maur and Matilda Leslie, and inwardly praying that they might be brought back from the errors of their ways. Earthly

love, and love-making, was going on all this time, in its usual course of fervour and increase.

Mr. Elyott looked smilingly upon Miss Cholmley, much upon the principle which asserts—put a pair of tongs and a poker together, and, unless the shovel interfere, they will unavoidably fall in love with each other.

Propinquity makes many matches. In this case, however, I rather think I was the shovel; for Miss Cholmley seemed to look on Mr. Elyott as so entirely my property, that she considered all his attentions to her were only to curry favour with all persons and animals that surrounded me. He often had wished I had a favourite dog, that he might caress it for my sake. His was a volcanic heart; and though I have vanity enough to suppose he never really cared for any one, as he had done for me in my young days; still, there were many fiery eruptions, casting the missiles of the artillery of love over many of my sex, which made him look very ridiculous for a time; for nothing is more foolish than the look of folk past the age for sentimentality, who nevertheless are still addicted to it.

Mary Douglas's loveliness of person and of purse had many admirers. Several coronets were placed at her disposal, which would not have adorned her, but to which she would have given great brilliancy. Old and young proposed to her, for Mary was the star of the season. She was the more sought and prized, be-

cause she was so seldom seen. She was not accustomed to late hours and much dissipation ; and never, indeed, went to balls, or large assemblies, but, to please Mrs. Stuart, who did not like her to renounce the amusements suitable to her years and her station in life.

Mary, however, felt that her post of duty was at her kind friend's side ; and she had always been taught, and had always practised the lesson, that peace and health are found only in the position, which the events of life show to be the path marked out for us by our Heavenly Father.

Mrs. Stuart was declining into the vale of her days, and dark shadows were on her. She felt, with a depth known only to those who watched every variation in her countenance, how greatly both Antonia and Matilda were wanderers from the fold of the only good Shepherd and were carving out for themselves an existence at total variance with the one assigned them by infinite love and infinite wisdom. Yet would she not hear of any harsh method of reclaiming them. " I can only pray for them," she said, " and leave the issue to Him, who may, possibly, be only correcting them, by leaving them to their wilfulness for awhile ; and when my grey head is laid with sorrow in the grave, they may be brought back ; but it will, too surely, be by a thorny path of sore trials.

We were all grieved by Matilda's absence. To

believe her to be alive, and never to hear from her, was so hard. We knew that she had been led astray by specious reasoning and arguments, which, to her guileless mind, would appear incontrovertible. We knew that, if she ever acknowledged she had been weak, and too easily beguiled, Miss Nolles would tell her in words of honey, that the sweet child should not listen to such suggestions of the Evil One. We could with such facility picture to ourselves this young bird, so used to diving and splashing in the huge tubs Mrs. Stuart always had placed in the bed-rooms, so used to the German soap-baths—which purify the skin, and act so beneficially on the nervous system, that it is averred one bath will enable a person to be in good humour for three or four weeks; we could imagine, I say, our dear Matilda obliged to content herself with a dish scarcely bigger than that she filled for her own canary, washing her hands and face, and not allowed to change her dress till dirt and vermin had made it so rotten, it would no longer stay on her. How often would she ask herself—for she would dare ask no one else—“Is this absolutely necessary to a religious life? Is this sacrifice of comfort and of cleanliness really pleasing to God?” Whatever answer her heart would give, the case was hopeless: there was no remedy. None of the rules of the Mother Superior could be broken through.

Oh! had she come back to us but for one day,

we might have persuaded her to renounce all the foolish projects formed for her; but the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light, and Miss Nolles and her satellites would not have consented to an interview between their prey and us.

Antonia was no longer a resource to Mrs. Stuart. She was so abstracted we could hardly get a word from her; and instead of driving with Mrs. Stuart, or riding with Mary, or walking with me, she would always plead some excuse for remaining in her own room while we were out.

All this gave Mary much to do, to cheer and be with Mrs. Stuart, so that the gentlemen who were devoted to her had little opportunity for converse with her; and all they could do was to pay a morning visit, or endeavour to take her down to dinner. There was one who always preferred sitting opposite to her. He reminded me of the lines—

“ Amongst the rest young Edwin bowed,  
But never talked of love.”

He was the younger son of a gentleman, untitled, but of a more ancient family than the greater part of our nobility. A most amiable young man, he had been called by the grace of God to the ministry. There had been no idea of entering the church for a living, (or, as is most aptly said, a starving,) but his whole heart was love.

“Is Ethelbert de Roussillon handsome?” I know not; I never asked myself the question till now; and now I cannot answer it. My readers will scarcely credit it; but, though I know him so well, I actually do not know the colour of his eyes, nor of his hair. “Is he light or dark?” Neither can I tell that. I only know the equilibrium is so complete in him, that there is not one glaring imperfection. He is in all things, at all times, the Christian gentleman. I know no one so thoroughly so. Greatly do I rejoice that it has been my good fortune to meet with him so often, since we were first introduced. His adaptation of manner to the person he addresses, is something unpractised by any one else of my acquaintance; and, yet, I am persuaded he himself has never analysed the fact. Although convinced deeply of his sins, ready at all times, like St. Paul, to confess himself the chief of sinners; he, nevertheless, seems to be so entirely thinking of his subject when he discourses, that no one would stop to inquire whether or not he ever thought about himself, except for self-examination.

I know no one who is so emphatically the minister of Christ. To be doing his Master’s business,—to be found watching when he comes again,—to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to help the way-worn in their struggles to enter also; this is De Roussillon’s occupation. I am fully persuaded his



very dreams are counterparts of his waking thoughts. And all this he is in the most natural unconstrained manner. His old nurse used to say he was too good to live ; and, indeed, his lamp does burn so brightly, I cannot but fear sometimes it will expend itself, and he will be hidden from our sight. We should, indeed, be left in darkness without him,— a darkness that would be felt.

To revert to the earlier days of our acquaintance : I had much pleasure in observing his love for my dear Mary, because I felt that, whether reciprocal or not, it would never injure him. He himself was not in the slightest degree aware of it. He loved her with all the ardour of a young man's first love,—a love that would grow with his growth in years, and strengthen with them, but which nevertheless was so subservient to his love for his Creator, for his Saviour, that it would never get the upper-hand of his faculties, never interfere with his duties.

It was a love which I have often dwelt upon as a prototype of the love we shall feel for each other in the world of spirits,—a love compatible in heaven with our having had ties on earth, which have bound us to each other while we were here,—earthly ties which death loosens, but which become indissoluble in an ethereal state and will be of an ethereal, spiritual nature,—a love which I like to imagine all the dear ones already in Paradise are feeling, and enjoying.

Ethelbert de Roussillon was the Curate of the parish in which we were located. The Rector was so occupied as the member of a committee which settled the affairs of many parishes, that De Roussillon was left to do as he liked, and to work to the utmost of his power.

His sermons are the best I ever heard. He was once thus abruptly accosted by a very parochially-inclined, self-sufficient, busy young lady,—“ Mr. Roussillon, you seem to forget we go to church to be edified, and learn to reverence our pastor and master. You are continually telling us how wicked you are, and yet, before you have fairly interested us in the state of your heart, your discourse comes to an end.”

Ethelbert smiled at her pert vehemence, which she, with want of delicacy, intended should be a flattering eulogium upon his humility, and at the brevity of a lecture which really pleased her. He quietly replied, “ The church is meant to be a house of prayer, and after reading the sublime words of the Psalmist, and the infinitely sublimer precepts taught by our blessed Lord and his disciples, I feel my words so insignificant that it is with difficulty I preach at all ; still, I know it to be my duty to bring these precepts home to the hearts of my congregation. I do it, therefore, as emphatically and as concisely as I can, consistently with lucidity ; and as to a detail of my own sins, did I not speak from the depths and know-

ledge of my own heart of the truth of original sin, how could I convince others of its undoubtedness? We are enjoined to take the beam out of our own eye, to enable us to see more clearly the mote that is in our neighbour's."

It was not, however, that Ethelbert spoke much of himself, but that one saw plainly his tenderness to the sinner, while reproving the sin; and that he felt how strange a position it was for a young man to dogmatise, and to exhort grey-headed old men and women to take heed to their ways. Whether Mary secretly preferred Ethelbert to the rest of her admirers, I could not tell. She did not notice him particularly, nor ever attract his attention to herself. She did the honours of the house for Mrs. Stuart, and with such an equality of manner towards all the guests, that I, even, who knew Mary so intimately, could not have discerned from it whether she had any partiality for particular persons. I observed that she endeavoured most to draw forth those who were diffident. She had great compassion on those who, with more capabilities for entertaining others, were too modest to come forward, and who, but for her, would allow the shallow and the noisy, the conceited and the flippant, to take the lead. Mary was remarkable for her tact.

Tact is considered to be undefinable and unattainable by those who are not gifted with it; but, on

the contrary, it is only an evidence of the larger or smaller portion of equilibrium which we possess. It consists in a due perception of what our own position requires from us, with a quiet, yet instant recognition of the exact position of others.

Ethelbert's manner towards Mary was exquisitely pleasing. He seemed to be fascinated by her loveliness, as a connoisseur is with the specimen of art, which is in perfect accordance with his idea of harmonious symmetry, or the exact lights and shades and colourings of a picture which commands his whole admiration. He would quietly gaze on her while she was speaking to some one else,—as if he felt what Adam felt before the fall, when God brought Eve to him, and said, "It is not good for man to be alone." He had not yet struggled with sin and sorrow in himself—he had not yet learnt the necessity for a sweet companion of his toils. Yet, did it charm him to be with Mary after the duties of the day, when he had been with the afflicted, the bereaved, the sick, the poverty-stricken, the sinful; when he had seen men brutalised by intemperance—heard the violent sounds of an evil-minded passionate woman's voice,—had seen children squalid from misery, unwashed, unkempt, all but unclothed,—when he had prayed with the dying, or exhorted the living; he seemed, when once in Mary Douglas's presence, to be quaffing nectar,—to be enjoying to the full a cup of sparkling water

fresh from the spring,—to forget that all things in the world were not rosy as the morn, bright as the summer's sun, pure as angels' minds, beauteous as paradise.

He did not in any way appropriate her to himself; he did not sit by her when at the piano, nor talk to her across the table, nor interrupt her when speaking to another; and often have they met and parted for the evening without having exchanged more than a bow of recognition, and a smile, which irradiated the whole countenance of both.

Mary was decidedly not, what is called in common parlance, in love. How different her glad welcome, and parting shake of the hand, from Miss St. Maur's and from that of Sir Alfred Velasquez!

Antonia was not in the least aware, that every one saw what she felt. She lived in a world of her own, and no more noticed the rest of us around her than if we had been spirits invisible to her.

Sir Alfred was much more inclined to join in what was going on; he liked to sing duets with Mary; to chat over the last new book with me; to travel in memory with Miss Cholmley. He was not fond of being much with Mr. Elyott, and he carefully avoided all intercourse with De Roussillon.

Mary's Italian friend, whom I shall call Prince Caccia-Piatti, was a lay cardinal, commissioned by the Jesuits to bring Mary over to the so-called only true church, and to engage her to make over the whole of

her fortune to charitable purposes. He found the task a dangerous one, and, while winning her for others, he lost his own heart completely.

He often assured her, that he had taken no vows of celibacy; and that no man would be so proud or so happy as he would be to lay aside the sacerdotal robe for a nuptial garment. "Of course," he would add, "I cannot marry one who is a heretic;" and, as if to arouse her jealousy, "I must seriously visit all the Roman Catholic families in England, to see if one of the fair daughters of the faith will be persuaded to share my rank, my palaces, my all but regal domains."

One day, he said, "Miss Douglas, why are you so cold to me? I love you so passionately, as Italians only can love, that I shall die if you are not kind."

"Kind!" and Mary looked up so archly, as she pronounced the word—"Kind! yet would you have me immure myself in a convent, and be lost to you for ever?"

"Lost to me! no, beloved lady; you would, on the contrary, be found by me; for I could easily obtain the appointment of Father Confessor, and should be able to see you every day, without witnesses, and there would be no man near who could rob me of your heart."

"That might be very good for you, sir, but I confess already to you, though I do not kneel at your feet for the purpose, that I think I am created for

other objects than to immure myself in a convent, for the pleasure of talking nonsense about myself to you. And, pray, how are you to continue to take pleasure in these private interviews, when you have discovered all my sins, and how very wicked I am ?”

“ You don’t know,” he hastily rejoined, “ the happiness of shriving young and lovely women ; to see such a being almost angelic at one’s feet ; to hear the confession of sins, which often emanate from a too great love of ourselves ; to know that our pardon is sufficient, and that, when you have risen from your knees, you stand up before us pure as the angels in heaven,—oh, it is bliss ! it is bliss !”

“ Well, it may be, when in fact young women, with loving, trusting hearts, come to you ; but, I suppose, your pleasure is not so intense, when the vulgar, the ignorant, the guilty, the ugly, the old of either sex come to kneel before you, and to pay a homage to you due to your Creator, and their Creator, only. It is in such cases you, doubtless, think the duty of penance and of mortification is performed by yourself.”

“ You are right in imagining such cases to be the bitter draught we must swallow, but how soon would such a sugary morsel as your confession make me forget the nauseousness of what I had previously swallowed.”

“ After all,” Mary rejoined, “ you would have all

the enjoyment to yourself ; for, when he had had this pleasant *tête à tête*, you might go and have, each day, twenty more equally agreeable, while I must content myself singing Latin hymns, counting my beads, doing housemaid's work, and, from year's end to year's end, having no variety—shut up from all I love, from the air of heaven, the beauties of earth ;—shut out from the interchange of kindnesses with those relations whom God chose for me ;—to be day and night with a host of women playing at religion, and who, from the regularity of their occupations, at last feel it irksome if any one be omitted. No, no, prince ; no convent for me ! ”

“ How strange,” he replied, “ that you should not see as a modest, delicate-minded woman, that such retirement from the world is peculiarly attractive—you, who have so much at your disposal, that you should not like to give up everything to the poor and afflicted. You might be placed in a convent from which you could go into the villages and visit the sick, and carry provisions to the hungry, and comfort the afflicted. And being in the dress of a Sister, and having adopted a new name, you would not be personally known, and might follow out the injunction of not even letting your left hand know what your right hand does, by doing all the bidding of the Mother Superior. That would be humility. In England, every sixpence given away is printed with the name



of the donor, in large letters in a book ; and everything is done in the open face of day, and with all eyes beholding. There is such a fuss, and such begging, and such disputing, and such an expense for public dinners or monster breakfasts, that the glare of charity is in direct opposition to the beauty and value of it."

"Yes," Mary meekly replied ; "I know our system is open to these animadversions, and it grieves me ; for England is pre-eminently charitable. Ostentation is, alas ! too evident. But, how much rather would I thus blazon forth our national deeds and those of private individuals,—letting our light shine before men, and placing it on a hill than in a bushel, or under a bed,—than belong to a papistical community. In England we are charitable, because God enjoins us to be so ; in Roman Catholic countries people hide their individual features under a particular head-dress, and think, if folk call me Teresa when my name is Susan, or Ignatius when the baptismal cognomen is plain John ; that they are much more religious, even though all the world recognised them, than Mrs. Fry, who visited prisons under her own name, or Lord Shaftesbury, who eschews neither the station nor the duties which God himself has assigned him. It is right, when men of zeal and integrity form themselves into a committee to do the utmost amount of good with the means intrusted to them, that they

should give a regular account of receipts and disbursements ; and this cannot well be done, in a public endowment, otherwise than by simply and clearly stating how, and from whom, the funds are gathered. The subscribers are none the better, neither are they the worse for this publicity ; it is a mere matter of form. We are charitable from love to our neighbour. You, prince, do deeds of benevolence and of mysterious alms as a set-off against evil deeds. You look upon such acts as meritorious, and as opening for you the gate of heaven ; while we know that, when we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants,—that Christ's merits, and his alone, will open paradise for us. We do it, not because our church orders us to do so, not to obey a pope, a priest or abbeſs,—but to show our love to God in the only way we can. It is an evidence of faith in our Saviour. Prince, I would not enter into controversy—for I am unused to scholastic wiles—but I cannot think that those who have so many mediators, those who have made of the blessed Virgin Mary, 'Blessed indeed among women,' but only as the most highly-favoured, still a woman, a Hebrew woman,—those who have exalted her as Queen of Heaven, and pray to her as you all do, and as you glory in the shame of doing,—can denominate yourselves *Christians* ? The Jews even are more decidedly Christian than you, for, though blindness be come on them for a season,—as a punishment for their wander-

ing from the true faith, because they made other gods, than the one God, objects of worship; yet they believe in Christ as the only Mediator and Saviour; having Abraham's prospective faith; and seeing His star still afar off, as if he had not been in the world yet. When God is pleased, in the fulness of his appointed time, to remove the scales from their eyes, then will they compare—as Dr. Wolff has compared—the 53rd chapter of Isaiah with the narratives of the gospels; and they will plainly see that the Messiah has lived and died already.”

“ Ah! lady, you say that you are no scholar; and, yet, what a learned dissertation you have just given me!”

“ My learning is from the simple, yet how resplendently sublime, Word of God.”

The Prince, seeing he had effected nothing, asked Mary to sing a song, and chose one of the most sentimental amongst her collection; nor could he resist joining in it, with a second of his own making, as he went along,—acting a pantomime of love the whole time.

## CHAPTER VI.

“For little did Fitz-Eustace know  
That passions, in contending flow,  
Unfix the strongest mind ;  
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,  
We welcome fond credulity,  
Guide confident, though blind.”

MARMION.

DEAR Mrs. Stuart, accustomed to Indian opulence and taste, was very much given to hospitality. Difficult as it is, in London, to form dinner-parties,—for the invitations are made so long beforehand, that many casualties may, and often do, arise amongst the chosen guests, before the day of meeting arrives,—yet, she usually contrived to have, around her well-appointed table, a remarkably agreeable and accomplished, though somewhat heterogeneous circle.

She went little into society herself, and the introductions to her, often requested, were frequently of a mixed sort. I do not ever recollect to have heard that she refused anybody's acquaintance, but, as she was very discriminating, after she had once seen and conversed with persons, if she were not pleased with them, she quickly dropped the recognition, and yet, so urbanely, that no one could be angry or hurt, but instinctively felt she had just cause for doing so.

In this way she did a vast amount of good ; for, when the discovery was made of the offending point in a person's character, or manners, or principles, many endeavoured to correct it, and tried to become worthy of being again brought to her notice.

She was beginning to be much annoyed with Sir Alfred Velasquez and Antonia St. Maur, and asked me what I would advise, as the least objectionable method to bring matters to some definite adjustment.

Extremely delicate in all her notions of propriety, she did not wish to enter into a discussion with either of them ; and yet she felt that, as Antonia's self-elected mother of adoption, it was a duty to bring matters to a crisis, especially as she perceived a great change in Antonia's whole demeanour.

Antonia was much away, either in her own room or with some friends whom she cherished, and who were not favourites with Mrs. Stuart. She received these ladies often in her own apartment ; the conferences were always lengthy ; and, when Antonia returned to the drawing-room, she appeared thoughtful, her eyes moved restlessly, and she was often spoken to by some one of the party present, without knowing that the words were addressed to her.

One day I was sitting with Mrs. Stuart ; Mary Douglas was tending her birds in the adjoining room, when the housemaid burst open the door with a vehemence that startled us, and made Mary upset the

little can of water, knock over the basket of seeds and chickweed, and run in haste to see what had occurred.

Rebecca was quite pale, and looked as if she had swallowed poison by some sad mistake. She rushed up to me, thinking, I suppose, I should be the least easily overcome by the intelligence she had to convey. She looked at Mrs. Stuart with a face of terror, and then, putting up both her hands to her eyes, she burst into a fit of tears and sobs, which agitated us greatly.

Rebecca had been born at Somerhurst, and was a most excellent, simple-minded, straightforward girl.

I approached her.

“Rebecca,” I said, “I implore you to tell us what has happened. Let us know the worst at once.”

“Oh! my lady,”—and she sobbed again, “Miss St. Maur, my lady ——”

“Calm yourself, Rebecca, and speak out. What has happened to Miss St. Maur? Where is she?”

“Oh! I don’t know, I don’t know, my lady. I wish she had never come amongst us; I wish she had never been born!”

I began to tremble violently, for I could not possibly imagine what could have arisen to make the girl form these sad wishes, for she and all our dear darlings had ever been great friends, and they appeared to be attached to Rebecca by her many amiable qualities.

Mrs. Stuart could not move or speak; she seemed paralysed by some dreadful apprehension of evil.

Mary took Rebecca's hands down from her eyes, and entreated her to speak out.

"Oh! ma'am, oh! ma'am, it is worse than anything you can think of. Oh! I do wish Miss St. Maur never had been born."

We thought then, if we ever were to hear the truth, the best way would be to let Rebecca have her fit of crying and sobbing well out, for she was choking with tears, and really could not articulate; so we all sat down, and were awaiting the recovery of her speech when Mr. Elyott came in.

"How is this!" he said, quickly; "you know then the truth?"

"We know nothing," I said; "we cannot elicit anything from Rebecca. She is so overwhelmed with sorrow, she cannot tell us anything."

Mr. Elyott approached Mrs. Stuart with reverential deference, and said,—

"My dear and valued friend, I believe I am about to give you greater pain by what I have to say than anything that has ever yet occurred to you has caused. You have had many sorrows; sorrows which without your pious submission to the will of your Heavenly Father, would have broken your heart. You were young, and physically able to bear the load which, in wisdom and love, was laid on you; but you have full hope of a reunion with those gone before to everlasting rest, and your souls will be reunited even with

the bodies in which you lived and walked on earth together. But this sad catastrophe rends souls asunder. Antonia is now in a Roman Catholic church, renouncing her allegiance to the Lord of life, and taking vows of Mariolatry, and invoking the saints to do the office of the one sole Mediator. I saw her enter the chapel, clothed in white and blue ; the two Cardinals Cacciapatti and Sapienthomo, and that snake in the grass, that arch-fool, Velasquez, followed her. I could not but follow also. She knelt and received the communion in the Roman Catholic fashion, which, in defiance of the simple, affectionate command of our blessed Redeemer, who said, ‘ Drink ye all of it,’ was administered by dipping into the cup the wafer, not the piece of bread, as Christ broke it and gave it to his disciples, and she—oh ! that I ever heard so awful a sentence,—she declared her belief in transubstantiation. She declared, that she believed that the Lord’s body, which we know to be in heaven,—for did He not sit down for ever at the right hand of God?—was whole and entire in that which the priest had thus transformed, and put into her mouth ; and she dared to say that she had eaten our Lord and Saviour. I wonder the monstrous lie did not choke her. She then solemnly dedicated herself to the Virgin Mary ; and promised, come what will, to wear blue and white, ‘ those pure celestial colours,’ for her sake, for the next seven years.







“ I have rushed away to tell you ; for I really felt, if I remained, I should do some deed of violence upon that deluded ape Velasquez, who, all this time, has been perverting her from true scriptural faith, from the pure Word of the great God, to believe in those lies of an apostate church.”

Mr. Elyott was very much excited.

Mrs. Stuart was like a marble statue. Mary had thrown herself on her knees, looking like an angel, and, with clasped hands, was praying for the erring one, and for her beloved Cara, with such a piteous, sweet tone, I fancied her a good representation of Eve when she was leaving Paradise ; save, there was no guilt, nothing but deep, deep sorrow in her countenance.

When Mr. Elyott had finished, she arose. “ Now, Rebecca, what is it you have to say?”

“ Well, miss, you know that Miss St. Maur has a little room within her bedroom. She has always, till to-day, kept this locked, and taken the key away. This morning when I went to put her bedroom to rights I saw this door wide open ; and a Popish altar, with an open-worked gold cloth on it, two large candlesticks, with burning candles in them ; a picture of the Virgin and the baby ; and underneath, a large crucifix of iron and ivory. Around the altar are beautiful wreaths of the loveliest flowers.”

I really do not know how I felt, all this time. I had often had my misgivings, that jesuitry, deceit, and

guile, and all manner of hypocrisies, were at work ; but I found those engaged in it so cunning and clever, that I could never catch them off their guard.

We desired Rebecca to show us to Antonia's room. We all went. Mr. Elyott all but carried Mrs. Stuart; Mary and I followed, weeping.

There, indeed, were found all the insignia of her more than egregious folly.

Here were Roman Catholic books, that had taught her to renounce the pure rivers of the waters of life, to drink of the foulest streams. I took up one book. It was a life of Martin Luther. How quickly I dropped it, when, in the first page, I saw accusations of sins and impieties, that would make one's hair stand on end to read of, as the doctrines and acts of devils.

We looked at each other in blank dismay. Whose the fault ?

Mrs. Stuart was in such a state, that we, in a moment, forgot Antonia, and Sir Alfred, and all the host of deceivers ; and occupied ourselves solely with our dear aged friend.

Rebecca wisely closed the door of this oratory, and we withdrew to Mrs. Stuart's morning-room.

When there, what could we do ? We would have given worlds to make her shed a tear. The agony was intense, was fearful ; she could not swallow the sal volatile we offered ; though it was a burning day in July, she was cold as a stone. We chafed her tem-

ples, rubbed her hands and feet, wrapped her in a blanket for hours, in vain. At length warmth returned in a measure, and we prevailed on her to go to bed.

It happened that, that very day, she was to have had a large dinner-party ; and some scientific gentlemen were to have come and discoursed about a late valuable invention.

M. de Roussillon had introduced these gentlemen, and he, therefore, of course, was to be with us.

Mr. Elyott determined to go and call on him, at the hour, he knew, he allotted usually for study, and would therefore be at home. He was to tell him the whole truth, and consult with him how we were to receive Antonia, and those who had thus led her astray, and abused so fearfully all the hospitality and kindness with which they had been treated.

Unfortunately, De Roussillon had been called out to a dying parishioner, and was not to be met with ; and we were actually obliged to have the party, as if nothing had happened.

None of the actors in the scene of apostasy arrived till the rest of the guests had been assembled, a quarter of an hour, and, then even, Antonia came up to each of us to greet us, as if they had merely been taking a ride in the Park.

Rather impetuous in my nature, and as open as our blessed Christian faith, which ~~has~~ nothing to disguise, I could not receive any one of the traitors with

a smile ; I refused my hand to all, and took my seat at the head of the table, distinctly calling to my side the gentlemen to whom the dinner was given.

I am afraid, I was unladylike enough in my manner, to look daggers at the foreign Cardinal, Sir Alfred, and Antonia, whilst they actually tutored themselves into being more lively, communicative, and well-bred than ever.

As we walked into the dining-room, I heard Mr. Elyott say to Sir Alfred,—

“ Quiz, you are a most unadulterated ass.”

Sir Alfred looked up with such a bland smile, and said, “ Let us agree to differ.” If a look could annihilate, Sir Alfred would have disappeared from the face of the earth from that moment, as Mr. Elyott said, with a withering frown,—“ You are beneath even my contempt.”

Antonia was handsomer than I ever remember to have seen her. She seemed to say triumphantly, by every gesture,—“ Now, then, I am secure ; he will soon be mine, and mine for ever.”

The blue and white, mingled with her artistic taste, were exceedingly becoming. Her eyes sparkled with beams of radiant love, and, at times, I quite forgot my anger, so wrapped was I in admiration, when, by chance, I glanced towards her.

I am very self-possessed, when I have deliberately determined to be so ; and, therefore, after I had apo-

logised for Mrs. Stuart's absence, I could enter into conversation with our learned guests ; and while I, of course, did not attempt to compete with them, yet, as they were masters of their subject, they conversed with lucidity, and made the dry matter quite interesting to my humbler self.

De Roussillon was lost in thought. He was pale and haggard, which I naturally attributed to the solemn scene he had just witnessed ; but, even in the abundant oil of that vessel of grace there was alloy, and I am afraid to own it, but when I discovered the reason of his unusual silence I was greatly relieved. I always had the idea that he was, as nurses say, too good to live, and I was quite pleased to find he had feelings of the earth—earthy.

Mary Douglas did not seem to notice the change in Ethelbert ; she was absorbed in grievous thoughts of her own ; but the sweetness of her nature prevailed, and, hiding an aching heart under a smiling face, she took her share in doing the honours of the table ; and even the Cardinal's assiduities were repaid by a gentle answer, when he put forth his Italian energy to win and please her.

When we ladies left the dining-room, Antonia went to her room ; Mary to Mrs. Stuart ; and I sat down to think over the disastrous day, on the sofa in the boudoir.

I had not been long alone, when Ethelbert joined

me. He looked round, and turned pale, when he saw Mary was not there ; but soon regaining his wonted composure, he said, " Lady Ingoldspier, how true it is, as Young says in his Night Thoughts,—‘ Our very wishes give us not our wish.’" I have rather deplored my fate that, with my small stipend, I could not attend to the wants of the poor around me, and thought, when God intended me to give alms, he would assuredly place me in a situation where, if not wealthy, I should, at least, have a sufficiency. That hour has arrived ; and so ungrateful am I, that I quite grieve that it is so. London air, and London work, do not agree with me, and I ought to rejoice that I am appointed to a living in Dorsetshire ; but, alas ! it is with reluctance that I go."

His voice faltered a little.

" Go !" I almost screamed,—“ what ! are you going away ? ”

" Yes," he replied, " and immediately. The Curate who succeeds me comes to morrow, and I am expected to do duty in my parish on Sunday next."

I think, if a gigantic extinguisher had descended suddenly on my head, and enveloped me in darkness, I could not have felt more astonished, nor more perplexed and dumb-founded.

I scarcely knew what I felt, or what I said. All at once, it seemed as if the deplorable event of the morning were a mere vexation to which I could get used ; but the idea that Ethelbert and Mary were to



be separated, flashed across me like a stroke of lightning, that destroys instantaneously whatever it touches. Crash, crash, the thunderbolt fell on this imaginary extinguisher.

De Roussillon sighed.

This recalled me to myself ; and as I could not, in common decency, allude to Mary, since he did not, I took refuge in a most common-place remark, and said, —“ You will be somewhat nearer my cottage in Ilfracombe ; how many miles do you think you will be from me ? ”

Now, I knew as well as possible, that he had expected some expressions of condolence and of sympathy ; but I withheld them ; and added, —“ Do try and find time this evening, for a conversation with Mr. Elyott. He has much to tell you of what is going on in this house.”

I wanted to edge him on to ask something about Mary, and, purposely, would not explain that that to which I alluded concerned every one else but her ; but in vain. De Roussillon merely hoped Mr. Elyott would be disengaged, as he could only hold any discourse with him, that evening. It was his last moment of leisure.

Mary came back just then. I told her what Mr. de Roussillon had just disclosed, and saw the blood run from her lips and cheeks, and then gush in torrents up to her temples.

Ethelbert did not see this ; he had turned his head to brush away a tear.

How lovely and engaging Mary was at that moment ! I knew her heart was throbbing, but what could I do ? I could not make love for either of them, and was on the point of discreetly retiring to the other end of the room, when the rest of the gentlemen came in, and Mr. Elyott called off Ethelbert.

I asked no questions, but knew that the two did not meet again.

It was settled that, as we could not undo what Antonia had done, we would take no notice of it ; and she was to follow her own devices, while we hoped, as she did, that Sir Alfred would soon propose.

Mrs. Stuart never quite recovered this shock. She always felt, had she been more watchful, more circumspect, she might have seen what was going on, and have nipped the whole affair in the bud.

What an illusion ! Dear, kind, sincere, warm-hearted Mrs. Stuart, a match for the wiles of the priests of Oscott ; for the Italian and English cardinals, who had woven this web, spread this net ! A match for Jesuitism ! Ay, truly ! Mystery is thy name, Papal Rome. Thou always workest in the dark. Fair and above board, as Protestantism is, it has no chance in the warfare with thee ; unless the intended victim is wary, and fights with the sword the angel holds in his mouth, the two-edged sword, so sharp, so fine, so subtle, it can

pierce through the marrow and bones of the sinner's spirit—that sword which is the Word of God. “For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Antonia fell a prey, because her heart was in Sir Alfred's keeping, and his was entangled in the meshes of Jesuitism.

From that day, Sir Alfred and Antonia were Roman Catholics.

My poor Mary! I was glad for her, when Parliament broke up, and she and Mrs. Stuart returned to Somerhurst.

I accompanied them.

Ethelbert's name was never mentioned. We each thought of him continually, and pretended that the other had forgotten him. I could not but see, however, that Mary made him the measure of all her ideas of goodness; whenever she spoke sententiously, it was evident that what she was saying was the emanation of another's mind; for, though it tallied with her own opinions, it was always something that was more manly than womanly,—something that savoured more of deep thought,—than any of her own reflections would have done.

Roussillon's soul had passed into hers, and they

were of one mind. Yet neither was any but a secondary object of attachment to the other; they were Christians in every sense of the word; and to love and obey Christ, was the primary motive of all their words and actions.

Obedience is become the watchword amongst all parties. Obedience to the church, to the pope, to the priests, is the one endeavour of Roman Catholics, while obedience to Christ, their sole Lord, Master, and Head, is the cause of earnest striving of those who love Him.

It is clear, that all things are winding up for the great consummation, and while the Prince of this world has his ardent votaries, the Lord of life, the Prince of peace, is silently, but surely, extending His own kingdom.

It was predicted of Him, centuries before He appeared; that His voice should not be heard in the streets; thus, also, should His disciples be meek, and lowly, and unobtrusive. Rome is noisy, full of pomp, boasting of her good deeds; she loves salutations in the market-place; but Christ is gentle, and the obedience we must pay to Him must be that of the heart. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is more beautiful in His sight, than all the tinsel and show of processions, and gorgeous dresses,—all the paraphernalia of proud Rome. Rome's religion is essentially in the streets: and foolish, unthinking people are caught by its noise and its trappings.

Antonia was seldom with us, yet, when with us, she was all softness and sweetness; she was taught to win us over by her tender solicitude; and she redoubled all her delightful attentions to Mrs. Stuart. She watched her, to see in what way she could be of use to her. She tried to wind herself round her heart, and, thus, to make her new religion irresistibly pleasing in Cara's eyes.

Mrs. Stuart had no idea of giving way to her new fancies, in the matter of meat and fish; and, indeed, Antonia had already had her cue from her spiritual directors in this. She was not to appear to have changed; hypocrisy was the one guide of all she did; and aware of her want of experience in their dogmas and rules, she was ordered never to give a handle for argument or controversy in any shape. Obedience to her new masters was to be, henceforth, the sole rule of faith; and she had her daily instructions from Sir Alfred, the post bringing her, regularly, a long letter from him.

Obedience is, likewise, the rule of the Christian faith. Obedience is to be the regenerator of the universe; "For as by man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

It is, thus, obedience has become the favourite theme of all parties.

Roman Catholics are obedient to their many

masters,—a long train, from the pope to the parish priest, from the bishop to the confessor.

“The glorious liberty of the sons of God” is unknown to them ; they are the slaves of jugglery and priestcraft.

## CHAPTER VII.

“Men were deceivers ever,  
One foot on land, and one on sea,  
To one thing constant never.”

OUR good friend, the Rector of Somerhurst, came frequently to visit us. He was much grieved to see dear Mrs. Stuart's care-worn countenance. He knew her fortitude; he had heard of her sorrows; he admired her resignation and cheerful piety. But now, when she was rapidly descending into the vale of years, when he expected to find her going on her way rejoicing, he found her, on the contrary, given up to grief, as if comfort there were none on this side the grave.

Mr. Ormsville could not resist speaking openly to her on the subject.

“My dearest madam,” he began, “I am, indeed, sorely grieved to see the great depression of your spirits. You were once my pattern of sweet submission; you seemed, in all things, to feel that the sorrows of this life were not to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed; your patience has, hitherto, been exemplary; and I have often thought, how blessed your conviction must be, that temporal things

will pass away, and that spiritual, heavenly things will be eternal."

"It is, my kind friend, because I feel I have badly done my duty to those dear girls. I love them very much, and I am persuaded they are sincerely attached to me; but, you see, Matilda has allowed herself to be carried away, in her childishness and heedlessness, by the most unmeaning,—puerile ceremonies; and has left me for a life which, I cannot have the least doubt, makes her utterly miserable. And as to Antonia,"—here Mrs. Stuart burst into tears,—“and Antonia, she is lost to me in this world, and in the next. Oh! it is impossible for me ever, ever to be happy again."

"Calm yourself, my dear Mrs. Stuart; remember how the faithless disciples, rocked in their boat on the waves, in a storm, were rebuked by our Lord; and how He immediately and merely said, 'Peace! be still;' and all became smooth and bright."

"Ah! but think of those fearful things in which, she has solemnly declared, she believes."

"She does not believe in them; she deceives herself only; they who have brought her to renounce, as they think, the errors of Protestantism, have not made her renounce anything in fact; for she was not before a religious character, though amiable, and lady-like, gentle, and in manner extremely decorous. She said her prayers; has attended church with regularity and pleasure, particularly when the singing



has been good; and, we know, has been assiduous at our Sunday-schools,—but that is not religion.”

“You say, sir, that Antonia loves particularly to attend the church services when there is good singing. You, surely, do not object to music in churches?”

“Object! no, indeed; were my wish fulfilled, no oratorio would be grander, more imposing, more moving, more thrilling, than the music in even the very smallest place of worship. I would always have the very best music that can be obtained. Our voices should be lifted up in one harmonious accord to the Lord of all; and I would like no poetry to be more sublime than that of hymns; and our best faculties and talents should be dedicated to the service of Him who bestowed them.

“To return to Miss St. Maur,—she does not believe in a word that she uttered as saving truths that day; she does not believe in Roman Catholicism, as the one true church; she does not believe that the Virgin Mary, as Queen of Heaven, is all powerful with her Son; she does not believe the saints hear our prayers, and mediate for us; she does not believe in the infallibility of the pope, nor the pardon of the priest. She has but one, sole, undivided faith: she believes simply, only, in Sir Alfred Velasquez; she has placed the creature in her heart above the Creator; and woful will be her state, when she finds him the broken reed he is.

“If you are not tired, I should like to converse with you a little longer on these topics ; tell me, dear madam, if you are wearied ?”

“Oh ! no ; such topics are too absorbing for me to feel weariness while you are with me. I confess they take so deep a hold on my nervous system, that I am often what is called *knocked up*, after devoting all my attention so exclusively to serious matters ; but I very much prefer that exhaustion to the fatigue I used to feel after the recreations of my youth, after a ball, or a long ride.”

“I will endeavour, then, to be brief ; but I wish much to call your thoughts to two things—you can meditate on them afterwards when alone ; they will be a pleasant exchange for the present sore reflections, which so much distress you.

“Obedience, you are aware, is the watchword now of all parties. It is a sign of the times ; and we frequently mistake the obedience which will be effectual : it is not our obedience ; we can have no merits in obedience ; we are, after we have done all, but unprofitable servants. Obedience is become the practice of the world in a great measure ; obedience in Roman Catholics, we know, means obedience to their church ; in different sects, to the different founders of those sects, whether within or without the pale of the Roman Church ; but the obedience meant in the Word of God, is the obedience of Christ, in

contradistinction to the disobedience of the first man, Adam.

“ It is through His obedience we obtain salvation ; to trust in this obedience makes us Christians ; and the love of Christ constrains us to follow his footsteps, his example.

“ As obedience is the watchword of the day, so is catholicity the aim. When all of us shall repeat from the heart, without any interpretation of our own, without any mental reservation, the Apostle’s creed and the Lord’s prayer, then, and not till then, shall we be catholic. The apostles were catholic ; they were of the one Christian Church. The innovations of the Roman Catholic section of the Church of Christ are, really, of modern date. I shall one of these days show you when purgatory, transubstantiation, invocation of the saints, Mariolatry were first introduced ; and, until they were introduced, the church was catholic ; it is now papistical. We should have been called Catholics, instead of Protestants. But, possibly, had there not been this broad distinction between those who still cling to Papal Rome, and those who shook off her yoke to take the yoke of Christ, when they, who heavily burdened with their sins, first repudiated the efficacy of Papal indulgences, and brought their burden to the feet of Christ, as alone able amongst men to forgive sins, the glorious Reformation would not have shone forth so conspicuously ;

and, for a time, we have been permitted to recognise the opposing parties as Roman Catholics and Protestants ; but the time is at hand, when every man shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and, then, we shall believe in the holy Catholic Church as our own.

“ When our Saviour was asked to teach us how to pray, He gave us a truly catholic prayer ; but there was no Papal doctrine in that. When the Lord’s will shall be done in earth, as it is in heaven, then, and not till then, shall we all be catholic. I once essayed to have a prayer promulgated, that hundreds might simultaneously ask of God, that we should do His service on earth as the angels in heaven ; but the world is not yet ripe for such a prayer, and it took only with a few.

“ I believe that the articles of the Church of England are framed in the spirit of catholicity ; and if men would pray, simply and fervently, to be enlightened as to their true meaning, they would undoubtedly see that they embody all the faith necessary to salvation ; —but we go to God with hearts predisposed to our own views and notions ; and, though we may be in earnest, and fancy we are ready to submit to man’s teaching, yet we rise from our knees, and, instead of studying the Bible, from the first to the last chapter, we take up parts that tally in our opinion with our preconceived notions, and we go about to make our will, and not

God's will, the rule of faith and of life. We read books of favourite authors who lean our way, and, little by little, the work of perversion is done. Did we offer the Lord's prayer in anxiety to know God's will, in order to practise it, we should come to the throne of mercy and of grace with the docility and love of little children, and address God as *our* Father, whom we would obey, if He would show us how to do so. We should receive an answer to our prayer; the influence of the Holy Spirit would be on us; the Comforter would take of the things of Christ, and teach us to be Christians; and thus doing the will of God, we should be of the family of Christ. He is the Son of God; and graciously tells us, that if we will do the will of His Father and our Father, He will look on us as dear relations, and such only does he call his mother, and sisters, and brethren.

“It has often occurred to me, that a great error is committed by those who send out our missionaries armed with copies of the New Testament only. A million have lately been sent to China. How can heathens wish for a Redeemer, unless they know from what they are redeemed? We are commanded to teach all nations, baptizing them in ‘the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;’ and our Lord added these words to the injunction, ‘And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ He has been always with his people from the beginning.

St. John's gospel opens thus: 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.' And then he states that this word was the Creator of all things. The gospel, in all its fulness, is not preached, unless we commence with the time when God said: 'Let us make man in our own image.' The word, the Son, the Saviour was promised immediately after the fall. When the disobedience of the first Adam was reproved, and punished by banishment from Paradise, the obedience of the second Adam, the seed of the Eve—of the woman—which was, in the course of ages, to bruise the Serpent's head, was promised at the same time by the Almighty. The angel of the covenant always accompanied the Israelites, and himself made the new covenant—the Christian—at the Last Supper with His disciples, by His own will and power doing away with the old covenant—the Jewish. When our Lord, after his resurrection, walked with two of His disciples to Emmaus, and found them much distressed, because they could not comprehend all that had happened in Jerusalem, He reproved their want of faith, told them they were 'slow to believe,' and expounded in the Scriptures all that concerned himself, 'beginning with Moses.' 'To Him gave all the prophets witness.' When we wish to make known the gospel, we must likewise begin with Moses, and prove that Christ is indeed 'the author and the finisher of our faith.' If he be not all this

to each one of us, then are we not Christians in the full sense of the word. And if we do not thus endeavour to enlighten the heathen, we do not reveal Christ to them. I am not for half-measures, for piecemeal information. Let us study the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of the Revelation, and we shall find Christ everywhere, throughout the whole ; and with the Bible in our hands, heads, and hearts, let us make our missionary efforts.

“Now, I really must go; for I have parochial duty carved out for me this afternoon. God bless you, my dear lady, and make His face to shine on you, and in your heart ; and comfort you with an abundant outpouring of his richest consolations !”

Mr. Ormsville left, and I am sure neither of us—for Mary Douglas and I were present—ever forgot the impression he made with his lucid explanations.

Sir Alfred Velasquez wrote to Mrs. Stuart, to ask her to permit him to come to Somerhurst.

“Ah!” she remarked, when folding up the letter, and putting it down beside her plate, on the breakfast table, “Sir Alfred Velasquez has a conscience not quite given up to the priests, for, had he not felt guilty towards me, he would not have waited for an invitation, but merely, as usual, announced his visit.”

For the first time, Antonia ventured to speak when he was mentioned, and replied to Mrs. Stuart as if the remark had been addressed to her:—

“Cara, dear, he tells me he wishes to come, that he may speak for himself and say many things that he does not like to write ; and, particularly, tells me that the hour of explanation has arrived.”

“ Well, my love, write to him and say he is welcome ; he can assuredly do no greater harm than, by my blind indulgence, I have permitted him already to do.”

Antonia jumped up with an alacrity unusual to her, and went to write the letter which she fondly hoped was to be the last as an unaffianced bride.

Her features absolutely glowed with delight. There was not that seraphic expression which love to a celestial, invisible being would give, but a radiance that was truly splendid. I shall never forget her appearance that day ; I felt awed at the sight of so much passionate devotion to a finite creature, and imagined all kinds of things that would turn her rapture into dire despair. I thought, Sir Alfred will break his neck on the railway ; or he will fall suddenly ill ; or he called away to his capricious, self-willed mother : that they should meet, and love continue to burn as brightly as it then did, seemed to me to be an impossibility.

However, I might have spared myself all this agitation, for Sir Alfred Velasquez appeared the next day ; but, oh ! how different from the Sir Alfred Velasquez who came to Whitby a pensive, sentimental invalid, handsome, accomplished, almost fascinating.



Antonia, no doubt, attributed the mighty change to love, but I could not; he was like the picture of Satan transformed into an angel of light, and I instinctively looked down for the cloven foot; I almost imagined I smelt sulphur. I suppose it was only the smell of a bad cigar, but I could have believed anything myself at that moment, I was so intensely disagreeably impressed by his whole appearance.

Several days passed; he seemed to be winding himself up to some terrific disclosure, and even Antonia, in her unbounded devotion, was beginning to look awed, finally discouraged.

I was sitting in the inner drawing-room one day writing, and not hearing anything that had been passing around me, when I suddenly looked up and saw Antonia and Sir Alfred on the sofa together. They did not notice me; the whole world was at that time non-existent to them; they were alone in the universe.

Antonia was looking down calm and smiling, but I saw a tear of emotion steal down her cheek and fall on her bosom. Sir Alfred was struggling with some inward feeling that I interpreted as shame. At last, he broke the silence, which was quite awful.

I have before said that his voice was peculiarly melodious.

"Miss St. Maur,"—he did not call her Antonia,—  
"the time is come when I must speak. You have, I fear, thought me engrossed by an earthly pas-

sion. You have misunderstood and misinterpreted my feelings, if so ; I have been bound for months by a solemn oath to do all in my power to bring you into the only true church. I have succeeded, and the vows you have taken can never be recalled. It would have been unwise to have explained this sooner. All our correspondence has been seen, canvassed, and my letters dictated by a venerable father of the Roman Catholic Church ; and he has shown his wondrous skill by conducting matters to this point, so anxiously sought for by me, so devoutly prayed for by us both. I have felt, indeed, for you what I must ever feel, the warmest love of the most affectionate brother ; but you are, perhaps, aware that I was engaged to be married to a charming person, whose strong resemblance to you first attracted me to your side. It has therefore been, in every sense, a sweet, a delicious employment for me, and the thought will brighten many an hour of toil and anxiety in my future career. I shall ever be willingly your confessor, and shall continue the correspondence with delight. I am now a priest, and you may safely confide to me all your sorrows, all your joys ; and I will counsel you to the best of my abilities. I must hasten back to London this afternoon ; my superiors have work for me. What ! will you not shake hands with me ? You are not surely displeased that I have worked so hard to save your precious soul ! Not a word of thanks, not one look of kindness !”

The clock struck, and Sir Afred Velasquez darted away.

“ You hypocritical, heartless vagabond,” said I to myself, as he closed the door after him.

All this time Antonia did not see me. In truth, with her physical eye she did not see at all; she did not see anything. I hesitated what to do. Had I followed the impulse of my heart, I should have rushed out, and clasped my arms around her, and said, “ Weep, weep, darling! lay your head on my shoulder; and weep, *weep!*”

But I dared not. Antonia had never been impulsive with me; I felt assured I should only add to her grief. I remained as quiet as a mouse, fearing even to breathe, lest she should know that some one besides herself knew the fatal result to her ardent hopes. That love was crushed within her, I did not, could not believe. My own woman’s heart told me, that such love was inextinguishable.

It might kill her; itself, it could not die.

She sat for half an hour; then arose, and went to her room.

At dinner, she appeared again as usual—very pale, very quiet; she scarcely seemed to press the carpet with her pretty feet, as she crossed the room, and took her usual seat. Unable to eat, she complained that she had so violent a headache, she should not be able to remain long at table.

Mrs. Stuart believed the headache, and fancied it was from too strong an emotion ; perhaps, the thought of leaving herself, when she was married, might, in dear, confiding Cara's imagination, have much to do with it.

I had told Mary all ; and no human being could have an idea of our torture. Our sympathy amounted to agony.

We almost felt more than Antonia ; for she was like a mourner, bereaved by death of the dearest object in life ; stunned by the blow, but still doubting its reality.

As Mrs. Stuart heard nothing of the marriage, she said to me, one day, she supposed Sir Alfred had much difficulty with the settlements ; and, as was her wont, she waited patiently for information.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Some call Him a Saviour in word,  
But mix their own works with his plan,  
And hope He his help will afford,  
When they have done all that they can.  
If doings prove rather too light,  
(A little they own they may fail,)  
They purpose to make it full weight,  
By casting His name in the scale."

NEWTON.

WE were, I confess, a very melancholy party just then.

It was a great relief to me, that Mary was not a love-sick girl, pining after De Roussillon. I do not know whether, at that time, I was not the most in love of the two; I verily believe, I allowed my thoughts to wander more after him, in his little parsonage, than Mary did; and had I not bound myself to conventional silence upon the subject, I am sure I should have been for ever making some remark about his imaginary sayings and doings.

We fortunately did not miss him in the pulpit. It was impossible to be a better, almost impossible to be as good, a preacher, as Mr. Ormsville. His zeal, his earnestness so tempered by knowledge, experience,

and love, made him the very best adviser we could have.

He was ambitious to win souls, but not to rise to a higher position in the church. He was contented to be a faithful pastor over a few. Some people used to say to him, "Mr. Ormsville, it is a pity you are not a bishop." "A bishop!" he would exclaim; "perhaps you wish me to be as great a man as the Bishop of Rome. No, no," he added, "I am not for such solitary grandeur as his. I say with St. Paul, 'Have I not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?' Is it not marvellous that the Romish Church should insist upon celibacy, as being pleasing to God, in order to enable the priests to devote themselves more fully to His service, by an entire disentanglement of domestic ties? St. Paul was not of their opinion, you see; and their own chosen head, St. Peter, is twice mentioned as a married man; once in this verse by St. Paul; and one of our Lord's miracles was wrought to cure his mother-in-law of a fever. God himself instituted marriage, and brought Eve to Adam. Our Saviour's first miracle was performed at a marriage feast; and, yet, Rome will not allow her pope, her priests to marry; and condemns multitudes of men and women to shut themselves up apart, between four walls, instead of allowing them to live in the active, busy world, to go about doing good, and to teach us,

by example, what it is to obey God in the various capacities of his own institution, as parents, children, brethren. No, no thank you; no bishopric of Rome for me."

It was in this way Mr. Ormsville always launched off from anything concerning himself, to bring us to the Scriptures, and teach us to take them for our rule and guide.

He was, of course, a great help to us in our down-cast state. He came often to see us, and to endeavour to make us raise our thoughts from earth to heaven. He did it in such an engaging, easy manner, that it was at all times plain that his heart was in the matter. There was no acting with him; he did not preach because he was a preacher, but because to be much with God in prayer, and to talk much of Him, and of redeeming love, and of sanctifying grace, was his chief delight.

He was a living paraphrase of our Lord's assertion—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

He was a widower at the time he came to Somerhurst. His wife had died of cholera; and his only son was married, and settled in a parish of his own.

Any holiday he gave himself was, to make a walking tour with his son, and his little party.

We were anxious—Mary and I—to cheer Mrs. Stuart and Antonia. With the latter it was a difficult

affair. She had placed such a barrier between us and herself, there could be no expansion of thought, and consequently, the ball of conversation was kept up by dint of hard labour.

Antonia had never been loquacious, — she was now monosyllabic ; and a languid yes, or no, was all we could elicit, usually. I was afraid she would become idiotic ;—she appeared to be so restless, and wandering in thought.

Ah ! there was no equilibrium, either in her countenance or in her mind.

She really suffered much from nervous headache. I pitied her, from my heart. Gentle exercise and plenty of air were good for her. I persuaded her to let me drive her out in a pony-chaise ; and we walked much in the gardens and lawns,—sauntered, rather—for she was unable to do much in that way.

Mary drove in the carriage, with Mrs. Stuart. They called upon the neighbours, and attended the religious meetings of the parish, and, indeed, all meetings ; for Mrs. Stuart thought it her duty to take a share and an interest in all things that concerned her tenants.

Antonia was not so partial to her own company as she used to be ; she was pleased whenever I knocked at her door, and requested her to accompany me.

Rebecca told us that “ Miss St. Maur was grown childish, she feared ; for she was often engaged in dress-



ing and undressing a great doll in her room, and her needlework seemed principally to be for the doll."

Alas ! it was an image of the Virgin Mary which thus employed her.

When I heard this, I went to the best draper's shop in the village, and bought up a great many pieces of print, of flannel, of calico, and of linen. The huge bale was brought into the drawing-room in the evening, and loud were the exclamations on its entrance.

"What in the world could it be? Where does the monster come from?"

Two footmen carried it, and laid it on the floor. "You may go," I said to Thomas and John. "And now, girls, help me," I said, turning to Antonia and Mary.

They immediately came to me, and we began untying the package, and I had each piece deliberately unfolded, and examined, and refolded, when we had duly commented on the colour of the prints, the texture of the linen and of the calico, and the quality of the flannel.

Mrs. Stuart was quite amused, and, laughing, asked me if I intended to set up a draper's shop or a ready-made linen warehouse.

"You have guessed it, dear Mrs. Stuart. I do mean to have a warehouse of ready-made goods, and I wish Antonia and Mary to be my assistants and

workwomen. I want to make up a large quantity of clothes for the children of your schools in Madras. I know, beforehand, they will be so happy, so very happy, to have been thought of by you, now you are so far away from them."

"I do not see very clearly, dear Lady Ingoldspier, that clothes purchased by you, and made up by Antonia and Mary, will be a proof that I have thought of them."

"Well, then, it shall be a proof that you have made a friend take a great interest in them, by the way in which you have often spoken of them."

It really was a bright thought of mine. Antonia, for very shame, could not tell me she preferred working for a senseless image, and she readily undertook to cut out, and sew, as many hours in the day as she could, without too much fatigue.

It would, I hoped, replace to her the in-folios she used to write to Sir Alfred, and was much better for her, and more soothing, than reading. So we worked and worked away, and, at last, Antonia spent the greater part of the morning with me, and we were again together as in days of yore, save and except what related to the one subject, that never left her thoughts. We sat in quiet companionship.

One day she made a great mistake. She had been telling me she had written to Miss Cholmley to send her materials for making flowers, and knew

she would add a little gossip about friends in her letter.

The next day two letters were handed to her. She read them both, and, when leaving the breakfast-room, held out one to me, saying—"I know that you will like to read this." She went her way, and I—must I confess it?—saw immediately that she had given me the wrong letter, but the temptation to such a true daughter of Mother Eve was too great for me to resist. I succumbed, and opened the literary production, and, moreover, read the whole of it.

She had given me her love-letter, for, in spite of all that had passed, and of all that could not come to pass, Sir Alfred's letters were treasured as only love-letters ever are.

Here is a copy of it :—

" Day of the Assumption of our Lady,  
the ever Blessed Virgin.

" My dear daughter in the Lord,—Some days have gone by since I received your warmly-expressed and most welcome letter. I can assure you I read all you write with greater pleasure than ever, for we are united by scriptural bonds that cannot be broken, even death cannot separate us from each other's fond attachment.

" How sweet is this thought ! I have not much leisure now for writing, even to you. My superiors give me constant employment, and I bow in submissive

humility, and with a reverence which grows daily deeper, to all they allot me.

“ Sometimes they talk of sending me on a mission to Rome, the holy city, the abode of the faithful, the residence of the head of our church, of the infallible guide of our new faith. Would that you and I could meet in the house of the Saviour at Loretto ! You know, doubtless, that angels brought it from Nazareth and deposited it there. I shall take an offering of a silver heart, if I go, that I may show my gratitude to our blessed Lady for having obtained the grace of conversion for me.

“ If I do visit Rome, I shall send you a detailed account of the holy relics that are kept there. I shall, of course, ascend, on my knees, the staircase up which the Lord walked to the Judgment Hall ; and I hope to be allowed to have on my shoulders the chain which the blessed Peter wore, when in prison. It seems to me, now, so strange, that there was a time in which I no more believed in the reality and efficacy of these holy things, than I now believe that the stars are composed of the old moons cut up—though even this I could not but believe, if my superiors assured me it was a fact.

“ Have you heard of the miracle performed by that truly holy man, Cardinal Sapienthom, on Miss Sorrystone ? She is like yourself, my dear child, brought over to the true faith ; but she has been longer

in the bosom of Mother Church than you, though I am sure, that the reverend father, who induced her to renounce heresy, could not have found the task so easy or so delightful as mine, in inducing you to enter the true and only fold of the good Shepherd. You are, indeed, a meek lamb, and most attractive in your loving faith. Miss Sorrystone has gone on in penances and mortifications beyond her strength. Verily the flesh is weak, however willing the spirit may be, and she has been obliged to come out again into the world, and leave the safety, peace, and happiness of the convent. Last week she was taken ill with dumbness. She could not open her mouth even to take nourishment, and was utterly unable to speak. She made signs that she wished to write. A slate was brought her, and she pencilled, with difficulty, these few words: —‘Unless Cardinal Sapienthomo be sent for, to give me the kiss of peace, I shall never be able to speak again.’ The family were much averse to this step, and combated her wish by every argument, but in vain. As she is herself rich, she was able to meet all the expenses. The cardinal answered a telegraphic message in person, and was ushered into the lady’s room with all the ceremony due to so exalted a personage. He approached the bed, and gave Miss Sorrystone a kiss which was instantaneously effectual. She opened her mouth, and ordered that a splendid repast should be forthwith prepared for the holy man.

The miracle was patent to all the household, and yet I have not heard that any person was converted by it—so slow are we to believe. You will see what a difference grace makes in the female mind. The cardinal is by no means agreeable to look at, or insinuating by gentlemanly and elegant manners; yet the kiss of peace was as sweet to the poor invalid as if her betrothed had imprinted it on her lips.

“Cardinal Caccia-Piatti asked me this morning if you were aware that he may marry if he like. I believe, had you not made over the greater part of your property to the church, for masses for the souls of your heretical friends and relations—which, as you have yourself told me, require so many more to be said, ere they can leave purgatory, than if they had died good Catholics—he would have proposed to you, as he is anxious, he says, to transplant one of Albion’s fair daughters to the delicious climate of his beautiful country.

“Ever, my dear child,

“Your affectionate father in God,

“ABELARD.”

I folded up the letter again in its own folds, and was on the point of taking it honestly back to Antonia when she came into the room again. She had fancied it, I suppose, snug in her pocket, while she went into the garden to gather some flowers to imitate; and, on her return, she must have wished to read the letter

over once more, perhaps to read and re-read it before she could replace it.

Poor child ! I felt sorry for her. How her cheeks glowed ! how her eyes shone ! The tears were in them. She held out her hand without speaking. The Evil One prompted me to ask her if she were likewise dumb, and if she needed the kiss of peace from Father Abelard ; but no, I had not the heart to do so unkind a thing. I merely said, when I laid the letter in her open hand, the fingers of which were quivering, "I have read it." Antonia did not return to work with me that morning, but she gave me Miss Cholmley's letter in exchange.

Miss Cholmley mentioned De Roussillon. She had seen the lay rector of his parish, who said he was more pleased with him than any words could express. The improvements in the parish, even in those few weeks, were marvellous ; and he had already made himself beloved by rich and poor. But he added, that M. de Roussillon seemed to have some secret sorrow, evident on his thoughtful brow, though never mentioned by him either directly or indirectly.

I kept this bit of news to myself, and Mary was not told of it ; but, once or twice during the day my tell-tale face betrayed that I had some feast within, and she, laughingly, asked me if I was thinking of Mr. Elyott ?

I knew a sentimental thought for one's self is visible

in the countenance; but I had yet to learn that a sentiment for another could be read there. It showed how dear Ethelbert and Mary were to me.

I could not help telling Mary all about Sir Alfred's letter, though, I confess, it made us both sick to think it possible that the human heart could so deceive itself.

We were conning over the sin of celibacy, when Mr. Ormsville was announced; for, as Mary observed, how can it be so wicked not to be married, when half the women of England are single? "I am sure, Sprite, it is not owing to any vow they have made; for I think there are few who would not rather have a house of their own, and be independent as married women are considered to be, especially as the world's dread laugh often is the portion of the neglected part of womankind, 'called old maids.'"

Mary had just come so far in expression of her opinion and of her wish for enlightenment on this subject, when Mr. Ormsville came in.

I turned to him, and, holding out my hand, I said to him, "You are just come in time to put an end to Mary's perplexity, dear sir."

Mary blushed; how beautiful she always looks when she blushes! I cannot describe the loveliness of her countenance at such times. Her blush is more peculiarly charming than that of any other person with whom I am acquainted. It is easily raised; and



I am glad it is so, for it heightens her beauty so much, I constantly wish her to be seen in such an attractive moment.

The case was propounded to our pastor. He gallantly replied,—“Single women are the guardian-angels of society. An American author says, ‘The single women of England’—I am afraid he does call them *old maids*—‘are a different class from those of any other country in the world.’ ‘They form,’ he says, ‘a part and parcel of the civil constitution.’ There is, of course, no one who has gone through life unloved by one of us, even if she herself have been unaware of it. How many instances I have known of this, ‘when it was too manifestly impolitic for a marriage to be proposed ; and the man has been too upright, and too honourable, to declare sentiments which might have endangered the lady’s peace, and have been a stumbling-block to all future prospects ! God, without whose permission, we know, not even a sparrow can fall to the ground, orders all these things ; and the destiny of each individual is governed by Him. We are prone to take the government of the events of our lives out of His hands ; and He, not unfrequently, gives us up to work out our own destruction by our wilfulness and folly. A married woman’s duties are confined to a much smaller range than those of a single woman ; and while the one must necessarily endeavour to please her husband, the other

is free to devote herself entirely to please the Lord. How purifying to a mixed circle is the presence of an amiable, intellectual single woman! Men, women, and children, the growing youth of both sexes, find a friend in her; and she is a delightful depository for our thoughts, and hopes, and fears. To whom can we better apply for comfort in our sorrows, for sympathy in our joys, than to her, who is disengaged from the cares of a household, and has leisure at all times to listen and console? That she is unmarried, may, perhaps, not have been her own choice; and she may the better be able to enter into the lacerated feelings of another, by a reference to her own sufferings. The reason that celibacy, which is thus, often, in England, the decree of God, is a sin in the Romish church is, that man ordains it in direct opposition to God's own institution; and forces men and women to take vows, which, though they may for a time think voluntary, nevertheless are bonds that have enslaved them to the rules of enforced obedience to the commandment of man.

“The Romish system is an excrescence growing on the tree of gospel-life. It is not wonderful that the Church of Rome makes the study of the Bible to be a deadly sin, for the whole tenor of it is a severe condemnation of the doctrines of that communion. St. Paul and St. John both say that the work of Antichrist had begun in their time; but it was not to be fully

developed till the mystery of iniquity had reached its height. Then would all this sinful work be displayed in the open daylight of revealed truth. Our Lord tells us 'there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known'; and he added to his disciples, 'Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the house-tops.' Houses in the East, you recollect, have flat roofs, and there the families assemble as we do in our drawing-rooms. The time, therefore, will come when all the mysterious workings of Jesuitism and of the papacy will be revealed; then shall we see the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that 'in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron.' And now comes the sin that shows to which church all this points:—*forbidding to marry*. That is, the *sin of celibacy*, in which the son of perdition opposeth God, *forbidding marriage*."

But going to the window, Mr. Ormsville exclaimed, "Whom have we here?"

Mary and I arose quickly and followed him to the

window, to see the apparition which caused this exclamation of surprise.

“Who is it, indeed?” we both said in breathless wonder.

We saw a tall figure, seemingly overcome with fatigue, that had, over a woman’s dress, the great coat of a naval officer, and a midshipman’s cap on the head.

“Who can it be? Who can it be?”

The toil-worn traveller turned towards the house and crossed the lawn, as one familiar with the grounds would do, and slowly approached the spot where we were standing.

Slowly, very slowly, the strange figure neared us; and, when within half a dozen yards of the window, looked up—and, oh! wonderful sight, we recognised Matilda!

Instantly all three were on the lawn by her side. Mary was foremost, and caught her in her arms, just as she was sinking from exhaustion.

Mr. Ormsville, being a powerful man, lifted her as if she had been merely an infant, and taking her from Mary, carried her into the house.

Mary’s first thought was of Mrs. Stuart. I knew it would be so, and whispered to her, “Yes, go, dear Mary, to Cara; leave our once lost, newly found one to us.”

We procured some food for the poor, wearied girl,

and administered it with great precaution. She was soon too overcome with that bewildering feeling of great fatigue to continue to eat ; so we placed her on the sofa, and in a minute she was fast asleep.

Mr. Ormsville withdrew, leaving her to my charge; himself giving orders to the servants that no one should come into the drawing-room, until the bell rang.

Matilda slept very uneasily ; she spoke much in her sleep, but so incoherently, that I did not catch a syllable of what she said.

As she slept I sat by her side, holding her hand, and weeping all the while like a child. I scarcely knew what I felt. Was it joy? Was it surprise, merely? Was it sorrow and pain to see her so altered a being? I did not fail to offer up my glad thanksgiving that she was restored to us, even before I could know whether she had returned unshackled by unhallowed vows.

She was there, on the sofa, before me ! It was all I knew ; and that was in itself happiness, short-lived as I might fear the happiness would prove.

Mary opened the door quietly and asked me to go to Cara, while she would watch by our newly-found darling.

I found Mrs. Stuart radiant with joy. " Come here to me, my dear, good Lady Ingoldspier ; come and kiss me. Oh ! how good is God ! He has heard my prayers ;

our poor child is come home.”—I promptly obeyed; and received on my cheek the cordial, velvet-like kiss of the dear old lady. I always felt particularly proud, when Mrs. Stuart embraced me. She was not apt to do so to any one. The foreign fashion of kissing on both cheeks,—of kissing, instead of shaking hands,—was one she was all unused to follow, and we none of us ever kissed her, but when she gave us permission so to do. It was thought, always, an especial favour, and we knew that when she volunteered to kiss one of us, she must be moved beyond her wont.

She said but little; her heart was too full for utterance. After a short pause she arose, and, taking my arm, murmured,—“I will go to her.”

## CHAPTER IX.

“ There is a shadow in her eye,  
A languor on her frame ;  
The spirit that, so bright and high,  
Shot upward— like the flame  
Which withers with its wild carress,  
And dies amid its own excess—  
Has wearied with its full delight,  
And fallen from its fiery flight;  
And she is still a bird-like thing—  
A bird,—but with a broken wing.”

WE stole quietly into the room. Matilda had just opened her eyes, as we drew near the sofa. When she saw Mrs. Stuart looking benignly, and smiling on her, she jumped up, her middy's cap flew off, and she fell on Mrs. Stuart's neck. I could contemplate her, being but a looker-on upon the scene, and, sooth to say, my heart only could recognise our little Matilda in that uncouth garb. I call her little from tenderness, and because she was then so young ; but she is much taller than I am.

How much, even in minute points, is the Romish system contrary to the Bible. St. Paul says,—“ If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her,” but, when the Romish Church entraps a young girl into a convent, she must be shaven and shorn. The ceremony of taking the veil is, indeed, solemn. In mockery, the

poor victim is decked out, even in borrowed jewels, if she have none of her own, and, then, all her gewgaws are taken from her, her long hair cut off, and she bids adieu to the pomps and vanities of earth.

Poor Matilda ! what a figure she was ! Her hair had been cut, as if a barber's bason had been placed on her head, and the scissors passed round the edge of it. When Mr. Elyott saw it, he declared that the rats had performed the office.

Her beautiful complexion was certainly spoiled, and her whole appearance was as if the greatest pains had been taken to divest her of any vestige which could recall her real station in life. We had slipped off the overcoat, before placing her on the sofa, and there remained to view that odious, dirty brown stuff gown, in which she had expected to be so neat and cleanly.

Truly, she looked little like a lady. A housemaid would have disdained such a dress.

Mrs. Stuart folded Matilda in her arms, and blessed her.

"Bless you, my dear one ! May our heavenly Father, who has permitted the wanderer to return home, bless you with His richest blessings ! May His Spirit enter into your heart, show you the error of your ways, and bring you back to the fold of the Good Shepherd, who is the truth ; and He only is !"

Matilda was, naturally, much overcome by such a reception, so different from that which her conscience



told her she deserved. She sobbed with all the wildness of a school-girl, and, when she could sob no more, she fell back on the sofa, and we left her, to remain thus quietly till the dinner-hour.

In the meanwhile, Mary had gone to communicate the glad tidings to all the household, and waited at the garden gate for Antonia's return from the village, to tell her what had taken place.

Antonia had not gone to visit the poor. She was not allowed by Mrs. Stuart to do that alone. We felt persuaded she would endeavour to unsettle the faith of the villagers; and we had no idea of consenting to that.

Antonia's surprise was very great, but of a different order from ours. She had rather envied Matilda of late, and was astonished to find that, having once entered such a peaceful retreat, she should have attempted, and so successfully, to find her way back into the wearisome world where all is "bubble, bubble, toil and trouble." She went immediately to the room where she was lying, made the sign of the cross, which Matilda, from habit, returned, and kissed her affectionately.

When I saw the three together again, how my heart beat, when I thought of the pretty joyous group that used to return from the pleasant sketching-parties, at Whitby, and that all this sad change had been wrought by that which went under the sacred name of *holiness*.

We gradually fell into companionship again ; but the sweetness of intercourse was lost to us for ever.

We could not elicit much from Matilda. They seemed, in Miss Nolles' establishment, to go on, day after day, with such a monotony of ceremony, and make-believe prayers, and good deeds, it was all so heartless, so uninteresting, so wearisome, that a penance was quite a relief, as giving some fresh occupation.

Miss Nolles did not practise the austerities she enjoined. She made delicate health a pretext for a thousand indulgences ; and even Matilda could not help laughing, as she recounted that, one day, Dr. Kitcat came to the convent to give some needed advice, and, whilst he and Miss Nolles were dining, and Matilda acting as footman, Miss Nolles turned round, and, with the sweetest tone, desired her to fetch a pint of beer for them from the neighbouring tavern !

On such errands are young girls of good families sent.

Her escape was effected in this wise. She had not been long in the convent before she was thoroughly sick of the whole thing ; but, day after day, week after week, month after month, passed. She grew more and more disgusted, till, at last, she was almost in a state of frantic despair. Miss Nolles observed it, but thought her too safe to take any notice of it ; and as, with all her blandness of voice, she has all the asperity

of dogmatical authority, she did not care whether Matilda were happy or not. She was there ! All her worldly goods were given to the convent. What could it signify, whether she were gay or not. She would get used to the thing in the course of time.

“ Oh ! ” said the dear child, after the novelty was once over, “ when I began to find the common works to which I was put most irksome, and even hard to do ; when I was obliged to get up in the winter night, to repeat prayers which I did not understand, and which, when translated to me, I disliked ; when I longed for some one to whom I might talk, as I used to do with one of you, and found silence commanded, under the very strictest injunction never to address any but the Mother Superior ; I often wished I could die ; I frequently wished I were dead. We had, often, to go out at midnight.” Dear Mrs. Stuart ! her look of horror at this was quite appalling ! “ Two or three times, a young midshipman contrived to speak to me, while Sister Wilhelmina, who accompanied me, was talking to his lieutenant. These gentlemen were on shore, at the time, on leave. The midshipman saw all the truth, in a moment, and cleverly managed to tell me, that, in a night or two, he would meet me with a railway-ticket, that would help me considerably to be on my way, before my flight was discovered. I almost went mad with joy at the very thought. It so happened that, at the end of that very week, we met him one evening, just

as the train was going off. He threw his coat over me, put his cap on my head, and, taking me by the arm, ran off with me as quickly as he and I could run. We heard the last whistle, as we came to the carriage door ; and he had just time to push me in, with the ticket in my hand. The porter shut the door, and away we whisked. I remembered, of course, the last station nearest to dear Somerhurst, and there I got out. The porter thought I was crack-brained, I believe, and would, possibly, have stopped me ; but I ran and ran, until I came to old Molly Freeman's cottage ; and there she took me in, after a good deal of thumping at the door to wake her up. She allowed me to sit by her fireside, though there was no fire in it, and gave me, for my journey, a piece of dry bread. I had, naturally, no appetite, and I soon set off. I was so alarmed, lest Miss Nolles should send a telegraphic message after me, which, however, I need not have feared, for she could not guess that any one would have given me a railway ticket, and she knew I had no money ; but reflection never was a gift of mine ; and so I came on foot, and walked and walked, till you saw me arriving on the lawn. I was obliged to lie down, now and then, on the bare ground ; but not after it was daylight, did I attempt to do so ; and you saw how tired I was when I did arrive."

Mr. Ormsville often came to visit us, and, I hope, we were, each of us, the better for his visits ; but

Matilda was not grown steadier; the weeds in her disposition, far from being eradicated, had grown apace, whilst she was leading that more than unprofitable life.

Dear Mrs. Stuart's spirits flagged once more, from the hour she saw how undisciplined Matilda's mind still was.

Mr. Elyott now came to Somerhurst. He was a welcome guest, and stirred us up to brighter and wittier themes.

One morning, it was very wet; so we assembled, in the drawing-room, with our needlework destined for Madras. Mr. Elyott came in, and I immediately called to him, "Come, Mr. Elyott, and entertain us while we work."

Even Mrs. Stuart was knitting little shawls, which were to be given, as prizes, to the young mothers, who were training their children carefully in the way they should go.

"Now, my Lady Ingoldspier, you are perfectly aware nothing so completely shuts persons' mouths as a call to them to make themselves agreeable."

"It may be so usually," said Mrs. Stuart, "but it cannot be your case, my good Mr. Elyott, for, as you have not the habit of pre-arranged witticisms, you do not treat us at any time to an *impromptu fait à loisir*; therefore, come, and sit down amongst us, and be yourself, and I am sure we shall all forget that the weather keeps us in-doors, and prevents us from taking our daily exercise."

Mr. Elyott kissed Mrs. Stuart's hand. "Always kind, always indulgent, dear madam. I have, however, a pre-arranged subject, at least, a pre-arranged request. I find our young friend De Roussillon is not quite well, and I want him to have a clergyman's fortnight at Somerhurst. May I write to him and invite him, in your name?"

"Decidedly, and it will give me very sincere pleasure to receive him. He will be a charming addition to our party, and I shall have long conversations with him about our villagers and their schools. Not that I mean in any way to interfere with Mr. Ormsville and his arrangements, but I think it good to discuss such matters, lest we fall into a jog-trot way of our own, when we might, by a little alteration, make great improvements. Tell Mr. de Roussillon that his stay with me is to be limited only by his own wish to return to his parish. Though, indeed, to so retiring a young man, it may as well be mentioned, as you suggest, that we do not intend to part with him under three weeks."

"Ah! De Roussillon is a young parson after my own heart. He is very unlike certain simpletons that shall be nameless, described by St. Paul, 'who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women.' "

Oh! most unwise Mr. Elyott! In one sentence he had for ever destroyed all chance of usefulness for Ethelbert with Antonia. I looked up at her, and saw how indignant she felt, and how determined she was,

from that moment, to dislike him as much as she had ever loved Sir Alfred. I cast my eyes round the table, and read in Mary's eyes the first consciousness of the state of her own heart ; it was as if Mr. Elyott had held up a mirror to it. No one, I hope and believe, remarked her beautiful blush of recognition of this image, reflected so clearly in her affection. I trusted nobody ever would see it until Ethelbert himself did. It was almost like the glance that is exchanged but once in life, when the avowal of love is made, and the maiden's eye speaks all the volumes contained in the smile of reciprocity.

Matilda was a queer object just then. It had, of course, been impossible, as yet, to do much for the improvement of her appearance. Her hair was so disfiguring that we had been obliged to make up some little dandy head-dresses for her, which, however, were by no means becoming. She, particularly, of the three, always spoke out, and whatever was in her mind was speedily on her tongue.

"Who is this Mr. de Roussillon, Mr. Elyott; I never have heard of him?"

"How should you have heard of him, or of many, whose acquaintance we made last season, in London, whilst you were repeating your devotions at Portdown? You can't think, Matilda, how much the business of the rosaries, for it is a business, reminds me, when I think of it, of the Arabian custom. When Arabs have certain

prayers to repeat over several times, they write them on slips of parchment and put them into a coffee-pot, and turn round the handle, which turns the slips at the same time, as often as the repetition is prescribed, and then the prayers are done. It is quite as pious as your way. I am glad to see you working so assiduously; needlework must have brought you into a higher grade of society and of servitude than scrubbing the saucepans at Miss Nolles'. By-the-by, that dinner, from which you stepped so nimbly to the pot-house for the beer, was, no doubt, very edifying.

"Dr. Kitcat is superlatively well named. They call him Pussy, at the University, I am told, for he verily is a *kitten* of the *Cat*-holic church. He goes about so slyly, so softly, and makes converts by such irresistible fascination, that it is a pleasure to be made a fool of by him. Well! 'offences must come—woe unto him by whom they come. It had indeed been better for him that a millstone had been tied round his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' However, one excuse to be made for him is, that he and all his family are subject to a sore disease, which, with some members of it, corrodes the body, and they die of consumption; in others, produces a partial or total aberration of intellect—his, I conclude, to be of the former class."

"That's a long story of Dr. Kitcat, which I believe to be true; but, as I cannot bear him, and would like



to forget his very existence, if possible, I want you to tell me, Mr. Elyott, who Mr. de Roussillon is."

"Mr. de Roussillon, Miss Lesbie, is the perfection of a young clergyman, who works so hard in the Great Master's cause"—and Mr. Elyott folded his hands and bowed reverently, as he said this—"that he is almost worn to death by his zeal and fervour; and, therefore, I wish him to come here, for change of air, and for repose. I know you, Matilda, will set your cap at him; but you must considerably mend your ways and your manners, if you hope to *cap*-tivate him."

Matilda laughed at this piece of sage advice, and said—"At least, it will not now be necessary for me to cut off my ringlets, as Rose of St. Mary did, lest I should make the conquest."

"Rose of St. Mary! Why, you are very learned, it appears; and so, you know all about Rose of St. Mary, and her wonderful dislike, at five years old, to marriage, and, in humility, so afraid that any man who saw her would be entangled in the beautiful meshes of her hair, would lose his own head in them, and be head over ears in love the moment he saw them! Miss Rose seems to have had a marvellous idea of her own charms; but, saints and sinners, you are all alike. From your cradles, your self-love is absorbed in coquetry, and the thought of the ways and means to secure admirers. What other saint has been introduced to your notice, Matilda?"

“ Oh ! such a delightful number. Good Cardinal Sapienthomo knows so well how dull it must be in a convent, where we are not even allowed to read the story of Joseph and his brethren, because it is in that prohibited book the Bble, that he has written a great, great many books, full of such wonderful and interesting stories of the lives of the saints, that, I assure you, Mr. Elyott, Jack and the Bean-stalk, and the old woman that rode to Banbury Cross, are nothing like so entertaining. Besides, you know, there are no horrors in the stories of the Nursery Rhymes ; and the Lives of the Saints, and all they do to punish themselves for their sins, are full of delightful anecdotes, which make one’s hair stand on end.”

“ It is probable that is one reason, Matilda, that long hair must be cut off. Fancy the long hair of all the women in a convent standing on end, at once ! May I be by to see, if such a marvel ever is to be witnessed ! It would cure a fit of the spleen in no time, a legion of blue devils could not but fly at such a sight.”

“ Dear me, Mr. Elyott ! how hard it would be to make a good Roman Catholic of you.”

“ Not only hard, but, I hope, impossible. I was commanded by Lady Ingoldspier to say something entertaining, and, instead of that, you have drawn me into talking over ‘ old wives’ fables.’ And I want very much to read some extracts of a couple of books, which I have been turning over of an evening lately.”

Mrs. Stuart looked quite pleased that the subject, of all others most inimical to her taste, was to be dropped.

"So much the better, my dear sir; I am sure, if it be anything that has struck your fancy, it will be improving to us to hear."

"Perhaps you do not know it, Mrs. Stuart, but I think a great deal about England and her history, and her present state, and her present position in the universe; so sublime is the task given to her by our Lord, to carry the glad tidings of the gospel to all nations, and, yet, so full of sin and error are we, even in our holy things, that we may well veil our faces in humility, and confess our deep unworthiness. It is thus God works out His grand, His wonderful, His gracious purposes. Magnificent in all His works, He yet chooses the meanest instruments to bring to pass His loftiest designs. For, as St. Paul says, 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, not of us.' It is the thought of these things, which makes me read with interest any remarks made about us in the works of foreigners; and, I am sure, you will all hear with patience what I am now going to read to you."

Antonia looked unspeakably relieved at the change of subject. Mary raised her lovely head from her work, with a gratified countenance. Matilda said, "I do hope it will prove entertaining; for I cannot be bored; I have had enough of that lately."

“ I will first read Heinrich Heine’s opinion of London :—

“ “ I have seen the greatest wonder which the world can show to the astonished spirit,—I have seen it, and am still astonished ; and still there remains fixed in my memory the stone-forest of houses, and, amid them, the rushing stream of faces of living men with all their motley passions, all their terrible impulses of love, of anger, and of hatred—I mean London. Send a philosopher to London ; but, for your life, no poet ! Send a philosopher there, and stand him at a corner of Cheapside, where he will learn more than from all the books of the Leipsic fair ; and as the billows of human life roar around him, so will a sea of new thoughts rise before him, and the Eternal Spirit, which moves upon the face of the waters, will breathe upon him ; the most hidden secrets of social harmony will be suddenly revealed to him ; he will hear the pulses of the world beat audibly, and see it visibly ; for, if London be the right hand of the world—its active, mighty right hand—then may we regard the route, which leads from the Exchange, as the world’s pyloric artery. But never send a poet to London ! This downright earnestness of all things, this colossal uniformity, this machine-like movement, this troubled spirit in pleasure itself, this exaggerated London, smothers the imagination, and rends the heart. And should you ever send a German poet thither—a dreamer, who stares at everything, even

a ragged beggar woman, or the shining wares of a goldsmith's shop—why, then at least, he will find things going right badly with him.' ”

When Mr. Elyott had finished, we all agreed that he had, indeed, chosen well for our entertainment, and were quite ready to trust him for a continuance.

“ This is a much longer extract I am now about to read, so that, if either of you tire in the middle just cry, Halt ! and I will finish it another time ; or not at all, as you like best. This is Emerson, the American's, opinion of England in general :—

“ ‘ Alfieri thought Italy and England the only countries worth living in ; the former, because there nature vindicates her rights, and triumphs over the evils inflicted by the governments ; the latter, because art conquers nature, and transforms a rude, ungenial land into a paradise of comfort and plenty. England is a garden. Under an ash-coloured sky, the fields have been combed and rolled till they appear to have been finished with a pencil, instead of a plough. The solidity of the structures that compose the towns, speaks the industry of ages. Nothing is left as it was made. Rivers, hills, valleys, the sea itself, feel the hand of a master. The long habitation of a powerful and ingenious race, has turned every rood of land to its best use, has formed all the capabilities, the arable soil, the quarriable rock, the highways, the by-ways, the fords, the navigable waters ; and the new arts

of intercourse meet you everywhere ; so that, England is a huge phalanstery, where all that man wants is provided within the precinct. Cushioned and comforted in every manner, the traveller rides as on a cannon ball, high and low, over rivers and towns, through mountains, in tunnels of three or four miles, at near twice the speed of our trains ; and reads quietly the *Times* newspaper, which, by its immense correspondence, and reporting, seems to have machinised the world for his occasion.

“ ‘ The problem of the traveller landing at Liverpool is, Why England is England ! What are the elements of that power which the English hold over other nations ? If there be one test of natural genius, universally accepted, it is success ; and if there be one successful country in the universe, for the last millennium, that country is England ! A wise traveller will naturally choose to visit the best of actual nations ; and an American has more reasons than another, to draw him to Britain. In all that is done or begun by the Americans towards right-thinking or practice, we are met by a civilisation already settled and overpowering. The culture of the day, the thoughts and aims of man, are English thoughts and aims. A nation considerable for a thousand years, since Egbert, it has in the last centuries obtained an ascendant, and stamped the knowledge, activity, and power of mankind with its impress. Those who resist it, do not

feel it or obey it less. The Russian in his snows is aiming to be English. The Turk and Chinese are also making awkward efforts to be English.

“ ‘ The practical common sense of modern society, the utilitarian direction which labour, laws, opinion, religion take, is the natural genius of the British mind. The influence of France is constituted of modern civility, but not enough opposed to the English for the most wholesome effect. The American is only the continuation of the English genius into her conditions, in more or less proportions. See what books fill our libraries. Every book we read, every biography, play, romance, in whatever form, is still English history, and manners ; so that a sensible Englishman once said to me, ‘ As long as you do not grant us copyright, we shall have the teaching of you.’

“ ‘ The country has a singular perfection. The climate is warmer by many degrees than it is entitled to by latitude. Neither hot nor cold, there is no hour in the whole year when one cannot work. Here is no winter, but such days as we have in Massachusetts in November, a temperature which makes no exhausting demand on human strength, but allows the attainment of the largest stature. Charles the Second said “ it invited men abroad more days in the year, and more hours in the day, than any other country.” Then England has all the materials for a working country, except wood. The constant rain—a rain with every tide in some parts

of the island—keeps its multitude of rivers full, and brings agricultural production up to the highest point. It has plenty of water, of stone, of potter's clay, of coal, of salt, and of iron. The land naturally abounds with game; immense heaths and downs are paved with quails, grouse, and woodcocks, and the shores are animated by water birds. The rivers and the surrounding sea spawn with fish; there are salmon for the rich, and sprats and herrings for the poor. In the northern locks the herrings are in innumerable shoals; at one season, the country-people say, the lakes contain one part water and two parts fish. But England is anchored at the side of Europe, and right in the heart of the modern world. The sea, which, according to Virgil's famous line, divided the poor Britons utterly from the world, proved to be the ring of marriage with all nations. It is not down in the books—it is written only in the geologic strata, that there was a day when a wave of the German ocean burst the old isthmus, which joined Kent and Cornwall to France, and gave to this fragment of Europe its impregnable sea-wall, cutting off an island of eight hundred miles in length, with an irregular breadth reaching to three hundred miles; a territory large enough for independence, enriched with every seed of national power, so near that it can see the harvests of the Continent; and so far, that who would cross the strait must be an expert mariner, ready for tempests. As America, Europe, and Asia lie,



these Britons have precisely the best commercial position in the whole planet, and are sure of a market for all the goods they can manufacture.'

"We will now hear what is said in America of the English language:—

" 'Scholars speak of the English language as in itself a power. No people have spoken it, or can speak it, but a powerful people. No other language equals it. With a law and genius of its own, it levies contributions upon all other languages, and incorporates the power and beauty, the heart and core, of every other tongue into it. For perspicuity and force, for elegance and smoothness, poetry and science, metaphysics and theology, the pulpit or the forum, the senate or the bar, for any and every use, there is no language which equals it. By the use of this common language, our country is bound together by a common sympathy; and by the same means—unity of language—we are allied to the most powerful nations of the earth. The English language is rapidly spreading into all lands, and will, according to present indications, soon become the language of commerce in all nations. The English and Americans are in the East Indies, in Australia, at the Cape of Good Hope, on the Coast of China; in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America; on all continents, seas, and islands; along all lines of travel, where they find or *leave* some who speak the language.' "

At this moment the luncheon was announced.

“What has become of the whole of the morning? Indeed, Mr. Elyott, you are a very charming man.”

“I wish, Lady Ingoldspier, you had thought so, and said so, a few years ago. How provoking it is that so many good matches are spoiled, for want of a little candour.”

“I do not agree with you there, for I, on the contrary, believe many a one is spoiled by premature candour. No man cares for love that is easily won, and that is the reason coquettes succeed so much better with you lords of the creation, than simple-minded women. When once a really loving woman has let the secret of her attachment slip out, you huntsmen no longer care for it; you are off on another scent; for the poor girl who has shown you you need run no longer, has spoiled all the pleasure of the chase for you.”

“Pray, my lady, shall I help you to this wing of a chicken, that you may fly off to something more pleasing to my self-love?”

I verily believe it was this flighty way of Mr. Elyott that had always prevented me from thinking him serious when he was making love to me; a pun and a proposal seem so little akin. At any rate, of one thing I felt sure, that I did not regret that I had not married him; though I value his esteem and his friendship very much.

“When is Miss Cholmley coming to Somerhurst?” I asked.

“ Why do you want to know, you jealous minx ? You see, in spite of all your pretended philosophy, you don’t like to give me up.”

“ Come, come,” I said, “ don’t let us be such geese as to be warming up a flirtation. *Si un dîner re-chauffé ne valut jamais rien*—an old love tale dished up is worse still.”

“ I do not feel sure but that you are right.

‘The man’s a fool who thinks by rule or skill,  
To stem the torrent of a woman’s will,  
For if she will, she will, you may depend on’t,  
And if she won’t, she won’t, and there’s an end on’t.’

“ *Sur cela, miladi, j’ai l’honneur de vous saluer,*” and, handing Mrs. Stuart back to the drawing-room, he made me a bow of mock-homage as he passed.

## CHAPTER X.

“Henceforth, thou wilt be all alone ;  
What shalt thou do, poor weeper ?  
Oh ! human love ! Oh ! human woe,  
Is there a pang yet deeper ?  
Can it live on without that love,  
For which its pulse beat ever ?  
Alas ! this loving, trusting heart  
Must ache, and bleed, and sever !”

MARY HOWITT.

MR. ELYOTT was our great resource. He was the laughing gas of our party. I do not know how we should have existed without him, to rouse us up at all times. His spirits never, for one moment, flagged ; and his manly, almost fatherly way of humouring, and indulging us, each in our respective modes, was most reviving.

Ah ! it is true, “Better a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith.” What a motley group we were ; no two exactly of the same opinion ; no two in anywise related, yet the love of God, and of our neighbour, was the silken cord that bound us together.

Ethelbert came soon to Somerhurst. I was sorry that he and Mary had become acquainted by absence

with the state of their own hearts, for it made them both so shy, and uncomfortable, in each other's presence ; and as Matilda, true to her flighty nature, did all she could to draw Mr. de Rousillon's attentions to herself, it was not even in Mary's nature not to feel jealous, when they went off to the village to visit the schools—or she drove him in the pony-chaise to show him the grounds, which were too extensive to be compassed by a walk. Matilda had taken the right way to secure the society of this zealous young man, by making her confession to him, as if in all the simplicity of a guileless heart, of her great need of spiritual instruction. Alas ! she was no longer guileless. The sojourn at Portdown had opened all the sluices of deceit and wile, which are inherent in fallen man. For, is not the heart “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ?” All that passed between her and Ethelbert, none of us knew ; and though I could not really fear that he would prefer Matilda to Mary, yet the experience of my whole life had taught me, that however secure a woman may feel of a man's heart—and Mary did not feel in the least secure of Ethelbert's—yet she may too often be erased from his constant thought, by the artifices of one determined to carry off the prize which she may have herself coveted, and believed she possessed.

This was quite a new phase of things, and made me see how often, as Ethelbert had himself said, so very

short a time ago—"Our very wishes give us not our wish." For how ardently had I wished for Matilda's return.

I was sorely embarrassed. I did not know how to act. Mary would never have forgiven me, if I had spoken to Ethelbert, so as in anywise to draw him off from Matilda to herself; and as Ethelbert, from the very excess of his love for Mary, did not dare often to approach her, he had no opportunity of comparing the two.

Mr. Elyott all this time was very provoking. It was impossible not to perceive that he was as aware of my wishes, as I was myself—he would frequently look at me with such a mischievous glance of his splendid eye, when Ethelbert and Matilda went out together, that I felt extremely angry with him.

One day, he came up to me, and said in the old, old way of days long gone by:—

"Dear little woman, take me into your confidence, and we can surely be a match for that wild, misguided girl."

It was very puzzling. Should I do so? Should I not? It seemed to me like taking the guidance of future events into our own hands; and yet, where was the wisdom of the serpent, which we are told to unite to the innocence of the dove, if we did not obstruct what was going on so contrarily to good sense?

I held out my hand, at last, saying—"It's a bargain; but how shall we set about it?"

“ The only thing I can do,” he replied, “ is, to make counter-drives and walks. I will engage Ethelbert to walk and drive with me, and Miss Matilda will have fewer opportunities for her pranks. I do believe there is more female devilry learnt in convents, from the lives of the saints, than a whole boarding-school could invent.”

How pleased my Mary looked the first time an act in our counterplot was performed ! I knew I could trust Mr. Elyott, for with all his abruptness, he was peculiarly delicate in all things that concerned women ; and I felt sure that the two gentlemen might walk together the whole day, and that not one word would be said, either of Mary or of Matilda, that they would have disapproved in the smallest degree. Mr. Elyott was eminently a man of the world, and had studied men and manners in all countries, and was as adroit as a diplomatist as even Talleyrand,—but on what different principles he acted !

Gradually De Roussillon became more at his ease, and like his former self, as we had known him in London.

This brightened up Mary, and, by little and little, they drew nearer to each other ; and before the three weeks were out, they had had much delightful companionship. Still no outpourings of the inward feelings towards each other ; and I began to fear we should have that kind of platonic engagement, tacitly made,

that has marred the happiness of so many men and women. Friends they were, dearer friends to each other than either could be with any one else; still, only friends.

Mr. Elyott was, at times, rather cross with Matilda, and one day when she was rolling her eyes about, as he coarsely said, like a duck in thunder, he very sharply reproved her.

"Come, come, Matilda, none of that nonsense; what are you drilling your eyes for in that very ridiculous way?"

Matilda was turning them slowly, first to the right, then to the left; then upwards, then downwards.

"It is the discipline of the eyes. I have been so long in the habit of practising it, I find it difficult to break myself of it. We are told in Scripture to bring our whole body into subjection, and even our eyes must be ruled to obedience."

"Well," he said, "you really must be excused for all your folly. How cunningly the Romish Church does turn the texts of Scripture to its own devices! Little did St. Paul think that his comparison of himself to a well-trained racer would have such results."

"May I be allowed to observe," Ethelbert meekly rejoined, "that St. Paul seems to have been as thoroughly acquainted with the system of the Church of Rome as if he had lived in our days. I think there is scarcely one error of a grosser or less palpable kind,



that he has not predicted. It is very wonderful how carefully he has been kept in the back-ground, until the mystery of iniquity has been fully worked out ; and now that the whole fabric is tottering, each stone, as it falls, seems to cry out, ‘The time is at hand. Look in St. Paul’s writings, and you will see how I was named in them—so plainly, that running, you may read what is engraved on me.’”

I was always charmed when I could bring out Ethelbert’s opinions. They were so matured, even young as he was ; so I remarked, “Is it not sad, that so many noblemen and noblewomen have gone to Rome, as the fashionable mode of expression has it?”

“Excuse me for differing from you, Lady Ingoldspier, but I hold, on the contrary, that it was expedient for the speedier downfall of Popery that it should be so. One Duchess, or one Lord, thus publicly renouncing the Holy Catholic Church to take up with the teachings of the unfaithful spouse of Christ, does more to forward the good cause than would the turning of a thousand boors to the pure springs of scriptural doctrine. It rouses up the zeal of those who are on the Lord’s side ; it encourages those who are also perverted, to declare themselves ; and it begins the good fight of faith in earnest. St. Paul predicted this apostasy—‘There must be a falling away first’—before the son of perdition is manifest in all his hideous workings, and nothing is so likely to produce a fervent spirit of

piety, and a more open vindication of the truth, than the glaring conduct of even one person in a high place."

"How do you account for it," I asked, "that the Low Church has produced more apostates than the moderate party?"

"Low and High Church designate different parties in the Church of England; extremes meet; and both have deviated equally from the straight and narrow path. If two are agreed, they may walk together in it; if not, not.

"I give every man credit for sincerity. Sec-tarians and Tractarians are equally seeking the truth; I admit the sincerity of the Bishop of Exeter, of Mr. Bennett, of Frome, of Dr. Pusey, as willingly as that of Baptist Noel. They all, I believe, are anxious for the truth, are seeking for the truth; but, as long as they do not abide by the orthodoxy,—the spirit of the Church of England,—I cannot admit that they have found the truth. The Low Church makes as much a Juggernaut of our gracious, heavenly Father, as the High Church, the Roman Catholic, the Jesuit party, make a Chinese Joss of Him.

"St. Paul, who, more than any man, suffered for his opinions, nevertheless bids us rejoice evermore, be of good cheer, be of good courage; yea, even in tribulation we are commanded to be so. The watchword of the Christian sentiment,—'Look to Jesus as the author

and finisher of our faith '—is St. Paul's simple injunction ; whilst the Low Church party bids us be ever looking into our own vile hearts, and instead of rejoicing that Christ is ready to send His Spirit to cleanse them, we are taught to be constantly deploring our sins. St. Paul desires us to be in the world, and yet not of it ; but the Low Church desires us to eschew all merry-makings, and to attend to meetings, which, under the mask of prayer, and serious conversation, savour more of dissipation than one assembly where the wholesome exercise of dancing is allowed. The High Church think that God is to be propitiated by candlesticks placed on the altar, floral decorations, an unbounded reverence for the priesthood, temples of splendid architecture, and painted windows. In neither party, do I think, the real spirit of gospel-truth is to be found ; and, yet, both are ever seeking, and never coming at it."

"Where does the fault lie, Mr. de Roussillon ?"

"In the not simply looking to Jesus. He is seen in the first page of Genesis, and in every page of Holy Writ, to the last line of it ; and if we would look to Him, and for Him, renouncing our own preconceived notions, giving up our own will, without any reservation to His ; most assuredly we should be led into the right way ; for, it is equally said to all,—‘ If ye seek me, ye shall find me.’ It is Him and Him alone we must seek,—the blessed Trinity, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, is first declared,

when God said—‘Let us make man in our own image.’”

What a countenance Ethelbert’s was at that moment! Again the thought came over me—he is too good to live.

And, yet, in the midst of my admiration—such wayward beings we are—I asked him, if he hated Roman Catholics, Dissenters, and Puseyites.

“Hate them! God forbid I should hate any man, for whose precious soul Christ died as well as for mine. Hate! oh! what a fearful word! And yet I do hate sin with all my heart.”

“Do you think Roman Catholics can be saved—can go to heaven?”

“My mission is, to preach Christ crucified for the sins of the whole world; to preach in season, and out of season; but not to judge. I am not called upon to judge any man. Most blessed that it is so! To his own Master each must stand or fall. My glorious privilege is, as Christ’s ambassador, to persuade men to embrace the covenant He has made with them. I have no power to alter one syllable in the Gospel.”

I turned towards Mary; oh! I could have risen and folded her in my arms: she looked seraphic, like an angel. I felt fully assured that, in that moment, she had not a thought of Ethelbert, only of his mission.

Mrs. Stuart was animated to-day; she was quite handsome, with that pleased expression. But bright

days are few in this nether world, or we should say, it is good for us to be here. We must press full on "towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" here we have no abiding-place; it is onward, onward, with each of us.

I am sorry to say De Roussillon's holiday-time was expended, and he left us.

Antonia had shown him the most marked repugnance. She seemed instinctively to feel his superiority to Sir Alfred, and to dislike him accordingly. She, therefore, did not join in the lamentations which we all made when the hour of departure arrived. Mary was silent from an opposite cause, but loud were our expressions of regret; Mrs. Stuart, Mr. Elyott, Matilda, and I, made quite a wailing when he left.

He had bid us all good bye, and had almost reached the door, when he turned his head to have one more look of Mary. What unutterable love there was in that look! He knew not that he had betrayed himself; it sank deep into her heart, and the oiled arrow never was withdrawn.

I happened to be holding the handle of the door as he passed out. He falteringly murmured, "God bless her!" and was gone. I soon after left Somerhurst; Miss Cholmley replaced me. She had not been able to join the party while I was there.

When I arrived at home I found my long absence had brought me into a world of arrears of occupation,

and I was obliged to deprive myself of the pleasure even of writing so frequently to Somerhurst as I wished, and the letters which I received from thence were not particularly interesting. Each day resembled the other, and there was nothing new to communicate to me.

I remained away all that Christmas, and did not even go to London in the spring. My own little cottage was so dear to me; I liked so much to be among my own people, and my love for the sea is such, that I scarcely need other voices than those of the waves for companionship.

It was, however, only a lull in the state of affairs. Before we met again, great changes had taken place. Mr. Elyott made me acquainted with them. He wrote to ask me if he should tell me all in person at Ilfracombe, or whether I preferred a written recital.

I dreaded so much to hear evil, that I begged of him to write immediately; for I liked to be prepared for the detail he might be able to give by having a general outline of the proceedings before I saw him.

I could not, however, have been prepared, by any precautionary diction, for what I had to learn:—

“MY DEAR LITTLE WOMAN,—Does it not make us young again, when, in spite of the silver-grey of your locks, and the snowy whiteness of mine, I presume to use the epithet by which I marked you as my own, when we danced and sang together in the days of giddy

youth? Do not, however, imagine that I have been constant to you ever since we parted at Somerhurst; that would have been exacting too much. No, I have flirted to my heart's content with amiable spinsters, bewitching widows, pretty misses in their teens, and, indeed, my present love is one who has not even cut her teeth, but, in spite of her teeth, we are the most affectionate friends. This morning she slobbered me well when I kissed her, and, I suppose, I must take the hint, and keep my distance another time. It is astonishing how plainly all you ladies indicate your wishes to one admirer when you want to please another. The nurse took missy to the window to show her the soldiers passing, and I came home to write to you.

“Oh! such a to-do as there is in Eaton Place! But I must begin from the beginning. You may imagine Matilda had no idea of staying at home, or of contenting herself with a dowager drive in the parks; so, as soon as she arrived, she induced Mrs. Stuart to furnish her with a complete wardrobe. Her hair is now a beautiful and most becoming crop, curled all over her head, with a fringe of light curls on the forehead and temples, that is much in the style of some of the ancient statues. She does look brilliant, I must own it. She made great acquaintance with Mrs. Malcolm, who, as you know, delights in having a *lion* to parade about; and the handsome Miss Leslie,

who has escaped in so romantic a way from Portdown, is the lion, of all others, to suit her. Matilda is by no means backward in the art of getting on in the world, and she attracts numbers of young men to Mrs. Malcolm's assemblies. And, sooth to say, if pleasure be her aim, she has now her fill of it. What with picnics to Richmond, breakfasts at Putney, dinners at Woolwich, large and small balls, panoramas and dioramas, English and Italian operas, plays at all the minor theatres, and an engagement every night somewhere, the girl has made a regular show of herself; and the young men about town have been vying with each other who could most express their admiration. She is fairly intoxicated with all this; her head is quite turned. I do not think I have seen her, except at one of these parties, during a minute for full two months. Evening and morning she entertains Mrs. Stuart with a history of her conquests of the preceding evening, not thinking of waiting for any comments of Mrs. Stuart's.

"Yesterday, a very shrewd observer of what is passing in the world told me he said to himself when he saw her,—‘She ran away to Portdown; she ran away from Portdown; she has not run for the last time.’ Nor, indeed, had she. This morning, the footman brought in a note to Mrs. Stuart, saying,—‘Miss Leslie desired me to give you this, ma’am; a gentleman called for her in his cab, and she stepped



into it, and drove off with him.' This was a pretty history to be brought by a lacquey. The note was short, but explanatory :—

“ ‘ MY DEAR CARA,—A regular wedding is a great, wearisome, expensive affair, for which you have neither health nor inclination ; so, to save you all this worry, I am going to Gretna Green with Charles Montresor ; and before I return to you, I shall be his wife. It is such fun to do things in this way !

“ ‘ Your giddy MATILDA.’

“ Mrs. Stuart seems quite resigned to anything Matilda can do, and, as if she had borne so much sorrow on her account already, she could feel no more. Fortunately, I can tell her there is no great harm in the lad ; he is only such a harum-scarum piece of goods as herself. As to money-matters, they will have to live on love and air ; whether Matilda will remain the plump young partridge she is, or become a scarecrow on this diet, we shall see if we live long enough. The next, and most unpleasant piece of news is about Antonia. We have only discovered the whole truth to-day, proving the correctness of the adage, that ‘ Misfortunes never come single.’ We had observed a great change in her of late ; but, with her habits of reserve, you know well how impossible it is to learn anything from her. She has been sadly out of spirits, which I thought natural, as she had nothing more to keep them up, and could

not well find all the silly employments of her new faith longer engrossing. All novelty is worn off, and, of course, from the moment Velasquez deserted her, all delight, in following out his injunctions and advice, ceased. We now discover that he, who never was in love with her, really believed that his heart was buried with his betrothed, and when the Jesuits, who had found him so willing to be an instrument and so successful a one, wished to make use of him again, they desired him to go a great deal into company, and try to make more converts. The moth flies long over the light before it is burnt; but one touch of the scorching wick, and it is doomed. So it has been with him. He has said soft nothings to the heretical young ladies till he has been caught, and is now in a state of frenzied love for a very pretty but very frivolous girl, Lady Olivia Sinclair. She is quite a young thing, though a widow; for she was married only six weeks when her husband shot himself through awkwardness at a friend's house.

“As she was a widow, Velasquez' attentions were not at first perceptible; but, as he is a simpleton, and ever will be, this passion has got the better of his self-control, and there remains no longer any doubt that he is ready to kill the Pope, and the Cardinals, or any one, if he could only be rid of his vow of celibacy. He is almost mad; does and says the most extravagant things; and is determined, he declares, to run away

character of a convert. Miss Cholmley told me this to-day. She was herself at the party, and saw all that occurred. Miss St. Maur looked exactly like a corpse prepared for the coffin. Tall and thin, her cheeks perfectly colourless, dressed in a white muslin dress, which went up to her throat, and with long sleeves, on her head a wreath of plain white roses, without even a green leaf, she struck all who saw her with a feeling of deep mysterious awe. How she had managed to conceal the blue she usually mixes with the white in her dress, I do not know—perhaps it was there, but not very evident. She stood in the doorway, motionless as a statue. All eyes were directed towards her; but none knew who she was, at first; and, as soon as she perceived she was observed she withdrew, and, fortunately meeting with Miss Cholmley, asked her in accents of such bitter woe, if she could take her home,

that Miss Cholmley says, even if they had been obliged to go on foot, she would have taken instant charge of her. There was, however, a disengaged cab at the door, and in that they both seated themselves. I have not seen Antonia to-day.

“It has all happened because you, our good genius, have deserted us. Let me know speedily when I may run down to Ilfracombe, throw myself at your feet, and acknowledge myself the humblest and most devoted of your slaves.

“THEODOSIUS ELYOTT.”

What a letter! What sad, sad tidings! Although the Frenchified ending of Mr. Elyott’s letter, so gallantly assuring me all had happened because I had withdrawn from the circle, was nonsense, yet this fiction did, I think, stimulate my resolve. I wrote him a line to say that, very soon after my answer reached him, I should myself be in Eaton Place.

I passed the evening making my arrangements for a lengthened absence; and, in the morning, early, went up to London.

The few months that had intervened since I had last seen my poor friends had done the work of years. Dear Mrs. Stuart was very aged. Mary looked miserable; and as to Antonia, she was the shadow of herself. Oh! what a wreck! Each time that I saw them, after leaving them, I always recurred in memory to the time I had first met them at the station, in the north; and

this made me see, more evidently, the untold difference between the present and the past.

For some days I merely talked to them about Somerhurst and Ilfracombe, and tried to lead them to open their hearts to me ; but all were silent. Language seemed to have lost its power with them. They spoke, like people in a dream, unconnected sentences, an unmeaning string of words ; I was quite terrified. Mary no longer left Mrs. Stuart, night or day. She had her bed on a sofa in her room, and watched her as if she were an invalid, too helpless to be by herself. It was heart-breaking. As to Antonia, I at times doubted whether she were alive, or whether she were in a state of catalepsy. She was all but motionless. She took her meals as usual with the rest ; even sat with us in the intermediate hours, sometimes with a book open which she did not read, sometimes with a piece of work in her hand at which she did not work.

Nearly a week had gone by, when, to our intense surprise, the door opened and in rushed Matilda. Her handsome, boyish-looking, open-browed husband followed her, and she ran, with her usual impetuosity, to Mrs. Stuart, hugged her till she was breathless, and then exclaimed, " Dear, dear Cara ! I am sure you will like Charlie so much, so very much ; will you let us come and stay with you till we have settled what we are to do, or till Charles's leave is expended ? "

It would not have been Mrs. Stuart had she acted

coldly ; so she said merely, " You are both very welcome to stay with me, so long as your plans and mine agree." She then gave her hand to Mr. Montresor, who thanked her respectfully and warmly, and expressed a hope that she would never have cause to repent of her kindness, nor of the tacit forgiveness implied in the permission to remain.

It really was a relief to have these two wild ones with us.

Matilda was much shocked to see the change in Antonia ; and, impetuous in all things, wept and sobbed when she heard of Sir Alfred's conduct.

## CHAPTER XI.

“ And ever, o’er each earthly thing,  
A languor spreads its dusky wing ;  
We pant for something new.”

My chief interest was in watching Mary. When the newspaper was brought in, before she turned to the leading article, or to the gossip of the day, she always searched minutely for some particular information. I stole behind her one day, and found it was the ecclesiastical intelligence to which she first reverted. Having satisfied herself on this point, she would begin to read aloud to Mrs. Stuart.

I bluntly asked her one day, in a tone which I wished should be a perfectly careless one, but which must have been anything but that, for I felt such a choking I could hardly pronounce the words, “Have you heard anything of Mr. de Roussillon since he was at Somerhurst?” In her sweet, gentle, silvery voice, she replied, “I once read in the newspaper that he was engaged to be married to the daughter of his lay rector, but that the marriage could not take place till he had a better living.”

Ah, I thought, that is the reason we look so anxiously and so immediately for ecclesiastical intelligence.

“And do you believe it to be the case, my love?”

Mary looked up as if even to doubt would be bliss.

“Now I, for one, don’t believe a syllable of that report!”

“Why?” she asked me, in an accent that betrayed the emotion passing within—an expression of gladness, of hope, yet of fear.

“Because I have an inward monitor which desires me to withhold credence, till I have more substantial groundwork for my belief than mere newspaper report.”

We said nothing more, but it was as clear as daylight why Mary was pensive, and so unusually out of sorts.

I resolved what to do; I would make a trial as to Ethelbert’s real wishes, and help two young folk out of a most embarrassing situation. I thought, very naturally and truly, there could be no harm, if I wrote to him, to ask whether the report were correct, and if we were to congratulate him. So, while Mary read out of the newspaper aloud, as she was accustomed to do, all that she knew would interest Mrs. Stuart, I went back to my own room, to pen my diplomatic despatch.

“DEAR MR. DE ROUSSILLON,—It appears the newspapers have been gossiping about you; and I find there is a report, that you are engaged to be married to the daughter of your lay rector, and are only waiting for a better living, before you have the indissoluble knot tied.



"I have too sincere a regard for you, to be indifferent as to the truth or falsehood of such a report, and I beg you to write, and tell me, if it be the case.

"Sincerely yours,

"EMMA INGOLDSPIER."

I gave myself very great credit for writing this letter. It was just enough to show him my friendship, and not enough to betray a wish to have the report contradicted; at the same time, I expressed no vehement satisfaction that he was going to be happy in his own way, and not in mine.

A day or two elapsed before the reply came. I was rather fidgety; I was half afraid it might be true, and that he feared to give me pain by the avowal. And then, I was vexed with myself for fancying, for a second, that he was spoiled and conceited, like any other man. At length, the letter did come. I turned and twisted it,—looked at the post-mark,—tried to guess the mood of the writer from the regularity or irregularity of the handwriting of the direction,—examined the seal, as if I had never seen his crest before,—and, at last, took courage, and opened the envelope. I drew the letter out; there was no writing visible on the outside of the second leaf; I unfolded it slowly, and read:—

"DEAR MADAM,—Your letter was the first intimation I had had of the report which you mention; I did not think the name of so insignificant a personage as myself would find its way into the public press. It is

a fertile imagination which has penned the article, as you will perceive, when, I tell you, that my lay rector has no daughter ; he is a bachelor. It was, however, very kind of you to care to know the truth. You would have given me much gratification, had you mentioned the various members of Mrs. Stuart's party—I see you write from her house—for, indeed, it is very long since I have had tidings of the circle, which, of all others, is most interesting to me.

“ May I beg to be allowed to be brought to the kind recollection of each member of it, and to be allowed to subscribe myself Lady Ingoldspier's respectful and affectionate well-wisher,

“ ETHELBERT DE ROUSSILLON.”

I quite screamed with delight, and went capering about the room, as if I had found a mine of gold.

Mary heard the noise, and came quickly in from the next room to know what had so alarmed me ; she fancied I had been stung by a wasp.

“ It isn't true ! it isn't true, Mary ! There, read—” and I flung the letter into her hand, in a state of ecstasy.

Mary read it—with what sparkling eyes ! and with her own pretty blush on her cheeks ; then, giving it back to me, she said, “ I cannot pretend not to be glad ; it makes sunshine in my heart, once more ;” and then ran away from me—I felt sure—to bend her knees in prayer, and to thank God for such good news.

I consulted with Mrs. Stuart what was to be done.

She candidly confessed, that to see Mary married to Mr. de Roussillon would make amends to her for many hours of anguish.

I determined to write to him, and to tell him to come ; and I did so. I told him we had had such sorrowful events in the family, that we much needed the services of our young chaplain ; and if he could get leave for a prolonged visit, we should be very much pleased. Mrs. Stuart begged him to bring his carpet-bag to her house, and to make it his home for as long a time as he could be spared.

It seemed to me like magic. I could with difficulty believe in the reality of his apparition, so quickly did he answer this note in person. The invitation had reached him just while his patron was consulting him about a nephew who had that morning arrived, and whom he wished to detain some months with him ; but who would not stay, he knew, to be idle. It was the very thing.

It was speedily arranged, and Ethelbert and his carpet-bag were, a few hours later, in Eaton Place with us.

Matilda blushed scarlet when she met him at dinner. Her confusion was so great, her husband was quite annoyed ; and it was, I believe, the occasion of the first discordant tones that jarred on the harmony of their honeymoon.

Now that I have brought Mary and Ethelbert in

juxtaposition, I shall leave them to their own words and feelings. They who have gone through the preliminary courtship which leads to the altar, will not have forgotten it, and may go over the fairy ground again, in their own minds; to them who have not walked in the magic path, all description would be as a sealed book. I will, therefore, spare my readers any details of a period all too short in life, and, yet, one which seems at the time never ending; so desirous are we for the arrival of that day which is to make the two one. It is a pity, that we have so much the habit of looking forward, that we forget to enjoy the present. By this we spoil the even tenor of the whole of our existence; for the future never fully realises our anticipations; and by this we prepare ourselves, also, for deeply regretting the past.

After Ethelbert had spent a couple of days with us, he asked for a private interview with me. I granted it, as may be supposed, very readily, and without delay.

When we were alone, his agitation of manner, and the tremor of his voice, when he said, "How kind you are to me!" were a plain indication of what was to follow.

"I doubt not, Lady Ingoldspier, you are aware even before I speak, of what I am about to say. May I hope?"

Had it been any one but Ethelbert, I could not

have resisted tormenting him by pretending to fancy the subject any one but that which I knew it to be.

I held out my hand to him. " You have, at least, my best wishes for success ; but it is impossible for me to give you an answer ; that must come from my beloved young friend herself. She is a priceless treasure, and, in my estimation, you are the only person worthy of her."

" Worthy of her ! Oh, no ! No one can be worthy of her ; and it is that fact which makes me so diffident. I am so afraid to speak, lest she should calmly tell me, she can look upon me only as a friend ; and, I own, that would destroy my happiness for life. I am a poor, weak mortal, and though, I hope, I should not the less endeavour to do my duty in my vocation ; yet, if Miss Douglas refuse to be mine, the world will be dark to me as long as I exist."

It was evident that this was the truth. He had discovered that he was a man of like passions with his fellow-men, and that he could love an earthly object with all the fervour, and depth, and constancy that another could. I augured well for Mary's happiness.

" Go," I said, nervously ; " go at once into the next room. Mary is alone."

When I met them again, I knew, by their countenances, that the one moment of perfect happiness, which can occur but once, had passed. They had promised to live and die for each other. That solitary

moment of earthly bliss, I fancy, must be like the bliss of our entrance into Paradise. It must be a foretaste of that happiness which is eternal in heaven.

Mrs. Stuart had given her consent, and her blessing ; and I began to hope that, notwithstanding all she had gone through, peace and happiness might yet be her portion.

The Montresors were really a great gain to us ; they were both young and light-hearted, and their spirits were charming.

Charles Montresor brought several of his comrades to the house, and even begged to introduce his colonel—rather contrary to discipline, that the colonel should be introduced by him ; but Colonel O'Brien permitted it, and the introduction gave general satisfaction.

Colonel O'Brien was all that a soldier should be ; and he was a frequent, and ever a most welcome, guest in Eaton Place. We did not remark it at first, but it appeared afterwards, that he had fallen desperately in love with our Mary the very first time he saw her. This gave an unwonted softness to his manner, which was particularly agreeable.

Poor Antonia was all this time sadly to be pitied. She was wasting away, and we saw that nothing could save her,—that die she would, and die she must. The state of her mind must have been unspeakably painful. We read it in her tottering step, in her wan, pallid

cheek, in her fitful glances. What could we do ? How be of use to her ? One morning I was writing in my room, when she glided in.

“Sprite,” she murmured ; “don’t cast me off ?” I rose instantly ; she stooped, and threw her arms round my neck ; and we two wept as if our hearts were breaking.

“Cast you off, my poor child ! God only knows how I have longed for this moment, when I could fold you to my heart, and bid you feel how warmly it beats for you.”

“For me, Sprite ! Can you love me still ? Do you really love me ? All the world hates me, has ever hated me.”

So it is with the female heart. I felt that Antonia meant Sir Alfred, and Sir Alfred alone, by “all the world.” Oh ! he who has the first, best place in our affections, is all the world to each of us.

“Do not say so, my darling ; sit down on this sofa by me ; and let us lift up our hearts to Him who alone can forgive us,—can send us the Comforter,—can send us peace.”

I could not help, in that moment even, being a sound church woman. My Protestantism would come out, though I was pressing to my heart one who believed that a priest, a poor sinful mortal like ourselves, could forgive sins.

We sat, for a few moments, while I prayed. I know not whether Antonia prayed. I am persuaded

she could use no words ; for her feelings were too overpowering, too confused for that.

Oh ! how blessed, that He, who makes the heart, sees its innermost recesses ;—that He knew long before we two sat there in our anguish what our thoughts would be.

“ Sprite,”—she liked to repeat this name—they had given it me. It assured her more, I suppose, that I was unchanged,—“ Sprite, can you tell me where he is ? ”

“ No, my darling ; I have heard nothing of him of late days.”

My conscience gave me such a thump at that moment,—it was just as much as if I had said, I have been so occupied with the mutual love and the happiness of Mary and Ethelbert, that I have not had time to think about him.

“ Will you try and find out something about him ? ”

“ Yes, I will ; and, dearest Antonia, will you promise to be much, very much with me ? ”

She cast her eyes downward, and whispered—“ I should like to sleep in your room ; I cannot bear to be by myself at night ; I have such dreadful dreams when I go partially to sleep. I never sleep soundly now.”

“ Indeed, dear girl, I do not wonder at that ; for you are completely out of health just now. Most willingly will I have you with me.” Rebecca came in just then, and I gave the necessary orders for the change.



Mary also came; she wished me to drive with Mrs. Stuart. I saw she had something to communicate to me; and so did Antonia; and the poor broken-hearted girl, though not envious, could not listen to any details of Mary's happiness, and wisely said, she would put on her bonnet and be ready if Miss Cholmley called to take a walk with her.

"A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind." Miss Cholmley had always been on better terms with Antonia than any of us, from the recollection that she likewise had been guilty of a work of supererogation, and dared to add to the full sufficiency of the one atonement.

"Mary, my love, we are alone. What pleasant bit of news have you for me?"

"Nothing of any consequence. I am to go to-day with him to call on his father and mother. They arrived last night in town with his two sisters, and he wishes me to go with him to invite them in Mrs. Stuart's name to dine with us."

I kissed, and blessed her, and wished her courage.

If there be one moment in a woman's life more trying than another, it is when she has to be introduced to *his* family. To be immediately on a friendly footing with utter strangers,—to try to please, to do honour to *his* choice,—and to feel that in no one moment of life was one ever less one's self, less at

ease, less likely to look, and act, and speak, as one would like to look, and act, and speak.

Fortunately, it was time for Mary to go; and so she left me, and went to make herself ready. I felt no uneasiness about her; for I could not but be sure that Ethelbert's parents would be delighted with Ethelbert's choice, even had he chosen one less perfect than was our Mary Douglas.

While driving with Mrs. Stuart, I proposed to her that I should carry off Antonia to Ilfracombe. When quietly with me, I knew she would suffer less than she would while the preparations for Mary's wedding were going on; and Miss Cholmley would take my place and be Mrs. Stuart's companion, while Mary and Ethelbert were otherwise engaged.

Mrs. Stuart liked the plan extremely; and so when I returned to the house, I immediately proposed it to Antonia. I was surprised that she hesitated, and then I bethought me it would be impossible to get her away from London as long as Sir Alfred Velasquez was at hand; so I did not press the matter, but told her to reflect upon it.

To Mr. Elyott I gave the charge of hunting out news of Sir Alfred, without telling him why I wanted to have any. He and I guessed each other's thoughts and motives, but did not express them in words.

We were all charmed with Ethelbert's family. They were quite worthy of him, as he was of them,

and the two sisters appeared, even at first sight, to be just as we would have wished his sisters to be.

Mary looked beautiful in her calm, deep, happiness. The De Roussillon family had heard so much of her from the hour of the engagement, that they fully appreciated her, even before they became personally acquainted.

The Montresors had not dined at home that day. It was Matilda's pleasure, as soon as she detected Colonel O'Brien's love for Mary, to keep the engagement a secret from him, and, as it was early days with the wedded pair, whatever she wished was a law to her husband, and he promised to say nothing. Colonel O'Brien was one of those men who never imagine there can be such a thing as a rival in the case ; and though he saw Ethelbert and Mary often together, yet as they made no demonstration of their sentiments, it did not occur to him they were other than mere friends ; and as he devoted himself to Mrs. Stuart—it was to Mrs. Stuart he sent the beautiful flowers—it was to Mrs. Stuart he gave his arm when we walked in the park in the forenoon—it was to Mrs. Stuart only all his attentions were addressed—so that Mary had no opportunity either of encouraging, or disencouraging him. She had always been a girl singularly unused to fancy that any man was in love with her, and naturally, at this time, she had no room for such thoughts in her calm, happy mind. She, moreover, did not

vary once in her manner towards Mrs. Stuart's guests, and therefore, unless plainly told of it, no one would have discovered how all-engrossed her affections were.

Mr. Elyott was some days before he could obtain any information of Sir Alfred. At length he succeeded, and though mystery was still the watchword for Jesuitism, yet he had been able to make out so much,—that he had been permitted to carry on his flirtation with Lady Olivia Sinclair for some little while, for his superiors had been outwitted by their own arts and devices, and gave him credit for the most splendid acting, and believed that he was only pretending all this love-making to blind Protestants; that while we were imagining we had the laugh on our side, they, in fact, had it all their own way. They were, however, forced to see their mistake, and had sent Sir Alfred out of the country, made him travel with two experienced priests, and no one but themselves knew whither he was gone. One of his companions was overheard to say, "If we cannot stop his tomfoolery by fair means, we must try foul."

In repeating this to Antonia I discreetly left out the threat, for that I knew would make a martyr of him in her eyes, and there would be no hope of cure for her in that case.

I felt very much for her. She was the picture of blank despair while listening to this; and then slowly,

and with difficulty, she pronounced the words, "Sprite, take—me—to—Ilfacombe !"

I embraced her and said I would write, by that very post, to my household to be prepared to receive me with a sick friend, and that we should arrive in less than a week. I did not like to do anything abruptly, and I wished her to have a day or two to pack up all her little possessions; for I felt that her days were numbered, and that she would never return to her old haunts again. I even wished her to go by Somerhurst, but she said in a hoarse, low whisper, "Oh! no; it was there he told me all."

I made no comments to her as to what she should take, or what she should leave. She could not but know that her oratory, and all concerning it—the crucifix, the candlesticks, the images—would gain no admittance into a house that belonged to me; and that she must content herself with heart-worship.

The parting with Mrs. Stuart was dreadful. The dear old lady was in such a state of grief, that I almost feared the results might be fatal. She loved Antonia in all sincerity, and Antonia felt, in the moment of severing the ties that bound her to so kind a friend, how she had repaid her by bringing greater sorrow and misery into her house and heart, than any previous events of her life had done. She was grieved to bid adieu to Mary; but it was a relief to think she should see Ethelbert no more. Mr. Elyott had made her

actually dislike him, by comparing him with Sir Alfred Velasquez ; and the feeling of antipathy was not softened by the inward whispering, which told her that Mr. Elyott's judgment was correct.

Before we left, Mr. Ormsville came up to town one day and made a most delightful proposition. He said, if it could be effected, he was willing to exchange livings with Ethelbert ; and this was a great addition to the happy prospects both of Mrs. Stuart and of Mary. .

At last the day of our departure arrived. The fly came to the door, and Antonia, and I, and my maid, left Eaton Place.

My readers have, doubtless, quitted spots endeared to them by the sorrows and joys of life, and can feel what we felt when we drove away. I had to be head, hands, and feet for Antonia and myself. I had, therefore, no time for melancholy reflection, and tried to cheer my poor child by a description of the beauties of Ilfracombe, and of the sketches she would make ; and I even expressed a hope that the sea breezes would restore her health. I knew the hope was fallacious. I trust I was not guilty of a falsehood.

## CHAPTER XII.

“ Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing ;  
Fill our hearts with joy and peace ;  
Let us each, thy love possessing,  
Triumph in redeeming grace.  
O refresh us,  
Trav’ling through this wilderness.

“ Thanks we give, and adoration,  
For thy gospel’s joyful sound ;  
May the fruits of thy salvation  
In our hearts and lives abound !  
May thy presence  
With us evermore be found !

“ So, whene’er the signal’s given,  
Us from earth to call away ;  
Borne on angels’ wings to Heaven,  
Glad the summons to obey,  
May we ever  
Reign with Christ in endless day !”

WE were not long in reaching my home, which was, henceforth, to be Antonia’s. As long as she lived I knew she would remain where she then was.

The emotions of her soul and the whirl of the railway had prostrated the little strength she had. She could hardly be called a living being when she first alighted ; and I instantly placed her on the sofa oppo-

site the sea ; and let her lie there, seeing, and not seeing, thinking, and yet with her thoughts so disturbed, so unconnected, that their dreaminess could not restore her to cheerfulness ; but I had determined to force nothing ; she should not be thwarted ; she should just vegetate as she liked.

We remained in this kind of way,—listless, inactive, doing nothing—till the autumn was fully established. Then I drew a comfortable chair to the hearth-rug for her, and gave her a little embroidery to do, or rather, in order that she might make-believe she was doing something.

At times she rallied. The novelty of the scenery, the strolling walks we took with a camp-stool, the freshening breezes, even the soothing, lulling sound of the fall of leaves somewhat revived her. I exacted of her that she should attend morning and evening prayers, at which times my maidens and my men-servants sang a hymn, and I read a few verses from the Bible. I always selected some passages likely to attract her by the boundlessness of God's love in creation, redemption, and sanctification. I took pains never to read anything which might make her feel that our hearts and sentiments were not in unison. She did not attend either my church or her own ; she had not strength for the exertion.

I had letters frequently, and of great length, from Mrs. Stuart, Mary, Mr. Elyott, and Miss Cholmley ;



but I read to Antonia only what could interest her, and which would not pain her. Matilda would write now and then, but her letters had so much of the giddiness of her nature, that we both generally felt cross with her ; she was no longer a child ; it was time for her to put away childish things. She wrote mostly about the gaieties into which she entered, with her usual thoughtlessness ; expending a great deal more on her dress, and tickets, than she could afford, and never failing to mention when “ Charlie pouted, or scolded ” her.

It was evident she was as giddy as a wife, as she had been in her girlhood.

Mary was to be married at Somerhurst ; and Ethelbert’s family was to be with her, and to remain with Mrs. Stuart, while the bride and bridegroom made a little tour.

The exchange of the livings had been effected, but was not to take place till after Christmas.

One of Matilda’s letters was full of Colonel O’Brien’s discomfiture.

“ Sprite, I wish you had been by when our colonel first discovered Mary’s engagement. It was worth a million of money, if it was worth anything. Mr. Elyott now says, he had only just discovered how the land lay ; and that he had resolved to tell Colonel O’Brien, that very day, all about Mary’s approaching wedding ; but dear Mr. Elyott is rather a slow coach

sometimes, and he put off the kind disclosure so long that the colonel made it for himself in a most tantalising way.

“ Mr. de Roussillon and Mary were in the drawing-room. What Mary had been saying to him, I do not know ; but, just as the colonel popped his head into the room, he saw Ethelbert fold his darling to his heart, and kiss her on the forehead, saying, ‘ How like you, my own Mary ! ’ I came in at the opposite door, and saw the poor colonel’s face. What a face it was ! I really was sorry for him ; the more so, I think, because it was in a great measure my own fault ; but, you must know, my Lady Sprite, that I just wanted to punish the colonel ; for, before I had fixed poor Charles’s heart, I used to play the colonel off against him, and I did try to please the colonel. I wanted him to be in love with me, if it were only to tease Charlie ; for, of course, I had no idea of marrying the old man, if I could secure the young one. It was just possible that I might lose both ; but I knew I was a pretty girl, and there would be no lack of husbands, of some kind or other ; so I thought the game was worth playing. But the colonel said, one day, ‘ I see what you are about, but it won’t do ; I am too old a bird to be caught by chaff ; ’ and I was, therefore, obliged to allow Charlie to propose, and, to make up for the loss of my amusement, I settled the Gretna Green trip.

I really was shocked by Matilda's letter. I sighed when I laid it down.

Antonia raised her eyes ; there was a fearful expression in them, which made me shudder.

"I dare not blame her ; she and I have both coquetted with our Maker—so wicked ! so faithless !"

I felt transfixed. An arrow seemed to pierce me through and through, transfixing my very heart.

"Antonia, dearest Antonia ! what are you saying?"

"I see plainly, now, what I have done, what has been my guilt ; and it has been Matilda's."

Antonia seemed to me to be wandering in her mind. I said nothing, but went out, and ordered that the doctor should be sent for. We had a most excellent physician quite near us—a perfect gentleman in mind and manners, and particularly skilful. He was, fortunately, at home. He felt Antonia's pulse, was struck by the fire in her eye, and immediately ordered the cooling draught which was necessary. He knew Antonia's history, and turning to me, he said, "My opinion is, that Miss St. Maur thinks too much, and converses too little. It would be good for you both if you each spoke out your thoughts more freely ;" and then, turning to Antonia, he asked her, "If she did not feel the truth of his remark ?"

"Yes, I own I do. I have been long wishing to open all my heart to Lady Ingoldspier ; but, whenever I attempt it, my courage fails."

“Let me then break the ice for you. I have here the fragment of a Jesuit’s sermon, which, if we read together, the one must succumb to the other in opinion about it; but you must converse as friends seeking the truth, not as declared enemies—each determined to conquer or die. Read it over to-morrow, after you have swallowed my invigorating draught. Lady Ingoldspier does not wish, I am sure, to take you at a disadvantage.”

“No, indeed, I do not, dearest. We will read the extract, to-morrow morning early, after breakfast, and before we walk out.”

Antonia had kept the paper which Dr. Thornton had brought. He had purposely left it with her; so that, the next day, having perused it, she was all impatience to show it to me. It was preached by a Jesuit, aware that one of his congregation was an Englishman, on the very verge of leaving the Holy Catholic for the Roman Catholic Church. That such arguments could have any weight was, indeed, a proof how far he had already given up the evidence of common sense.

The sermon is written down by this wise man. The pith of it seems to have been—the want of faith in Protestants; especially, in their utter disbelief of the doctrine of transubstantiation. “To confirm this, he called attention to the *remarkable fact* of our Lord’s not only forgiving St. Peter, after his denial of Him,

but going so far as to *select* him for the important office of head of the church, and first Pope. The only reproach our Lord is recorded to have addressed to him was so tender and touching, that, appealing, as it did, to his best affections, it would only have served to increase his fervour and love for his Divine Master. ‘Jusqu’ici, mes frères, tout ce que je vous ai mis sous les yeux est authentiquement raconté dans l’Ecriture Sainte, il n’y a pas à en douter, et vous le croyez sans effort—et voilà, voilà où s’arrêtent les protestants. Ils refusent de se rendre au divin témoignage, à l’autorité spirituelle de l’Eglise.’ ”

To make a beginning for accustoming Antonia to the frequent sound of her own voice, I had induced her to read this aloud. She hesitated, several times. She could not but feel she was reading nonsense, and, when she had finished, she laid the paper on the table before her, and with great languor said :—

“ Help me to think, Sprite ; help me to think.”

“ Indeed, dear Antonia ; it is not difficult to think, and to answer such absurdities. Is there any argument, in the first place ? What has the compassion of our Lord, in forgiving Peter, to do with transubstantiation ? And where is the proof that he was the first Pope ? I suppose the Jesuits would have us believe that the BISHOPS OF ROME were always called POPES ; when we know it was not so till the fourth century. We are, also, to infer, if St. Peter

were made the first Pope, that he himself was at Rome, which is what the papists cannot prove ; and to make the assertion as plausible as possible, they endeavour to prove that the BABYLON, from which he wrote, was the MYSTICAL name for ROME. And the translators of the Rhemish Bible have actually adopted this. Indeed, my love, we, who are against those who ingraft Romanism on the Tree of Life, cannot do better than show them up in their very own words ; by their own history. This priest declares that the whole can be proved by Scripture. Let him come forth, and prove it. We will fearlessly permit him to do his best.

“ St. Peter, who had not, as St. Paul, the gift of prophecy, and was only an uneducated fisherman, did not foresee that he should ever be called the head of a church. And himself tells us, that the Lord Jesus was the stone on which Christianity was founded ; he says, in speaking of our Lord, ‘ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’

“ Poor St. Peter ! it was well for him, at that time, that he did not know he would be considered THIS STONE, and that he would be worshipped,—he who, when on earth, refused all homage, and, when he died, according to history, would be crucified with his head

downwards, as being unworthy to die in the same position as the Lord, whom he had denied. We, Protestants, refuse to believe 'l'autorité spirituelle de l'Eglise—of the Church of Rome. The Church of Christ as set forth in the Bible we believe in, not in the infallibility of sinful man. The Pope is not the spiritual head of the church; Christ alone is. This Jesuit thought, "If I tell this Englishman that it is all in the Bible, he will be satisfied, and firmly believe I could not assert openly what is not true." But the new Saint Alphonso di Liguori has given an immense number of instances, where lying is not only NOT A SIN, BUT A POSITIVE VIRTUE; although the Scripture tells us, that it is the devil who is the father of lies, 'For he was a liar from the beginning.' Thus you see the literal fulfilment of St. Paul's prediction, that those, who depart from the faith, will 'give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of DEVILS, speaking LIES in hypocrisy.' In the times of the Apostles, Christians, who believed in the Lord, and were His faithful disciples, were called saints. They did not die to be canonized by the dictum of a Pope, but, in their lifetime, were called saints. 'The Spirit maketh intercession for the saints;' not the saints for us. Dear Antonia, everything which has been subtracted by the reformers of the Catholic Church, to bring it to its primitive apostolical, and holy state, has been a corruption, an error, which the Romish Church has en-

grafted on the True. The very dates of the periods when all these things were added to the Holy Catholic Church of Christ, and of the Apostles, themselves prove that they are the works of sinful man, of the man who ‘opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God’—and upon this infallibility, which was not introduced as a matter of belief till 1076, although practised so long before, we are told the Pope’s supremacy rests. Transubstantiation, auricular confession, praying in churches in the Latin language, were not made articles of faith, till the year 1215 ! Purgatory, in 1438. The worship of the Virgin Mary, in 1558. Then St. Bonaventure substituted the name of the Virgin for that of God, in the Psalms !

“The Invocation of Saints was introduced in the fourteenth century. The Inquisition, in 1198 ; and, in Spain alone, in 339 years, 340,921 persons suffered !

“Is that working by love ?

“Had Sir Alfred Velasquez lived in 1198, he need not have taken vows of celibacy.

“Perhaps, dear child, I have helped you to think, beyond your present strength. We will talk over these things again.

“It is plain, is it not, that the Romish Church has added a great deal to the creed and practice of the



Apostles? And to think all this has been done in poor St. Peter's name! It is sad, indeed.

"As to lying wonders, I need only refer you to those marvellous and absurd legends which Sir Alfred related to you, at Whitby, to make you see what they are. Even in these present days, a pervert—for I cannot call you converts, Antonia—had the folly to believe that, if one had faith enough, one could kneel in the air on nothing, to pray. She showed some friends a stone which, she said, had the miraculous power of smoking; but alas! for her, the stone was so over-awed by the presence of the heretics, whom she wished to convince, that it would not smoke!

"But an efficacy, in which I do believe, is that of prayer. Listen to Montgomery's beautiful lines—

" ' Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward gleaming of an eye,  
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try;  
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach  
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword in the hour of death  
He enters Heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,  
Returning from his ways,  
While angels in their song rejoice,  
And say, 'Behold, he prays.'

In prayer, on earth, the saints are one,  
In deed, in word, in mind,  
When with the Father and the Son  
Sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made on earth alone ;  
The Holy Spirit pleads,  
And Jesus, on the eternal throne,  
For sinners intercedes !

Oh ! Thou, by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way ;  
The path of prayer thyself hast trod ;—  
Oh ! teach us how to pray !

“ You see, my love, the poet is of the Holy Catholic Church, which worships only Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He acknowledges the Trinity in Unity, but no Mariolatry, no worship of the Virgin Mary, no invocation of Saints.

“ The Psalmist's dying words acknowledge, likewise, faith in the Trinity, as an undoubted tenet. He says, — ‘ The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me.’

“ Let me read to you St. Paul's remarkable words, — ‘ Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant ’—mark that ! we are to possess the following knowledge—‘ how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ; and were all

baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; and did all EAT the SAME SPIRITUAL MEAT ; and did all drink the same spiritual drink : for they drank of that SPIRITUAL ROCK, that followed them : and that ROCK was CHRIST.

“ We hear of no infallible Pope here ; of no St. Peter as the Rock, of no transubstantiation.

“ Christ is the Rock of ages, ages past, ages yet to come, and Christ alone.”

“ Dear Sprite, tell me why you do not believe in the Real Presence in the elements of the Sacrament ? ”

“ Because, for one thing, my dear, I thank God that I am in the full possession of my senses ; and that I have not given them up to priest or pope.

“ Christ Himself tells us, when the Jews asked Him, how He could be what He asserted,—‘ Bread come down from heaven,’—‘ The words that I speak unto you, they are SPIRIT, they are life.’ This is, you see again, from His own lips—the *Spiritual* Rock, Christ. It was material bread and wine that were to become His flesh and blood ; but we eat this bread spiritually, we drink the blood spiritually, because our Lord Himself says,—*His words are* SPIRIT ; after having said, ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is

drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' This it is to be one with Christ; we dwell in Him, and He dwells in us. St. Paul explains it thus, prefacing his speech by saying,—‘I speak unto wise men,’ having said, as I remarked before, ‘he would not that we should be ignorant.’ ‘The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for WE, being many, are ONE BREAD, and ONE BODY, for we are all partakers of that one bread.’ Can anything be clearer, than that there can be no such thing as a change of the bread and wine into the whole body of Christ? as He was in this body when He was conversing about this to His disciples. St. Paul says,—‘We are one bread,’ and that is the communion of the body of Christ. Now, if the wafer of the Romish Church be turned into Christ Himself, then must we be turned into bread,—‘*for we are one bread,*’—which I do not imagine the greatest miracle-monger will assert.

“Then, again, St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, to those Jews who were so contentious and hard to be convinced, when referring to a yearly sacrifice, which was the type of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, of the Lord Jesus, says, as plainly as language can say anything: ‘Nor yet that He should offer Himself OFTEN, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others, for then He must often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now

ONCE, *in the end of the world*, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.' By Christ's obedience to God's will, we are redeemed and purified from our sins; for, again, St. Paul says,—' By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE FOR ALL.' St. Peter himself says, in speaking of our Lord,—' Whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restitution of all things;' and St. Paul declares, in so many words, that the Redeemer has sat down at the right hand of God *for ever*. From all which it is plain that neither of the apostles ever thought of transubstantiation, nor, as I have said before, did Rome invent it, till 1215 years after this time."

Antonia had great power in remembering the facts of chronology; she had, at all times, an excellent memory. I am sure she could have repeated, without the omission of a single word, all that I had said to her.

She read French very fluently, and had been permitted to acquaint herself with the travels of Huc and Gabet, because they were Roman Catholic missionaries. Even she herself was startled, when she met with their avowal, how very much the Mongolian and Thibetian religious ceremonies resembled those of their own church. She was candid enough to read the passage out to me.

"The moment," I said, "we go from the Bible,

the only source of pure doctrine, how absolutely we condemn ourselves !

“Floral offerings were made to the heathen gods. You may remember, that we have an instance of this even in the sacred writings themselves; and how horrified Paul and Barnabas were, when they received this homage. Because those apostles had cured a cripple, the ignorant people took them for Jupiter and Mercurius, and the priest of Jupiter brought oxen and GARLANDS, and wished, then and there, to sacrifice these things to them.”

Antonia had become, at last, quite interested in this sort of conversation, and waited even impatiently for my leisure in the morning to continue it.

She was losing bodily strength, day by day, but her mind was gradually opening to the truth as it is in Jesus, in Jesus alone,—to the truths of the *Christian* religion. Her countenance was less and less indicative of a restless spirit, the beauty of holiness was more and more overspreading it.

We had one long discourse on the subject of the exact description, in the Book of the Revelation, of the Romish Church, as it is given in the 17th and 18th chapters.

It was one of our last conversations, for, soon after, she became too weak to keep up her attention, and she permitted me to send for the excellent vicar of the parish, who came to read and pray with her. Peace

returned to her sôul, and she died in the communion of saints, "no more a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God." She had come to believe St. Paul, when he says, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

She had prayed for the presence of the Comforter, and He had taken of the things of Christ and taught them to her. How pure was her faith at the last ! How earnestly she prayed that one still so dear, who had been the instrument in the hands of Satan-led men to draw her from the only source of truth, might himself be brought to the Holy Catholic Church !

She at one time wavered ; thought she must confess her sins to some priest, that she might obtain forgiveness and have absolution. It was, however, in the then state of her mind, which was gradually opening to the truth, no difficult task to convince her that Jesus Christ alone, as man, can forgive sins.

"Dear Sprite," she would look me so anxiously and eagerly in the face, "our Lord himself told His disciples whatsoever sins they remitted would be remitted ! "

"Remitting is not absolving, is not forgiving. All that the pastors of the church can do is to promise forgiveness in their Master's name, if their people repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They

have full authority, as his ambassadors, to do that, but nothing more. Auricular confession was instituted—when?”

“In 1215,” she replied.

“See, my dear, how long that was after the apostles’ time. Priests of the Romish persuasion think they can absolve even murderers; they must never denounce them, but permit them to rove at large, ready to commit murders and grievous sins to any amount, if they only confess again, and again are made guiltless by the priest’s absolution. Is not that horrible, most horrible? ‘My prophets,’ said the Almighty, ‘prophecy falsely, and my people love to have it so.’ I once knew a Roman Catholic young lady who called on me in her way to the confessional, and told me that one of the questions put to her for self-examination was, ‘Whether she dressed herself out to attract the gaze of men?’ ‘I shall not answer that question,’ she said, ‘it is a waste of time, for I always have done so, and shall continue to do so, till I have succeeded in getting a husband.’”

“Surely, if we must confess all that passes in our thoughts, it is good that the priests are not married men, and that they are entirely given up to their holy avocation,” Antonia remarked.

“Celibacy, my dear, does not make them Christian gentlemen, whatever else they may be; it makes



hypocrites and humbugs of them. Once, when I was abroad, I had a long and serious illness ; I sent for a Protestant clergyman, and was much edified and comforted. A Roman Catholic friend came in while he was there, and when he left, she said, ‘ How can you venture to have a minister in your room in this way ? In all the town, I know of but one Catholic priest that I could receive, unless in the presence of my husband.’ ”

When I talked about the representation of the Church of Rome as given by St. John, Antonia listened with most absorbing interest.

“ I will give you only Roman Catholic opinions,” I said.

“ In the first place, the woman was arrayed in scarlet. A Roman Catholic remarked to me that Cardinal Wiseman wore scarlet petticoats, exactly like a woman ! We all know what a profusion of jewels and ornaments are used in the Catholic churches. Take the Bible, and read out the verses as I explain them.” Antonia did so.

“ The unfaithful spouse of Christ has upon her forehead a name written—MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT. She holds in her hand a cup full of all abominations. This is, surely, the great sin of transubstantiation. In delivering the cup at the communion service, the priest says, ‘ Take and drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal covenant, the MYSTERY OF FAITH,

which SHALL be shed for you and for many to the remission of sins.' Here we have the name on the forehead of the woman who holds the cup in her hand—*mystery*. The bread is not broken and distributed, but the priest dips a consecrated wafer into the cup which he gives to the communicants—you see, he says, 'the blood *shall* be shed.' In every respect differing from the manner in which our Lord instituted the service which is in remembrance of his death, till He come. The angel of the covenant, who always accompanied the Israelites, himself made the new covenant with His disciples, and abrogated the Jewish ceremonies ; testifying that he was the Messiah, the son of the WOMAN ; He who was to bruise the serpent's head, and who now had come in the flesh. The Jews were accustomed to the metaphor of human bodies spoken of as bread ; for when they were desired not to fear the people of the land towards which they were marching through the wilderness, Joshua and Caleb, to encourage them, said, 'for they are bread for us.' The Israelites did not, on that account, imagine that they were to be transubstantiated and turned into bread as food for them ; but, as the bread in the communion service remains bread, so the enemies of the Jews remained human bodies. The woman is called, BABYLON THE GREAT. The Roman Catholics themselves say this is the MYSTICAL NAME FOR ROME.

“It is said, ‘The woman that thou sawest is that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth.’ That can apply to Rome alone, for no other power REIGNS OVER KINGS, and has control in their dominions. MYSTERY is involved in her name. Cardinal Wiseman acknowledges that the Concordat, by which the Pope rules in Austria with a rod of iron, is couched in the language of ecclesiastical diplomacy; consequently, it is the clergy only who can interpret it. I will pass over a great deal that might be easily explained in these two chapters, for you will at once see the analogy if I begin my explanation at the 11th verse of the 18th chapter.

“The merchants of this mystical Rome,—this Babylon,—are, of course, the priests. Their merchandise is enumerated—gold and silver, and precious stones, we know, she has in abundance. They are everywhere in their churches, on their vestments, in the shrines of the saints; ‘fine linen, *purple*, and silk and scarlet.’ Here we have even the cardinal’s dresses designated. ‘Thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and of iron, and marble.’

“These things almost speak as it were for themselves,—large wooden crosses, wooden images, and, in that still more corrupt branch of the Christian Church, the Greek Church, there are pictures on wood innumerable.

“The pyxes, the censers, the crucifixes, the fonts,

the vessels for holy water, are plainly pointed out. Cinnamons, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour,'—what are these, again, but for incense, for consecration, for the service in high mass?

“The priests make a great traffic by blessing animals, ‘beasts, and sheep, and horses.’ Where are ‘chariots’ used as they are in Rome, in the last days of the carnival? Who are ‘slaves’ like Roman Catholics? They only eat and drink by order; they dare not read a book but with permission; and as to the ‘souls of men,’ there is no traffic like that in any part of the world: masses for the dead are so multifarious.

“Look to the 22nd verse—a direct reference to the music of Italy; think of the ‘singers’ in the Sistine Chapel; think of the ‘trumpeters’ on Easter-day—the only instrument the Pope is allowed to hear is the *trumpet*.

“‘The light of a candle shall shine no more in thee.’ In our days, what a turmoil there is about candlesticks and candles, because the use of them is solely papistical! At baptism, a lighted candle is put into the child’s hand; thus early in life is it used.

“‘The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.’ Too true, indeed, that the voice of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the church, the Holy Catholic Church,

is no longer heard ; for the Church of Rome is full of sorceries, lies, idolatry, and corruptions of every kind. ‘ The truth is not in her.’ ”

When I had finished, Antonia’s eyes dilated ; she arose to her full height ; she clasped her hands, and, with deep emphasis, said—“ I thank thee, my God ! I have entered into thy Holy Catholic Church ; from this hour I declare myself a believer of the truth as it is in Jesus, my Saviour, my only mediator.” How grandly she looked ! Sublime—beautiful ! the **BALANCE** was complete. She was, from that moment, ripe for heaven.

One evening I had drawn her sofa near the fire ; she was reclining on it with all her wonted gracefulness ; we had been quiet for some little while, musing, watching the embers, and trying to make out pretty scenic representations, as one always does,—when Antonia broke the silence, saying—“ Sprite ; I have been thinking over the comparison between the chapters of the Revelation and the Romish Church ; but I cannot recollect that ‘ he ’ ever told me anything about blessing beasts, horses, sheep, &c.”

“ I will tell you about blessing the horses, and that will give you an accurate idea of all the animals, and articles of consumption besides, that are blessed. The church could not be so rich, did she not make money in a million of ways. Of course, a particular saint is chosen as patron for particular things.

"It would appear, that a certain Anthony, once an abbot, is the especial friend in heaven of horses. Horses and mules come in great numbers for this fête of blessing; the peasantry deck them out in ribbons and flowers, and array themselves in holiday attire. The priest takes a brush from an attendant, dips it into a bucket of holy water placed at his feet, and sprinkles the horses, &c., saying, 'Through the intercession of the blessed abbot, Anthony, may these animals be delivered from evil, in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!' An Italian peasant was overheard to sum up the benefits contained in these words: 'Is it not a good horse which we have? Then it has also had, this year, St. Antonio's blessing. My fellows decked him out with silken ribbons, opened the Bible before him'—it appears horses may read the Bible, though the laity may not!—'and sprinkled him with holy water; and no devil, or evil eye, can have influence over him, this year.'"

"Such things must appear heathenish, indeed, when one reflects properly about them," observed Antonia.

"Sir Alfred," she whispered. The name made me start; I had not heard her pronounce it since the first days of our acquaintance with him. I knew now, since she could mention him, that passion had died within her, though I doubted not that she loved him, with all the tenderness of her woman's

heart still. "Sir Alfred was much edified by the ceremony of the washing of the feet, as he saw it in St. Peter's. He told me how touching a sight it was, to see the venerable Pontiff humble himself to wash the feet of the poor beggars. Indeed, he thought it was even a greater proof of humility in the father of the church to do it; for our Lord washed the feet of His disciples, of His chosen companions and friends."

Of course, I felt highly indignant with this same Sir Alfred; but I had gained too much with Antonia, to try and spoil anything by irritation; so I withheld any comments I might have made on such an opinion, which placed the Pope above the Lord Jesus, and calmly said—

"My darling, all that is a grand mistake. The whole affair of the washing of the feet, as performed by the Pope, is only one act of their ecclesiastical dramatic representations. It is nothing but a *coup de théâtre*,—the Pope in the midst of that stupendously-magnificent temple, surrounded by cardinals and priests, in their gorgeous vestments, with a crowded audience, more humble than our Saviour, who had laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel! The impetuous St. Peter was, at first, affrighted by the bare possibility of such a condescension, and when our Saviour's mild authority had awed him into submission, he was as impetuous in the opposite extreme, and requested that his hands and his head might be

washed also. He was still a Jew ; he had even yet to be converted to the true faith, as our Lord's words to him, at the Last Supper, indicate. He knew, when a leper went to the priest to be cleansed, the priest touched him on the right ear, and on the thumb of the right hand, both with the blood and with the oil ; but our Lord showed him, that one touch from Himself was all-sufficient. Let the foundation of faith be pure, the feet clean, and we are clean every whit."

"But how can you get over the injunction, to go and do likewise? The Pope does not, you see ; he obeys."

"Still the Pope, child, acts as if he were an example and an authority ! Our Lord desired us to follow His example, and do menial services for our neighbours, whenever we can be of any material use to them ; and as he, afterwards, dried the apostle's feet, so are we to do our work fully, and not to begin with hot, misguided zeal, and tire of our duty. Do you think that Jesus, who knew all things, did not know that it was only in eastern countries people's feet could be washed in this way ? It was the custom there, to perform rites of hospitality by bringing water to wash the guests' feet ; you remember Abraham did so, when the Lord visited him in the plains of Mamre, in the form of three angels. Addressing Him as my Lord, he asked for the honour of His presence in his tent ; and added, ' Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your



feet.' In hot, dusty countries, where the inhabitants wear only sandals, washing the feet is, naturally, the most refreshing thing that can be done ; but, in colder climates, it is not only not needed, but would be impossible. Shoes and Paris boots are now becoming the great ambition of Turkish women ; and a present of English stockings is greatly valued by them.

"I must read to you, Antonia, the opinion of a very clever man on the religion of Italy. 'It is interwoven,' he says, 'with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration ; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and, without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge—never a check.'"

Autumn was fast flying by, and winter coming on. Antonia grew more and more lovely ; peace, daily, more and more her portion. I watched her with too much love and tenderness, not to see the approach of death ; but I was not sorrowful on her account, neither on my own. It was greater happiness to be with her now, than it had ever been before ; and I rejoiced with her, and for her, that earthly cares and vexations, and her bitter, bitter disappointments, were soon to be forgotten in a bliss perfect and eternal. In her latter

days, she was much less reserved than I had ever known her ; and she told me distinctly, and accurately, all that had passed between her and Sir Alfred. She liked to talk of him ; it was the last, the lingering, the only weakness of her love for him, that yet remained. I made very few remarks ; they were not necessary. Her pure faith now saw clearly where all the error lay, and she prayed most fervently for his spiritual happiness. She would say, she had no idea how it could be brought about. And, at times, she would shudder when she thought of all he might possibly have to endure from the enraged Jesuits. “ I have heard,” she said, one day—and her whole frame quivered while she said it,—“ that if a priest abandon the church, and he can be caught when he has fled, the very palms of his hands are skinned, to take off the consecrated flesh.” Consolation I had none for her, for I knew too well, this had lately been done to one who, from political motives, had aided in the Italian rebellion ; but we prayed together, and it was a great balm to her bleeding heart, that I never once spoke harshly of him.

The hour of her release came. She seemed particularly well that morning ; relished her breakfast ; even admired the frost on the plants in the garden. She walked to the window slowly, languidly, leaning on my arm, to have a last look at the sea ; but her eyes were dim, so she returned to the sofa. She laid herself down—so much strength had she to the last ; and

feeling that she was becoming cold, she said, in a clear, distinct voice,—“This is death,—ask the Vicar to come to me.” Fortunately, he was at the door. He saw, at the first glance, that she would, ere many minutes, be in Paradise.

She faintly murmured to me—“Kiss me ; bless you, bless you !”—and then lay with her hands folded meekly on her breast.

The vicar and I knelt down ; he prayed in the exquisitely sublime words of the petitions for the dying, which are in the Book of Common Prayer ; and, when we looked up, there lay the form of my beloved Antonia. Her spirit had been carried by the angels to “the bosom of her Father and her God.”

Her funeral was conducted with much simplicity. On her tombstone I had only her name, age, and day of her death engraved, with the text—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

"Hers was a frame so frail, so fine,  
The soul was seen through every part—  
A light that could not choose but shine  
In eye, and aspect, hand, and heart;  
That soul rests now, till God in His great day,  
Remoulds His image from this perished clay."

MONTGOMERY.

"I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

My house was very dull to me after Antonia's death. I felt so lonely; I missed her from my side, from my occupations, from my sight, all day long, and I determined that, as soon as I could, I would go away and travel for a long time. I would see new places, hunt out learned people who would give me new ideas, search for bright sunshine, brisk breezes, a dry climate.

My attendance on Antonia had kept me from my loved Mary Douglas's wedding, and I was only to see her again as Mary de Roussillon. I felt, however, it would be an intrusion on her new happiness if I went soon to Somerhurst, for the seal of mournfulness was on my countenance, and, though Mary had always been my favourite, yet I had learnt to give such individual attention to Antonia, of late months, that I was not in tune for the playfulness and brightness of Mary's

voice and manner. I could not leave my cottage for some months, not till the spring, for I never left my poor till I thought my presence was no longer needed, till fine weather had chased away the gloom and the biting winds of March, which had succeeded to the bleakness of the winter. I therefore remained where I was till the next year.

I had no longer any pleasure in thinking of Matilda. She had, at one time, wanted to come down and vegetate with me, as she called it, till she had recruited her purse, but I had no inclination to have such a harum-scarum young dame with me. She wrote very coaxingly; told me Charlie was dull and stupid; he only talked and thought of his horses; he no longer cared how she was dressed. He spent all his time with his brother officers, but would not let her do so, as he very naughtily and falsely declared she made herself talked of by the way in which she flirted with them. What should I have done with such a flighty person in my little snuggerly, where she would, assuredly, have no one to admire her, nor any one with whom to flirt? We had rather a lengthy correspondence on the subject, as she was determined to come at all risks and hazards, and I as determined not to be troubled with her. Had she not married, I should have thought it my duty to have had her with me, and to endeavour to reform her, but she had often been pert to me in Eaton Place, holding her head high, as a young spoilt

wife, and refusing to listen to any remonstrance, however kindly expressed.

When the month of April arrived, I packed up and left Ilfracombe. The vicar was just about having the old tumble-down vicarage rebuilt, I therefore let him have my cottage, which was a convenience to him, and very good for my little dwelling that it should be inhabited. I left strict orders for the care of the garden and the poultry, but I went off in my little pony-carriage, for one of my plans was to eschew railways, and to go from place to place by short distances, such as my two beautiful little bay ponies could effect in a day.

I did not go through great or manufacturing towns. I branched off to rustic villages, and went in search of the picturesque. I have accustomed myself so much to solitude that I did not feel even the Frenchman's need, who, travelling in solitariness, said,—he could enjoy nothing, for there was no one near him to whom he could exclaim, “*Ah, que c'est beau !*” I travelled in that way, till late in the autumn, and then returned, each year, to my cottage and my villagers, for the dreary months ; departing again in the spring. It was, thus, I went through England, Scotland, and Ireland, and was on the point of crossing over, pony-carriage and all, to Normandy, when Mary wrote me such a very pressing invitation to go to Somerhurst, I could no longer refuse.

I had not sought out learned people, as I had at first intended ; I preferred reading their books. It was less fatiguing, and more promptly profitable ; for, in their books, I had the essence of their wit and science.

I arrived, early in the day, at Somerhurst, just about the luncheon hour ; and I found the happy group in the drawing-room that opened on the lawn. There, a rush of reminiscences came upon me like a flood, when I thought of the time I had gone up to that window with Mary to see Matilda arrive from Portdown. How little the present outward woman resembled that of the weary girl, who surprised us, then, by coming once more amongst us ! In her heart and mind she was changed only by the deepening dye of passing time. Nothing remains stationary ; all things progress in good or evil ; and Matilda was yet more giddy, as a married woman, than she had been as a girl.

Mrs. Stuart, Mary, Ethelbert, almost dazzled me by their beauty. Mary had a little cherub in her arms that was kissing her fondly, and trying to span "mamma's" throat with its little hands. As soon as the handle of the door moved, Ethelbert had come forth, to do for Mrs. Stuart what was no longer in her power to do,—to welcome the coming guest. I found dear Mrs. Stuart very feeble. She had not sunk rapidly after the troubles and sorrows in the midst of which I had left her ; for Mary and her husband

contributed so much to her peace and comfort, that life slipped quietly and gently on from day to day and month to month. Still she had been declining from the time Matilda left her so abruptly ; and the misery of Antonia's conduct had caused her to change, at that time, visibly. Now her countenance had retained all its serenity, and, with it, the bright glow of faith,—the hope of soon ending her earthly pilgrimage had given to her that expression, that strength and vividness which had hitherto been wanting.

Ethelbert was then, as he still is, the perfection of manliness ; so sweet tempered, so full of faith and gratitude, so energetic in his various duties ;—no wonder that Mary has much ado, with her woman's heart, to prevent herself from making an idol of him. She succeeds ; for she does not attempt what, in that case, would be an impossibility ; she does not attempt it in her own strength.

Mary, as a mother, as a minister's wife, as the kind friend of the poor, as the mistress of a household, is indeed a pattern. In her the Balance of Beauty is perfect.

And, now, my memoirs of Mrs. Stuart are come to a close.

I remained with her the whole summer ; and just as the leaves began to fall, dear Mrs. Stuart sank to her eternal rest. She passed away as if in a sweet sleep.

She felt herself declining, and rejoiced in the



approach of death. "I am going," she would say, "to Him who made me, has redeemed, has sanctified me—I am about to join angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven. My long life, my chequered life, is ending; and I, even now, see how gracious God has been, and that the flowers and the thorns have been equally indispensable."

In her, likewise, was fully manifested at last—

THE BALANCE OF BEAUTY.







