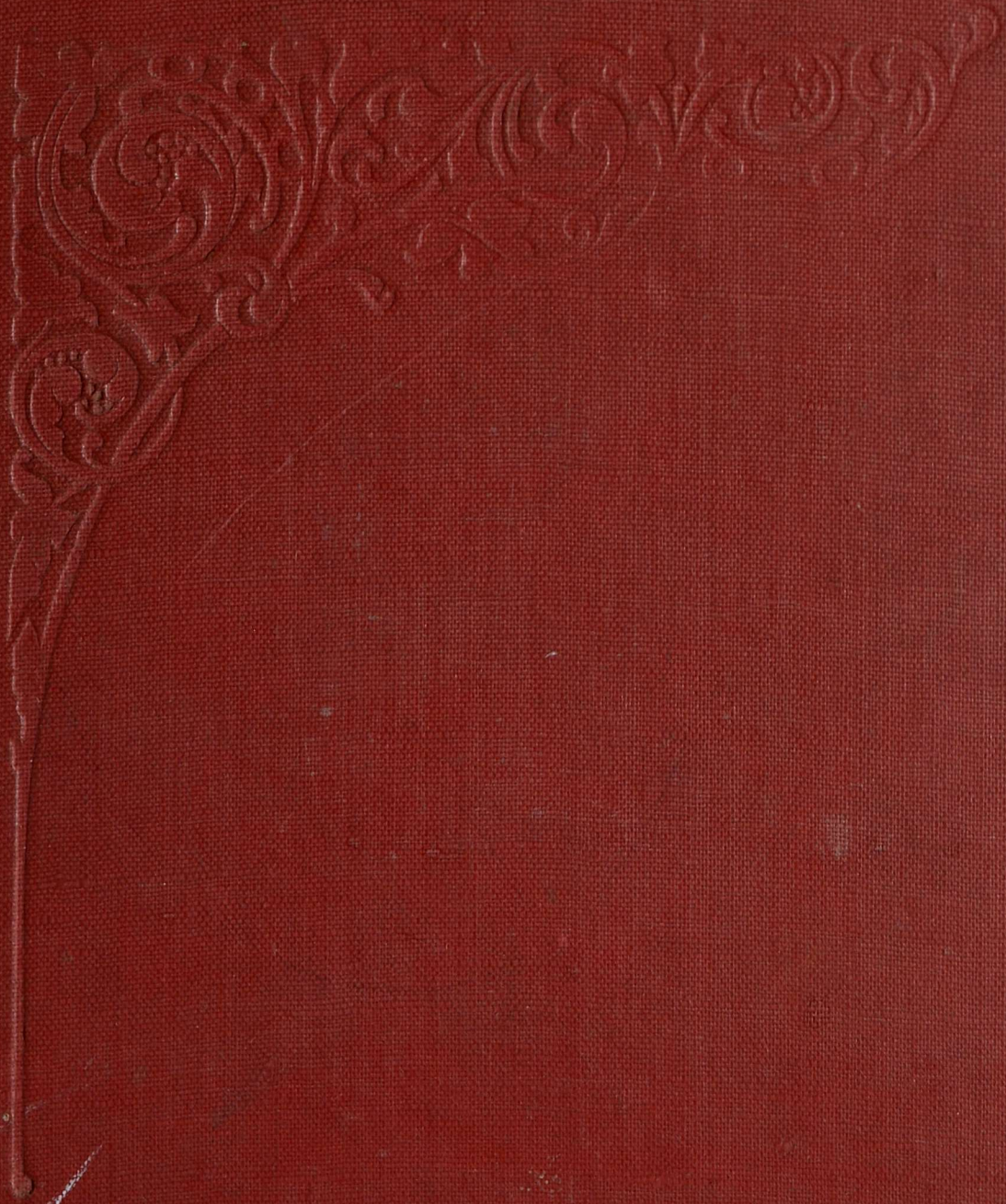


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THE EDICT



Presented

to

Harold Mc Coy.

for

Regular attendance

at

St. Andrews Church

and

Sabbath School.

Bellerive,

January 5. 1900



Frontispiece.

THE EDICT.

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

GRACE AGUILAR.



LONDON :

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The Edict.

A TALE OF 1492.

"The love that bids the patriot rise to guard his country's rest,
With deeper mightier fulness thrills in woman's gentle breast."—MS.

"And we must wander, witheringly,
In other lands to die ;
And where our father's ashes be,
Our own may never lie."—BYRON.

"THEN thou wouldst not leave this beautiful valley even with me, Josephine?"

"Nay, thou knowest thou dost but jest, Imri; thou wouldst not give me such a painful alternative?"

"How knowest thou that, love? Perchance I may grow jealous even of thy country, and it hold so dear a place in thy gentle breast, and seek a home elsewhere—to prove if thy love of Imri be dearer than thy love of land."

"I know thou wouldst do no such thing, my Imri; so play the threatening tyrant as thou mayest, I'll not believe thee, or lessen by one throb the love of my land, which shares my heart with thee. I know too well, thy heart beats true as mine; thou wouldst not take me hence."

"Never, my best beloved. Our children shall rove where we have roved, and learn their father's faith uninjured by closer commune with its foes. Here, where the exiles of Israel for centuries have found a peaceful home, will we rest, my Josephine, filling the little hearts of our children with thanksgiving that there is one spot of earth where the wandering and the persecuted may repose in peace."

"And surely it is for this cause the love we bear our country is so strong, so deep, that the thought of death is less bitter than the dream of other homes. We stand alone in our peculiar and most sainted creed, alone in our law, alone in our lives on earth, in our hopes for heaven. Our doom is to wander accursed and houseless over the broad earth, exposed to all the misery which man may inflict, without the power to retaliate or shun. Surely, oh, surely

then, the home that is granted must be doubly dear—so sheltered from outward ill, so blessed with inward peace that it might seem we alone were the inhabitants of Spain. Oh! it is not only memory that hallows every shrub and stream and tree—it is the consciousness of safety, of peace, of joy, which this vale enshrines, while all around us seemeth strife and gloom. Dearest Imri, is it marvel that I love it thus?"

The speaker was a beautiful woman of some two or three and twenty summers. There was a lovely finished roundness of form, a deep steady lustre in her large black eye, a full red ripe on her beautiful lip, a rose soft yet glowing as the last tinge of sunset beaming, in the energy of her words, upon a cheek usually more pale—all bespeaking a stage of life somewhat past that generally denominated girlhood, but only pressing the threshold of the era which follows. Life was still bright and fresh, and buoyant as youth would paint it; but in the heart there were depths and feelings revealed that were never known to girlhood. Her companion, some three or four years her senior, presented a manly form, and features more striking from their frankness and animation than any regular beauty. But there was one other individual, seated at some little distance from the lovers (for such they were), whose peculiar and affecting beauty would rivet the attention to the exclusion of all else. He was a slight boy, who had evidently not seen more than ten years, though the light in the dark blue eye, so deep, so concentrated in its expression, that it seemed to breathe forth the soul; the expression ever lingering round his small delicately pencilled mouth appeared to denote a strength and formation of character beyond his years. His rich chesnut hair, long and gracefully curling, fell over his light blue vest nearly to his waist, and, parted in the centre, exposed a brow of such transparent fairness, so arched and high, that it scarce appeared natural to his Eastern origin and Spanish birth. Long lashes, much darker than his hair, almost concealed the colour of the eye, save when it was fixed full on those who spoke to him, and shaded softly, yet with a mournful expression, the pale and delicate cheek, to which exertion or emotion alone had power to bring the frail and fleeting rose. An indescribable plaintiveness pervaded the countenance; none could define wherefore, or why his very smile would gush on the heart

like tears. He was seated on the green sward, weaving some beautiful flowers into a garland or wreath, in perfect silence, although he was not so far removed from his companions as to be excluded from their conversation, could he have joined in it. Alas! those lips had never framed a word; no sound had ever reached his ear.

An animated response from Imri followed his Josephine's last eager words; and the boy, as if desirous of partaking their emotion, whatever it might be, bounded towards them, placing his glowing wreath on the brow of Josephine with a fond admiring glance, calling on Imri by a sign to admire it with him; then nestling closer to her bosom, inquired in the same manner the subject of their conversation: and when told, there was no need of language to speak the boy's reply. He glanced eagerly, almost passionately, around him; he stretched forth his arms, as if embracing every long-loved object, and then he laid his hand on his heart, as if the image of each were reflected there, and stretching himself on the mossy earth, as if there should be his last long sleep. He pointed to distant mountains, made a movement with his hands, to denote the world beyond them, then turned shudderingly away, and laid his head on the bosom of his nearest and dearest relative on earth.

The situation of the valley of Eshcol was in truth such as to inspire enthusiasm in colder hearts than Josephine's. Formed by one of the many breaks in the Sierra Morena, and sharing abundantly the rich vegetation which crowns this ridge of mountains nine months in the year, it appeared set apart by Nature as a guarded and blessed haven of peace for the weary wanderers of Israel; who, when the Roman spoiler desolated their holy land, tradition said there found a resting-place. Lofty rocks and mountains hemmed it round, throwing as it were a natural barrier between the valley and the world beyond. The heath, the rosemary, the myrtle, and the cistus grew in rich profusion amidst the cliffs; while below, the palm, the olive, the lemon, orange and almond, interspersed with flowering shrubs of every variety, marked the site of the hamlet, and might mournfully remind the poor fugitives of the yet richer and holier land their fathers' sins had forfeited. To the east, a thick grove of palm, cedar, and olive surrounded the lowly temple, where for ages the simple villagers worshipped the

God of Israel as their fathers did. Its plain and solid architecture resisted alike the power of storm and time; and it was the pride of every generation to preserve it in the primitive simplicity of the past. Innumerable streams, issuing from the mountains, watered the vale; some flowing with a silvery murmur and sparkling light, others rushing and leaping over crags, their prominences hid in the snowy foam, creating alike variety and fertility. The brilliant scarlet flower of the fig-marigold mingled with the snowy blossoms of the myrtle, peeping forth from its dark glossy leaves, formed a rich garland around the trunks of many a stalwart tree; and often at the sunset hour the perfume of the orange and almond, the balsamic fragrance of the cistus, mingling with, yet apart from the others, would float by on the balmy pinions of the summer breeze, adding indescribably to the soothing repose and natural magic of the scene.

But it was not the mere beauty of nature which sunk so deeply on the hearts of the Eshcolites, as to create that species of *amor patriæ*, of which Josephine's ardent words were but a faint reflection; it was the fact that it was, had been, and they fondly hoped ever would be, to them a second Judea. Its very name had been bestowed by the unhappy fugitives from the destruction of Jerusalem, who hailed its natural loveliness as their ancestors did the first-fruits of the land of promise. Throughout the whole of Spain, indeed, the sons of Israel were scattered, far more numerous and prosperously than in any other country. Despite her repeated revolutions, her internal wars, her constant change of masters, the Hebrews so continued to flourish that the whole commerce of the kingdom became engrossed by them; and occupying stations of eminence and trust—the heads of all seminaries of physic and literature—they commanded veneration even from the enemies and persecutors of their creed.

With the nation at large, however, our simple narrative does not pretend to treat. Century after century found the little colony of Eshcol flourishing and happy; acknowledging no law but that of Moses, no God but Him that law revealed. It mattered not to them whether Mahommedan or Nazarene claimed supremacy in Spain. Schism and division were unknown amongst them; the same temple received their simple

worship from age to age; for if it chanced that the more eager, the more ambitious spirits sought more stirring scenes, they returned to the simplicity of their fathers, conscious they had no power to alter, and satisfied that they could not improve.

Varying in population from three to five hundred families, actuated by the same interests, grief and joy became as it were the common property of all—the one inexpressibly soothed, the other heightened by sympathy—the vale of Eshcol seemed marked out as the haven of peace. The poet, the minstrel, the architect, the agriculturist, even the sculptor, were often found amongst its inmates, flourishing, and venerated as men more peculiarly distinguished by their merciful Creator than their fellows. The sins that convulse kingdoms and agitate a multitude to them were unknown; for the seditious, the restless, the ambitious sought a wider field, bidding an eternal farewell to the vale, whose peaceful insipidity they spurned. Crimes were punished by banishment, perpetual or for a specified time, according to the guilt; liable indeed to death, if the criminal returned, but of this the records of Eshcol present no example.

Situated in the southern ridge of the Sierra Morena, on the eastern extremity of Andalusia, and consequently at the very entrance of the Moorish dominions, yet Nature's care had so fortified the vale, that it had remained both uninjured and undiscovered by the immense armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, who for ten years had overrun the beautiful province of Grenada, and now, at the commencement of our narrative, had completed its reduction, and compelled the last of the Caliphs to acknowledge their supremacy in Spain. Misery and death were busy within ten miles of the Hebrew colony, but there they entered not. Some aspiring youths had in truth departed to join the contending hosts; but by far the greater number, more indifferent to the fate of war, cared not on which side the banner of victory might wave—their affections centred so strongly on the spot of earth at once their birthplace and their tomb, that to depart from it seemed the very bitterness of death.

Tedious as this digression may seem, it is necessary for the clear comprehension of our narrative; for the appreciation of that feeling of *amor patriæ* which is its basis; an emotion experienced in various degrees by every nation, but

by the Jew in Spain with a strength and intensity equalled by none and understood but by a few.

Josephine Castello, in whom this feeling was resting yet more powerfully than in her compeers, was regarded as an orphan, and as such peculiarly beloved; yet an orphan she was not. The youth of her father, Simeon Castello, had been marked by such ungovernable passions, as to render him an object of doubt and dread to all; with the sole exception of one—the meekest, gentlest, most timid girl of Eshcol. Perhaps it was the contrast with herself—the generous temper, the frank and winning smile, the bold character of his striking beauty, or the voiceless magic which we may spend whole lives in endeavouring to define, and which only laughs at our wisdom—but Rachel Asher loved him, so faithfully, so unchangeably, that it stood the test of many months, nay years, of wandering on the part of Simeon, who on each return to the vale appeared more restless, more wayward than before.

Men said he was incapable of loving, and augured sorrow and neglect for the gentle Rachel, even when, seemingly touched by her meek and timid loveliness, he bent his proud spirit to woo her love, and was accepted. They were married; and some few years of quiet felicity appeared to belie the prognostics of the crowd. But, soon after the birth of a daughter, the wandering propensities of her father again obtained ascendancy; and for months, and then years, he would be absent from his home.

Uncomplainingly Rachel bore this desertion, for he was ever fond when he returned; and even when she once ventured to entreat permission to accompany him, it was with soothing affection, not harsh repulse, he refused, assuring her, though honoured and trusted by the Nazarene, he was seldom more than a month at one place; and he could not offer delicate females the quiet settled home they needed. Rachel could have told him that privation and hardship with him would be hailed as blessings, but she knew her husband's temper, and acquiescing, sought comfort in the increasing intelligence and beauty of her child.

Ten years thus passed, and then Simeon, as if involuntarily yielding to the love of his wife and child, declared his intention of never again seeking the Nazarene world, and for two years he adhered to his resolution; at the end of that

time hailing with pleasure the promise of another little one, to share with Josephine the affection he lavished upon her. This sudden change of character could not pass unnoticed by his fellows; and no man being more tenacious of his honour than Simeon Castello, it was of course exposed to many aspersions, which his passionate temper could not brook.

It happened, in a jovial meeting of youngsters when somewhat heated by excitement and wine, that the character and actions of Castello were canvassed somewhat more freely than sobriety would have ventured. One of them at length remarked, that in all probability he was glad to avail himself of the retreat of Eshcol, to eschew the hundred eyes of justice or revenge.

"Then die in thy falsehood, liar!" were the words that, uttered in thunder, startled the assembly. "The man lives not who dares impugn the honour of Castello!" and the hapless youth sunk to the earth before them, stricken unto death. The speechless horror of all around might easily have permitted flight, but Castello scorned it. He knew his doom, and met it in stern unflinching silence;—to wander forth alone, with the thoughts of blood clinging to his conscience, till the mandate of his God summoned him to answer for his crime;—death, if he ever ventured to insult the sacred precincts of his native vale by seeking to return.

The voice of his father faltered not as from his seat of judgment, amid the elders of his people, he pronounced this sentence. His cheek blanched not as the wife and child of the murderer flung themselves at his feet, beseeching permission to accompany the exile. It could not be. Nay more, did he return, the law was such, that his own wife or child must deliver him up to justice, or share the penalty of his crime. Hour by hour beheld the wretched suppliants pleading for mercy, but in vain.

Nor did this more than Roman firmness (for it was based on love, not stoicism) desert him when, in agonized remorse, his son besought his forgiveness and his blessing. He confessed his sin, for he felt it such. No provocation could call for blood. And headstrong and violent as were the passions of Simeon Castello, his father believed in his remorse, his penitence; for he knew deeds of blood were foreign to his nature. He raised his clasped hands to heaven, he prayed

that the penitence of the sinner might be accepted, he spoke his forgiveness and his blessing, and then flinging his arms around his son, his head sunk upon his shoulder. Minutes passed and there was no sound—the Hebrew father had done his duty : but his heart had broken—he was dead !

From the moment she was released from the parting embrace of her doubly-wretched husband, and her strained eyes might no longer distinguish his retreating figure, no word escaped the lips of Rachel. For the first time, she looked on the sorrow of her poor child, without any attempt to soothe or console. She resumed her usual duties, but it was as if a statue had been endowed with movement. Nor could the entreaties of her aged grandfather, her sole remaining relative, nor the caresses of Josephine, wring even one word of suffering from her lips.

A week passed, and Josephine held a little brother in her arms ; the looks of her mother appeared imploring her to cherish and protect him, and kneeling, she solemnly swore to make him the first object of her life ; belief beamed in the eyes of the dying—her look seemed beseeching the blessing of heaven on them both ; but Josephine yearned in vain for the sweet accents of her voice—she never spoke again.

From that hour the gay and sprightly child seemed changed into premature and sorrowing womanhood. She stood alone of her race. Alone, with the sole exception of that aged relative, who had seen his children and children's children fall around him, and her infant brother. She shrunk, in her sensitiveness, from the young companions who would have soothed her grief. She did not fear that the crime of her father would be visited upon her innocent head, for such feelings were unknown to the simple government of Eshcol ; but her loneliness, the shock which had crushed every hope and joy of youth, caused her to cling closer to her aged relative, and direct every energy to the welfare of her young and—as, alas ! she too soon discovered—afflicted brother. She watched his increase in strength, intelligence, and loveliness, and pictured in vivid colouring the delight which would attend his instruction ; she longed intensely for the moment when her ear should be blessed by the sweet accents of his voice. That moment came not ! the affliction of her mother had descended to the child she bore, and Josephine,

in irrepressible anguish, became conscious that not only was his voice withheld from her, but hers might never reach his ear.

Her deep affection for him, however, roused her from this mournful conviction; and energetically she sought to render his affliction less painful than it had appeared, and she succeeded. She led him into the fields of nature—every spot became to the child a fruitful source of intelligence and love, providing him with language, even in inanimate objects; by his mother's grave she instilled the thoughts of God and heaven, of their peculiar race and history; of the God of Israel's deep love and long-suffering; and she was understood—though to what extent she knew not, imagined not, till the hour of trial came. That she was inexpressibly assisted by the child's rapid conception of the good and evil, of the sublime and beautiful—by its extraordinary intellect and truly poet's soul, is true, but the lowly spirit of Josephine felt as if a special blessing had attended her task, and urged yet further efforts for his improvement.

By means of waxen tablets, formed by the hand of Imri Benalmar, she taught him to read and write. Leading his attention to familiar objects, she would write down their appropriate names, and familiarising his eye to the writing, he gradually associated the written word with the visible object. The rest was easy to a mind like his. The flushed cheek and sparkling eye denoted the intense delight with which he perused the manuscripts collected, and often adapted for his use by Imri, and poesy became his passion; breathing in the simplest words, on his waxen tablets, the love he bore his devoted sister, and the pure, beautiful sentiments which filled his soul.

The kindness of Imri to her Aréli, passed not unfelt by the heart of Josephine. Tremblingly she became conscious than an emotion towards him was obtaining ascendancy, which she deemed it her duty to conquer, or at least profoundly to hide. She could not forget the stigma on her name, and believed none could seek her love. The daughter of a murderer (for though the crime was involuntary, such he was) was lonely upon earth. Dignified and reserved, they would have thought her proud, had not her constant kindness, her total forgetfulness of self, in continually serving others, belied the thought; but this they did think (and

Imri Benalmar himself, so well did she hide her heart) that her affections were centred in her aged relative and her young brother.

But when the magic words were spoken, when Imri Benalmar, whose unwavering piety and steady virtue had caused him to stand highest and dearest in the estimation of his fellows, young and old, conjured her with a respectful deference, which vainly sought to calm the passionate affection of his soul, to bless him with her love, her trust—the long hidden feelings of Josephine were betrayed, their inmost depths revealed. Blessed, indeed, was that moment to them both. Fondly did Imri combat her arguments, that she had no right to burden him with the aged Asher and her helpless Aréli, yet from them she could never consent to part.

“Had not Aréli ever been dear to him as a brother—had he not always intended to prove himself such?” he asked, with many other arguments of love; and how might Josephine reply, save with tears of strong emotion to consent to become his bride?

Josef Asher heard of their engagement with delight; but he would not consent to burden them with his continued company. True, he was old, but neither infirm nor ailing. He would retain possession of his own dwelling, which had descended to him from many generations; but the nearer his children resided, the greater happiness for him.

Imri understood the hint, and, as if by magic, a picturesque little cottage, not two hundred yards from her native home, rose before the wondering eyes of Josephine; and Aréli, as he watched its progress, clapped his hands in childish joy, and sought to aid the workmen in their tasks. Presents from all, as is the custom of the Hebrew nation, were showered on the youthful couple, to enable them to commence housekeeping with comfort, or add some little ornament or useful article of furniture to the house or its adjoining lands. The more the *fiancées* were beloved, the greater source of public joy was a wedding in Eshcol.

The conversation which the commencement of our tale in part records took place a few evenings previous to the day fixed for the nuptials.

On leaving his sister and her betrothed, Aréli betook himself, as was his custom, ere he joined the evening meal,

to his mother's grave, to water the flowers around it, and peruse, in his simple and innocent devotion, the little Bible which Josephine and Imri's love had rendered into the simplest Spanish, from the Hebrew Scriptures of their race. The shades of evening had already fallen around the leafy shadowed place of tombs, but there was sufficient light remaining for the boy to discern a cloaked and muffled figure prostrate before his mother's grave, the head resting in a posture of inexpressible anguish on the cold marble of the tomb. The stranger's form moved convulsively, and though Aréli could distinguish no sound, he knew that it was grief on which he gazed. Softly he approached and laid his little hand on that of the stranger, who started in evident alarm, looking upon that angelic face with a strange mixture of bewilderment and love. He spoke, but Aréli shook his head mournfully, putting his arm around his neck caressingly, as if beseeching him to take comfort; then, as if failing in his desired object, he hastily drew his tablets from his vest, and wrote rapidly—

"Poor Aréli cannot speak nor hear, but he can feel; do not weep, it is so sad to see tears in eyes like thine!"

"And why is it sad, sweet boy?" the stranger wrote in answer, straining him as he did so involuntarily closer to his bosom.

"Oh, man should not weep, and man like thee, who can list the sweet voice of nature, and the tones of all he loves; who can breathe forth all he thinks, and feels, and likes. Tears are for poor Aréli, and yet they do not come now as they did once, for I have a father who loves, and who can hear me too, though none else can."

"A father?" wrote the stranger. "Who is thy father, gentle boy? Thou bearest a name I know not. Tell me who thou art."

"Oh, I have no father that I may see and hear—none, that is, on earth; but I love Him, for He smiles on me, through the sweet flowers, and sparkling brooks, and beautiful trees; and I know He loves me and cares for me, deaf and dumb and afflicted as I am, and he hears me when I ask him to bless me and my sweet sister, and reward her for all she does for me. He is up—up there, and all around." He stretched out his arms, pointing to the star-lit heavens and beautiful earth. "My Father's house is everywhere;

and when my body lies here, as my mother's does, my breath will go up to Him, and Aréli will be so happy—so happy!”

“Thy mother!” burst from the stranger's lips, as though the child could hear him; and his hand so trembled that he could hardly guide the steel pencil which traced the word “Who is thy mother—where does she lie?”

Aréli laid his hand on the tomb, pointing to the name Rachel Castello, there simply engraved. The effect almost terrified him. The stranger caught him in his arms—he pressed repeated kisses on his cheek, his brow, his lips—clasping him, as if to release him were death. The child returned his caresses without either impatience or dissatisfaction. After a while the stranger again wrote—

“Thy sister, sweet boy—is it she who hath taught thee these things—doth she live—is she happy?”

“Oh, so happy! and Imri, kind Imri, will make her happier still. Aréli loves him next to Josephine, and grandfather and I am to live with them, and we are all happy. Oh, how I love Josephine! I should have been so sad—so sad, had she not loved me, taught me all; but come to her—she will make thee happy too, and thou wilt weep no more. The evening meal waits for us both—wilt thou not come? Josephine will love thee, for thou lovest Aréli.”

A deep agonized groan escaped from the stranger, vibrating through his whole frame. Several minutes passed ere he could make reply, and then he merely wrote, in almost illegible characters—

“I am not good enough to go with you, my child. Pray for me—love me; I shall remember thee.”

And then again he folded him in his arms, kissed him passionately, and disappeared in the gloom, ere Aréli could detain him or perceive his path, though he sprang forward to do so.

The child watered his flowers more hastily than usual, evidently preoccupied by some new train of thought, which was shown by a rapid return to his grandfather's cottage, and an animated recital, through signs and his tablets, of all that had occurred, adding an earnest entreaty to Imri to seek and find him.

Josephine started from the table—the rich glow of her cheek faded into a deathlike paleness, and, without uttering a

syllable, she threw her mantle around her and hastily advanced to the door. Imri and even the aged Josef threw themselves before her.

"Whither wouldst thou go, Josephine, dearest Josephine! this is not well—whom wouldst thou seek?"

"My *father*," she replied, in a voice whose low deep tone betrayed her emotion. "Shall he be lingering near, unheeded, uncared for by his child? Imri, stay me not; I *must* see him once again."

"Thou must not, thou shalt not!" was Imri's agonized reply, clasping her in his arms to prevent her progress. "Josephine, thy life is no longer thine own, to fling from thee thus as a worthless thing; it is mine—mine by thine own free gift; thou shalt not wrest it from me thus."

"My child, seek not this stranger; draw not the veil aside which he has wisely flung around him. The penalty to both may not be waived—thou mayest not see *him*, save to proclaim—or die. My child, my child, leave me not in my old age alone."

The mournful accents of the aged man completed what the passionate appeal had begun. Josephine sunk on a seat near him, and burst into an agony of tears. Aréli clung round her, terrified at the effect of his simple tale; and for him she roused herself, warning him to repeat the tale to none, but indeed to grant the stranger's boon, and remember him in lowly prayers. Fearfully both Imri and Asher waited the morning, dreading lest its light should betray the stranger; and thankfully did they welcome the close of that day and the next without his reappearance. A very different feeling actuated the afflicted Aréli; he sought him with the longing wish to look on his face again, for it haunted his fancy, lingered on his love—and a yet more hallowed spot became his mother's tomb.

The intervening days had passed, the affection of Imri bearing from the heart of Josephine its last lingering sadness, and enabling her to feel the anguish her impetuosity might have brought not only on her father and herself, but on all whom she loved. The first of May, her bridal morn, found her composed and smiling like herself. She had placed her future fate, without one doubt or fear, in the keeping of Imri Benalmar, for the tremors and emotions of modern brides were unknown to the maidens of Eshcol;

once only her calmness had been disturbed, when her young brother had approached her, had clasped his arms about her neck, and with glistening eyes had written his boyish love.

"Look at the sun, sweet sister ; how brightly and beautifully he shines, how soft and blue the sky, and the sweet flowers, and the little birds ! Oh, they all love thee, and can smile and sing their joy ! and gentle friends throng round thee, and speak loving words. Oh, why is poor Aréli alone silent, when his heart is so full ? But he can pray, sweet sister ; pray as thou hast taught him ; and he will pray his Father to give back to thee all which thou hast done for him."

Was it marvel that Josephine's tears should fall over those fond words ? But the boy's caresses turned that dewy joy to softer smiles, as surrounded by her youthful companions she waited the entrance of her aged relative to conduct her to the temple.

Three hours after noon the nuptial party there assembled, marriages among the Hebrews seldom being performed at an earlier hour. Twenty young girls dressed alike, and half that number of matrons, attended the bride ; and proudly did old Josef gaze upon her, as she leaned on his arm in all the grace and loveliness of beautiful womanhood, unconscious how well it contrasted with his sinewy and athletic form ; his silvery beard and hair alone betrayed his four score and fourteen years. There was no shadow of age upon his features, beaming as they were, in his quick sympathy, with all around him. The path was strewn with the fairest flowers, and the freshest moss, of varied hues, while rich garlands, interwoven with the blushing fruits, festooned the trees. The whole village wore the aspect of rejoicing, and every shade passed from the brow of the young Aréli ; the flush deepened on his fair cheek, the intense blue of his beautiful eye so sparkled in light, that the eyes of all were upon him, till they glistened in strange tears.

The bridegroom awaited the bride and her companions in the temple, attended by an equal number. The little edifice was filled, for marriages in Eshcol were ever solemnized in public ; the number that attended evincing the feelings with which the betrothed were regarded. The ceremony commenced, and, save the voice of the officiating priest, there

was silence so profound, that the faintest sound could have been distinguished.

As Josephine flung back her veil, at once to taste the sacred wine, and prove to Imri that no Leah had been substituted for his Rachel, a distant trampling fell clearly on the still air. The service continued, but many looked up to the high casements as if in wonder. The sun still poured down his golden flood of light ; no passing cloud announced an approaching storm, so to explain the unwonted sounds as distant thunder. They came nearer and nearer still ; the trampling of many feet seemed echoing from the mountain ground ; and at the moment Imri flung down the crystal goblet on the marble at his feet, as the conclusion of the solemn rites, the shrill blast of many trumpets and the long roll of the pealing drum were borne on the wings of a hundred echoes, far and near. Wild birds, whose rest had never before been so disturbed, rose screaming from their haunts, darkening the air with their flapping wings. Again and again, at irregular intervals, this unusual music was repeated ; but though alarm blanched many a maiden's cheek, and the brows of the sterner sex became knit with indefinable emotion, the afternoon service, which ever follows the Jewish nuptials, continued undisturbed.

The eyes of Josephine were fixed on Imri more in wonder than alarm, and Benalmar had folded his arm round her and whispered, "Mine, mine in woe or in weal ; mine thou art, and wilt be, love ! whatever ill these martial sounds forbode."

A smile so bright, so confiding, was the answer, that even had he not felt her cling closer to his heart, Imri would have been satisfied. A sudden paleness banished the rich flush from the cheek of the deaf and dumb ; he relinquished his station under the canopy which had been held over the bride and bridegroom during the ceremony, and drew closer to them. He had *heard* indeed no sound ; but so keen are the other senses of the deaf and dumb, that many have been known to *feel* what they cannot hear. Aréli could read, in a moment's glance, the countenances of those around him, and at the same instant he became conscious of a thrilling sensation creeping through his every vein. He took the hand of Imri and looked up inquiringly in his face. The answer was given, and the child resumed the pos-

ture of devotion, which his strange feelings had disturbed.

The last words of the presiding priest were spoken, and there was silence ; even the sounds without were hushed and a voiceless dread appeared to withhold those within from seeking the cause. There was evidently a struggle ere the usual congratulations could be offered to the young couple ; and so preoccupied was the attention of all, that the absence of Aréli was unnoticed, till, as trumpet and drum again pierced the thin air, he darted back, and with hasty and agitated signs related what he had beheld.

"Soldiers, many soldiers ! It may be so ; yet wherefore this alarm, my children ?" exclaimed the aged Asher, stepping firmly forward, and speaking in an accent of mild reproof. "What can ye fear ? Nazarene and Mahommedan have oft-times found a shelter in this peaceful valley : fearlessly they came, uninjured they departed. Wrong we have never done to man : peace and goodwill have been our watchword ; wherefore, then, should we tremble to meet these strangers ? My children, the God of Israel is with us still."

The cloud passed from the brows of his hearers. The young maidens emulated the calm firmness of the bride, and gathering round her, followed their male companions from the temple. The spot on which the sacred edifice stood commanded a view of the village market-place, which, from its occupying the only level ground half a mile square, was surrounded by all the low dwellings of the artizans, and was often the place of public meeting, when any point was discussed requiring the suffrages of all the male population. This space was now filled with Spanish soldiers, some on horseback, others on foot ; while far behind, scattered in groups amongst the rocks, many a steel morion flung back the sun's glistening rays. The villagers, startled and amazed, had assembled on all sides, and even Josef Asher for a moment paused, astonished.

"Let us on, my children," he said, "and learn the meaning of this unusual muster. Yet stay," he added, as several young men hastened forward to obey him ; "they are about to speak ; we will hear first what they proclaim."

Another flourish of drums and trumpets sounded as he spoke, and then one of the foremost cavaliers, attired as a herald, drew from his bosom a parchment roll. The officers

around doffed their helmets, and he read words to the following import :—

“ From the most high and mighty sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, joint-sovereigns of Arragon and Castile, to whose puissant arms the grace of God hath given dominion over all heretics and unbelievers, before whose banner of the Holy Cross the Moorish abominations have crumbled into dust — to our loyal subjects of every principality and province, of every rank, and stage, and calling, of every grade and every state, these—to which we charge you all in charity give good heed.

“ Whereas we have heard and seen that the Jews of our states induce many Christians to embrace Judaism, particularly the nobles of Andalusia ; for THIS they are BANNISHED from our domains. Four months from this day, we grant them to forswear their abominations and embrace Christianity, or to depart ; pronouncing DEATH on every Jew found in our kingdom after that allotted time.

(Signed) FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.

“ Given at our palace of Segovia this thirtieth day of March, of the year of grace one thousand four hundred and ninety-two.”

As a thunderbolt falling from the blue and cloudless sky—as the green and fertile earth yawning in fathomless chasms beneath their feet, so, but more terribly, more vividly still, did this edict fall on the faithful hearts who heard. A sudden pause, and then a cry, an agonized cry of horror and despair, burst simultaneously from young and old, woman and child ; and then, as awakened from that stupor of woe, wilder shouts arose, and the fiery youth of Eshcol gathered tumultuously together, and shrill cries of “ Vengeance, vengeance ! cut them down—rend the lying parchment into shreds, and scatter it to the four winds of heaven — thus will we defend our rights ! ” found voice amid groans and hisses of execration and assault. A volley of stones fell among the Spaniards, who, standing firmly to their arms, appeared in the act of charging, when both parties were arrested by the aged patriarch of Eshcol rushing in their very centre, heeding not, nay, unconscious of personal danger, calling on them to forbear.

“ Are ye all mad ? ” he cried. “ Would ye draw down further ruin on your devoted heads ! Think ye to cope with

those armed by a sovereign mandate, backed by a mighty kingdom? Oh, for the love of your wives, your children, your aged, helpless parents, keep the peace and let your elders speak!"

Even at that moment their natural veneration for old age had influence. Reproved and sorrowful, they shrunk back—the angry gesture calmed, the muttered execration silenced. Surrounded by his brother elders, Asher drew near the Spaniards, who struck by his venerable age and commanding manner, consented to accompany him to the council-room near at hand, desiring their men on the severest penalties to create no disturbance. The edict was laid before them, its purport explained, enforced emphatically, yet kindly; for the Spaniards felt awed, in spite of themselves. But vainly the old men urged that the given cause of their banishment could not extend to them. They had had no dealing with the Nazarene; they lived to themselves alone; they interfered not with the civil or religious government of the country, which had sheltered them from age to age; they warred with none, offended none; their very existence was often unsuspected; they asked but liberty to live on as they had lived; and would the sovereigns of Spain deny them this? It could not be. The Spaniards listened mildly; but the edict had gone forth, they said, unto all and every class of Jews within the kingdom, and not one individual was exempt from its sentence, save on the one condition—their embracing Christianity. It was true that many of their nation might be faithful subjects; but even did their banishment involve loss to Spain, her sovereigns, impressed with religious zeal, welcomed the temporal loss as spiritual gain. If, indeed, they could not comply with the very simple condition, they urged the old men instantly to depart, for one month out of the four had already elapsed, the edict bearing date the last day but one of the month of March. They added, the secluded situation of the valley had caused the delay, and might have delayed its proclamation yet longer, had not chance led them to these mountains in search of an officer of rank, who had wandered from them, and they feared had perished in the hollows.

Even at that moment a chilling dread shot through the heart of the aged Asher. Could that officer be he whom Areli had seen but seven days previous? He dared not

listen to his heart's reply, and gave his whole attention to that which followed. A second edict, the Spaniards continued to state, had been issued prohibiting all Christians to supply the fugitives with bread or wine, water or meat, after the month of April.

The old men heard : there was little to answer, though much to feel ; and sorrowing council occupied some time after the officers had retired. They wished to learn the condition of their wretched countrymen, and the real effects of this most cruel edict. The blow had descended so unexpectedly, it seemed as if they could not, unless from the lips of an eye-witness, believe it true, and they decided on sending twenty of their young men to learn tidings, under the control of one, calm, firm, and dispassionate enough to restrain those acts of violence to which they had already shown such inclination. But who was this one ? How might they ask *him* ?

The old men together sought the various groups, and, expressing their wishes, all were eager to obey. Josef Asher alone approached his children, who sat apart from their companions. He related all that had passed between them and the Spaniards, and then awhile he paused.

"Imri," he said at length, "my son, thou hast seen the misguided passion of our youth ; they must not go forth on this mission of unimpassioned observation alone. Our elders, the wise and moderate, must husband their little strength for their weary pilgrimage. Thou, my son, hast their wisdom, with all the activity and energy of youth. We would that thou shouldest head this band ; but a very brief absence is needed. Canst thou consent ?"

A low cry of suffering broke from the pale lips of Josephine, and she threw her arms round Imri, as thus to chain him to her side. "In such an hour wilt thou leave me, Imri ?" His lip quivered, his cheek paled, and the few words he uttered were heard by her alone. "Yes, yes, thou shalt go, my beloved ; heed not my woman's weakness. Thou wilt return ; and then—then we will *depart* together." Oh, what a world of agony did that one word speak !

The instant departure of the younger villagers occasioned some surprise, but without further interference. The Spaniards began to pitch their tents amongst the rocky eminences, as preparing for some months' encampment.

Had not the inhabitants of Eshcol felt that their cup of bitterness was already full to the brim, the appearance of an armed force in the very centre of their peaceful dwellings would have added gall; but every thought, feeling, and energy were merged in one engrossing subject of anguish. Some there were who rejected all belief in the edict's truth. They could not be banished from scenes in which they and their fathers had dwelt, from age to age, in peace and bliss. Others felt their minds a void; they asked no question of their elders, spoke not to each other, but in strange and moody silence awaited the return of Imri and his companions. Nor could the obnoxious sight of a huge wooden crucifix, which the next morning greeted the eyes of every villager, rouse them effectually from the lethargy of despair.

And Josephine, did she weep and moan, now that the fate she so instinctively dreaded had fallen? Her tears were on her heart, lying there like lead, slowly yet surely undermining strength, and poisoning the gushing spring of life. In sobs and tears her young companions gathered round her, and she spoke of comfort and resignation, her gentle kindness soothing many, and rousing them to hope, on the return of the young men, things might not be found so despairing as they now seemed. But when twilight had descended and all was hushed, Josephine led her young brother to her mother's grave. She looked on his sweet face, paled with sympathetic sorrow, though as yet he knew not why he wept; and she sought to speak and tell him all, but the thought that his young joys, yet more than her own, were blighted—that, weakly and afflicted as he was, he too must be torn from familiar scenes and objects which formed his innocent pleasures, and encounter hardships and privation that stood in dread perspective before her—oh, was it strange that that noble spirit lost its firmness for the moment, and that, sinking on the green sward, she buried her face in her hands, and sobbed in an intensity of suffering which found not its equal even midst the deep woe around her? Aréli knelt beside her; he clasped her cold hands within his own; he hid his head in her lap—seeking by all these mute caresses, which had never before appealed in vain, to restore her to composure. For his sake she roused herself; she raised her tearful eyes to the star-lit heavens in silent prayer, and drawing him closer to her, commenced her painful task,

Too well his ready mind conceived her meaning. His beautiful lip grew white and quivering—the dew of suffering stood upon his brow ; but he shed no tear—nay, he sought to smile, as thus to lessen his sister's care. But when she told him the condition which was granted, and bade him choose between the land of his love or the faith of his fathers—a change came over his features : he started from her side, the red flush rushing to his cheek ; he drew his little Bible from his bosom, pressed it fervently to his lips and heart, shook his clenched fist in direction of the Spanish encampment, and then laid down beside the grave. “ My boy, my boy, there spoke the blessed spirit of our race ! ” and tears of inexpressible emotion coursed down the cheek of Josephine, as she clasped him convulsively to her aching heart. “ Death and exile, aye, torture, thou wilt brave rather than desert thy faith. My God, my God, thou wilt be with us still ! ”

It was not till the ninth day from their departure that Imri Benalmar and his companions returned. One glance sufficed to read their mournful tale. On all sides, they said, they had beheld but cruelty and ruin, perjury or despair. From every town, from every province, their wretched brethren were flocking to the sea-coast—their homes, their lands left to the ruthless spoiler, or sold for one-tenth of their value. They told of a vineyard exchanged for a suit of clothes—a house with all its valuables, for a mule. Their gold, silver, and jewels, prohibited either to be exchanged or carried away with them, became the prey of their cruel persecutors. Famine and horror on every side assailed them ; many they had seen famishing on the roads, for none dared give them a bit of bread or a draught of water ; and even mothers were known to slay their own children, husbands their wives, to escape the agony of watching their lingering deaths. Their illustrious countryman, Isaac Abarbanel, Imri said, had offered an immense sum to refill the coffers of Spain, emptied as they were by the Moorish war, would his sovereigns recal the fatal edict. They had appeared to hesitate, when Thomas de Torquemada, advancing boldly into the royal presence, raised high before them a crucifix, and bade them beware how they sold for a higher price Him whom Judas betrayed for thirty pieces of silver—to think how they would render an account

of their bargain before God. He had prevailed, and the edict continued in full force.

On a towering rock, in the centre of the mourning populace, the aged Asher stood. He stretched forth his hands in an attitude of supplication, and tears and groans were hushed to a voiceless pause. There was a deep-red spot on the old man's either cheek, but his voice was still firm, his attitude commanding.

"My children," he said, "we have heard our doom, and even as our brethren we must go forth. Let us not in our misery blaspheme the God who so long hath blessed us with prosperity and peace, and pour down idle curses on our foes. My children, cruel as they seem, they are but His tools; and therefore, as to His decree, let us bow without a murmur. Have we forgotten that on earth the exiles of Jerusalem have no resting—that for the sins of our fathers the God of Justice is not yet appeased? Oh, if we have, this fearful sentence may be promulgated to recal us to Himself, ere prosperity be to us, as to our misguided ancestors, the curse, hurling us into eternal misery. We bow not to man; it is the God of Israel we obey! We must hence; for who amongst us will deny Him? Tarry not, then, my children; we are but few days' journey from the sea, and in this are blest above our fellows. Waste not, then, the precious time allowed us in fruitless sorrow. There are some among ye who speak of weakness and timidity, in thus yielding to our foes without one blow in defence of our rights. Rights! unhappy men, ye have no rights! Sons of Judah, have ye yet to learn we are wanderers on the face of the earth, without a country, a king, a judge in Israel? My children, we have but one treasure, which, if called upon, we can die to defend—the glorious faith our God himself hath given. To Him, then, let us unite in solemn prayer, beseeching His guidance in our weary pilgrimage—His forgiveness on our cruel foes; and fearless and faithful we will go forth where His will may lead."

The old man knelt, and all followed his example; and silence, deep as if that wild scene were desolate, succeeded those emphatic words. A fervent blessing was then pronounced by the patriarch, and all departed to their homes.

And now day after day beheld the departure of one or two families from the village. We may dwell no longer on their feelings, nor on those of their brethren in other parts of Spain. We envy not those who feel no sympathy in that devotedness to a persecuted faith, which could bid men go forth from their homes, their temples, the graves of their fathers, the schools where for centuries they had presided, honoured even by their foes, and welcome exile, privation, misery of every kind, woes far worse than death, rather than depart from it. If they think we have exaggerated, let the sceptic look to the histories of every nation in the middle ages, and they will acknowledge this simple narrative is but a faint outline of the sufferings endured by the persecuted Hebrews, and inflicted by those who boast their religion to be peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

Reduced from affluence to poverty, from every comfort to the dim vista of every privation, without the faintest consciousness where to seek a home, or how to cross the ocean, did Imri Benalmar regret that he had now a wife and a young, helpless boy for whom to provide? Nay; that Josephine was his, ere this dread edict was proclaimed, was even at this moment a source of unalloyed rejoicing. He knew her noble spirit, and that, had not the solemn service been actually performed, she would have refused his protection, his love, and, rather than burden him with such increase of care, have lingered in that vale to die. That she was inviolably his own, endowed him, however, with an energy to bear, which, had he been alone, would have failed him. He thought but of her sufferings; for, though from her lips they had never found a voice, he knew what she endured. He told her there were some of their unhappy countrymen, who, rather than lose the honourable situations they enjoyed, the riches they possessed, had made a *public* profession of Christianity, and received baptism at the very moment they made a solemn vow, in secret, to act up to the tenets of their fathers' faith.

"Alas! are there indeed such amongst us, thus doubly perjured?" was the sole observation of Josephine, looking up sorrowfully in his face.

"They do not think it perjury, my beloved: they say the God of Israel will pardon the public falsehood, in consideration of their secret allegiance to Himself."

"But thou, Imri, canst thou approve this course of acting? Couldst thou rest in such fatal security?"

"Were I alone, my Josephine, with none to love or care for, death itself were preferable; but oh, when I look on thee, and remember thy deep love for this fair soil—when I think on Aréli, on all that he must suffer—the misery we must all endure—I could wish my mind would reconcile itself to act as others do; that to serve my God in secret, and those of wood and stone in public, were no perjury."

"Oh, do not say so, Imri; think not of me, my beloved: I love not my home better than my God—I would not accept peace and prosperity at such a price! Had I been alone, death, even by the sword of slaughter, would have been welcome, would have found me here, for I could not have gone forth. But now I am thine, Imri, thine, and whither thou goest I will go; and thou shalt make me another home than this, my husband, where we may worship our God in peace and joy, and there shall be blessing for us yet."

She had spoken with a smile so inexpressibly affecting in its plaintive sweetness, that her husband could only press her to his heart in silence, and inwardly pray it might be as she said. Of Aréli she had not spoken, and he guessed too truly wherefore. From the hour of their banishment, a change had come over the spirit of the boy; his smiles still greeted those he loved, but he was longer away than was his wont, and Imri, following him at a distance, could see him ever lingering amid his favourite haunts; and when far removed, as he believed, from the sight of man, he would fling himself on the grass, and weep, till sometimes, from very exhaustion, sleep would steal over him, and then, starting up, he would make hasty sketches of some much-loved scenes, to prove to his sister how well he had been employed.

These painful proofs of the poor boy's sorrow Imri could conceal, but not the decay of bodily strength; or deny, when Josephine appealed to him, that his frame became yet more shadowy in its beautiful proportions,—that the rose which had spread itself on either cheek, the unwonted lustre of the eye, the increased transparency of his complexion, told of the loveliness of another world; yet for him how might they grieve?

It happened that one of the Spanish soldiers, a father

himself, and less violently prejudiced than his fellows, had taken a fancy to the beautiful and afflicted boy always wandering about alone ; and he thought it would be doing a kind action to prevent his accompanying the fugitives, by adopting him as his own ; believing it would be easy to rear him to the Catholic church, as one so young, and moreover, deaf and dumb, could have imbibed little of the Jewish misbelief. Kindly and tenderly he sought and won the child's affection, and found means to converse with him intelligibly.

Incapable of thinking evil, Aréli doubted not his companion's kindness, and though aware he was a Spaniard and a Catholic, artlessly betrayed the deep suffering his banishment engendered. Fadrique worked on this ; he told him he should not leave them, that he would bring his family and live there, and Aréli should be loved by all. He worked on the boy's fancy till he felt he had gained his point, then erecting a small crucifix, bade him kneel and worship.

The film passed from the eyes of the child, indignation flashed from every feature, and springing up, he tore the cross to the earth, and trampled it into the dust. Ten or twelve soldiers who had been carelessly watching Fadrique's proceedings from a distance, enraged beyond measure at this insult from a puny boy, darted towards him, flung him violently to the earth, and pointed their weapons at his throat. At that instant Josephine stood before them ; for she too had watched, with the anxious eye of affection, the designs of Fadrique.

"Are ye men !" she exclaimed, and the rude soldiers shrunk abashed from her glance, "that thus ye would take the blood of an innocent helpless child—one whose very affliction should appeal to mercy, denied as it may be to others ? On yourselves ye called this insult to your faith. How else could he tell ye he refused your offers ? You bade him acknowledge that which his soul abhors ; and was it strange his hand should prove that which he hath no voice to speak ? And for this would ye take his life ? Oh, shame, shame on your coward hearts !"

Sullenly the men withdrew, at once awed by her mien, and remembering that in assaulting any Hebrew before the time specified in the edict was over, they were liable to military severity. Fadrique lingered.

"This was not my seeking," he said respectfully; "I sought but the happiness of that poor child: I would save him from the doom of suffering chosen by the elders of his race. Leave him with me, and I pledge my sacred word his life shall be a happy one."

"I thank thee for thy offer, soldier," replied Josephine, mildly, "but my brother has chosen his own fate; I have used neither entreaties nor commands."

The boy, who had betrayed no fear even when the deadly weapons were at his throat, now took the hand of Fadrique, and by a few expressive signs craved pardon for the insult he had been led to commit, and firmly and expressively refused his every offer.

"Thou hast yet to learn the deep love borne to our faith by her persecuted children, my good friend," said Josephine, perceiving the man's surprise was mingled with some softer feeling; "that even the youngest Jewish child will prefer slavery, exile, or death, to forswearing his father's God. May the God of Israel bless thee for the kindness thou hast shown this poor afflicted boy, but seek him not again."

She drew him closer to her, and they disappeared together. A tear rose to the Spaniard's eye, but he hastily brushed it away, and then telling his rosary, as if it were sin thus to care for an unbeliever, rejoined his comrades.

The family of Imri Benalmar was the last to quit the vale. Each was mounted on a mule, and there were two led or sumpter mules, on which was strapped as much clothing as they could conveniently stow away, and provisions which they hoped would last them till they reached the vessel, knowing well they could procure no more. Some few valuables Imri contrived to secrete, but his fortune, principally consisting in land and its produce, was of necessity irretrievably ruined.

Josef Asher accompanied them; he had been active in consoling, encouraging, and assisting his weaker brethren. Not a family departed without receiving some token of his sympathy and love; and young and old crowded round him, ere they went, imploring his blessings and his prayers.

It was, however, observed that of his own departure, his own plans, Asher never spoke. That he would accompany

his children, all believed, and so did Josephine herself; but all were mistaken.

On the evening of their first day's journey, as they halted for rest and refreshment, some unusual emotion was observable in the mien and features of the old man. He asked them to join him in prayer, and as he concluded, he spread his hands upon their heads, and blessed each by name, emphatically, unfalteringly, as in his days of youth.

"And now," he said, as they arose, "farewell, my beloved children. The God of Israel go with ye, and lead ye, even as our ancestors of old, with the daily cloud and nightly pillar. I go no further with ye."

"No further! what means our father?" exclaimed Imri and Josephine together.

"That I am too old to go forth to another land, my children. The God of Judah demands not this from his old and weary servant. Fourscore and fifteen years I have served Him in the dwelling-place of mine own people, and there shall His Angel find me. My sand is well-nigh run out, my strength must fail ere I reach the shore. Wherefore, then, should I go forth, and by my infirmities bring down danger and suffering on my children? Oppose me not, beloved ones; refuse not your aged father the blessing of dying beside his own hearth."

"Alone, untended, and perchance by the sword of slaughter? Oh, my father, ask us not this!" exclaimed Josephine, with passionate agony throwing herself at his feet and clinging to his knees.

"My child, the Spirit of my God will tend me: I shall not be alone, for His ministering angels will hover round me ere He takes me to Himself; and if it be by the sword of slaughter, 'twill be perchance an easier passage for this sorrowing soul than the lingering death of age."

"Then let me return and die with you!"

"Not so, my child! thy life hath barely passed its spring; 'twould be sin thus to sport with death. The God who calls me to death, bids thee go forth to serve Him—to proclaim His great name in other lands. Thy husband, thy poor Aréli, both call on thee to live for them; thou wouldst not turn from the path of duty, my beloved child, dark and dreary as it may seem. See, thine Imri weeps; and thou, who shouldst cheer, hast caused these unmanly tears."

She turned towards her husband, and with a painful sob, sunk into his extended arms. Asher gave one long lingering look of love, folded the weeping Aréli to his bosom, and ere Imri could sufficiently recover his emotion to speak, the old man was gone.

The death he sought was speedily obtained. The Spanish officers and several of the men had quitted Eshcol, leaving only the lowest rank of soldiery to keep watch lest any of the fugitives should return, and, taking advantage of the secluded situation of the vale, set the edict at defiance. Effectually to prevent this, the men were commanded to turn the little temple to a place of worship for true believers. Workmen, with images, shrines, and pictures, were sent to assist them, and a pension promised to every Catholic family who would reside there, thus to exterminate utterly all trace of heresy and its abominations.

The men thus employed, ignorant and bigoted, exulted in the task assigned them, and only lamented that no human blood had been shed to render their holocausts to their patron saints more efficacious still. The return of Asher excited some surprise, but believing he would depart ere the allotted period had expired, they took little heed of his movements. The work continued, crosses were affixed to every side, images decked the interior, and all promised fair completion, when one night a wild cry of fire resounded, and hurrying to the spot, they beheld their work in flames. It was an awful picture. The night was pitchy dark, but far and near the thick woods and blackened heavens suddenly blazed up with lurid hue. There were dusky forms hurrying to and fro; oaths and execrations mingled with the stormy gusts which fanned the flames into greater fury; and, amidst them all, calmly looking on the work his hand had wrought, there stood an aged man, whose figure, in that glow of light, appeared gigantically proportioned, his silvery hair streamed back from his broad unwrinkled brow, and stern, unalterable resolution was impressed upon his features. He was seen, recognised, and with a yelling shout the murderers darted on their prey.

"Come on!" he cried, waving his arms triumphantly above his head. "Come on, and wreak your vengeance on these aged limbs; 'tis I have done this! Better flames should hurl it to the dust, than the temple of God be pro-

faned by the abominations He abhors. Come on, I glory in the deed!"

He spoke, and fell pierced with a hundred wounds. A smile of peculiar beauty lighted up his features. "Blessed be the God of Israel, the sole One, the Holy One!" he cried, and his spirit fled rejoicing to the God he served.

Slowly and painfully did Imri's little family pursue their way. They chose the most secluded paths, but even there traces of misery and death awaited them, and they shrank from suffering they could not alleviate. There might be seen a group dragging along their failing limbs, their provisions exhausted, and the pangs of hunger swallowing up all other thoughts. There lay the blackening bodies of those who had sunk and died, scarcely missed, and often envied by the survivors. Often did the sound of their footsteps scare away large flocks of carrion birds, who, screaming and flapping their heavy wings, left to the travellers the loathsome sight of their half-devoured prey. And they saw, too, the fearful fascinated gaze of those in whom life was not utterly extinct, as they watched the progress of these horrible birds, dreading lest they should dart upon them ere death had rendered them insensible. Josephine looked on these things, and then on her young brother, whose strength each day too evidently declined.

Aréli's too sensitive spirit shrank in shuddering anguish from every fresh scene of human suffering. He, whose young life had been so full of peace and bliss, knowing but love and good-will passing from man to man, how might he sustain the change? He had no voice to speak those feelings, no time to give them vent in the sweet language of poesy, which, in happier hours, had been the tablet of his soul. As the invisible worm at the root of a blooming flower, secretly destroying its sap, its nourishment, and the flower falls ere one of its leaves hath lost its beauty, so it was with the orphan boy. Each day was Imri compelled to shorten more and more their journey, for often would Aréli drop fainting from his mule, though the cheek retained its exquisite bloom, his eye its lustre. Imri became fearfully anxious; from the comparative vicinity of the sea-shore, he had believed their provisions would be more than sufficient to last them on their way, but from these unlooked-for delays, the horrors of famine, thirst, that most horrible death,

THE EDICT.

stood darkly before him. Josephine, his own, his loved, would she encounter horrors such as they had witnessed? Imri shuddered.

One evening, Aréli lay calmly on the soft bed of moss and heath his sister's love had framed; his hand clasped hers; his eyes seemed to speak the unutterable love and gratitude he felt. They were in the wildest part of a thick forest in the Sierra Nevada; and Imri, unable to look on the sufferings of his beloved ones, had wandered forth alone. Distant sounds of the chase fell at intervals on the ears of Josephine; but they were far away, and her soul was too enwrapped to heed them. Suddenly, however, her attention was effectually roused by the large crashing of the bushes near them, accompanied by low yet angry growls. Aréli marked the sudden change in her features, his eye too had caught an object by her still unseen. He sprang up with that strength which energy of feeling so often gives when bodily force has gone, and grasped tightly the hunting spear he held; scarcely had he done so, when a huge boar sprung through the thicket, his flanks streaming with blood, his tusks upraised, his mouth gaping, covered with foam, and uttering growls, denoting pain and fury yet more clearly than his appearance. He stood for a second motionless, then, as if startled by the agonized scream of terror bursting from Josephine, he sprung upon the daring boy. Undauntedly Aréli met his approach. His spear, aimed by an eye that never failed, pierced him for a second to the earth, but, alas! the strength of the boy was not equal to his skill. The boar, yet more enraged, tore the weapon from the ground, which it had not pierced above an inch. Once more he fell, struck down by a huge stick, which Aréli, with the speed of lightning, had snatched up. Again he rose, and fastened on the child. A blow from behind forced him to relax his stifling hold; furious, he turned on the slight girl who had dared attack him, and Josephine herself would have shared her brother's fate, when the spear of Imri whizzed through the air, true to its mark, and the huge animal, with a cry of pain and fury, rolled lifeless on the ground.

The voice of his beloved had startled Imri from his mournful trance; the roar which followed explained its source, and winged by terror, he arrived in time. Josephine was saved indeed, but no word of thankfulness broke

from that heart, which, in grateful devotion, had never been dumb before. She knelt beside the seemingly lifeless body of her Aréli, scarcely conscious of the presence of her husband; his hands, his neck, his brow, were deluged in blood; she bathed him plentifully with cold water. Could she remember at such a moment that no springs were near, and that, if overwhelmed with thirst, the pure element would be denied them? Oh, no, no; she saw only the helpless sufferer, to whom her spirit clung with a love that, in their affliction, had with each hour grown stronger.

But death was still a brief while deferred, though so fearfully had Aréli been injured, they could not move him thence. His wounds were numerous and painful, and strength to support himself, even in a sitting position, never again returned. Yet never was that sweet face sad; his smiles, his signs were ever to implore his sister not to weep for him—to take comfort and be happy in another land; that the blissfulness of heaven was already on his soul—that if it might be, he would pray for her before his God, and hover like a guardian spirit over her weary wanderings, till he led her to a joyous home. For him, indeed, Josephine might not grieve, but for Imri she felt the deepest anxiety. The horrors to which this unlooked-for delay exposed him had startled her into consciousness, and on her knees she besought him to seek his own safety; she would not weakly shrink, but when all was over she would follow him, and, in all probability, they would meet again in another land; not to risk his precious life and strength by lingering with her beside the dying boy. She pleaded with all a woman's unselfish love, but, need we say, in vain?—that Imri's sole answer was to lift his right hand to heaven and swear, by all they both held most sacred, NEVER to leave her—they would meet their fate together? Days passed; their small portion of food and water, economised as it was, dwindled more and more away, and so did the strength of Aréli. It was a night of unclouded beauty; millions and millions of stars spangled the deep blue heavens; the moon in her full glory walked forth to silver many a dark tree, and dart her most refulgent rays on that little group of human suffering. Yet all was not suffering; the purest happiness beamed on the features of the dying, and an unconscious calm per-

vaded the weary spirit of these lonely watchers. Nature was so still, they spoke almost in whispers, as fearing to disturb her.

A sudden change spread on the features of the dying boy. Imri started: "Josephine, the chains are rent—he HEARS us!" he cried; and Josephine, raising him in her arms, almost involuntarily spoke in uttered words, "Aréli, my own, my beautiful!"

He HEARD; the film was removed one brief moment from his ear; her voice, sweet as thrilling music, fell upon his soul: his lips moved, and one articulate word then came, unearthly in its sweetness, "JOSEPHINE!" He raised his clasped hands to heaven, and sunk back upon her bosom: his soul had hovered on the earth one moment FREE, then fled for ever.

Imri and Josephine joined in prayer beside the loved. They neither mourned nor wept, and calmly Josephine wrapped the fadeless flower in the last garment of mortality, while Imri formed his resting-place. They laid him in that humble grave, strewed flowers and moss upon it, prayed that their God would in mercy guard his body from the ravening beasts, then turned from that hallowed spot, and silently pursued their journey.

It wanted but two days to the completion of the allotted period, when, faint, weak, and well-nigh exhausted, Imri and his Josephine stood on the sea-shore, and there horrible indeed was the sight that presented itself. Hundreds of the wretched fugitives lay famishing on the scorching sands. Many who had dragged on their failing limbs through all the horrors of famine, of thirst, of miseries in a thousand shapes, which the very pen shrinks from delineating, arrived there but to die; for there were but few vessels to bear them to other lands, and these often sailed with half their number, either because the bribes they demanded were refused (for the wretched victims had nought to give), or that their captains swore so many heretics would sink their ships, and they would take no more. Then it was that, with a crucifix in one hand, and bread and wine in the other, the Catholic priests advanced to the half senseless sufferers, and offered the one, if they acknowledged the other. Was it marvel that at such a moment there were some who yielded? Oh, there is a glory and a triumph in the martyr's death!

Men look with admiring awe on those who smile when at the stake; but the faith that inspired courage and firmness and constancy 'mid suffering which we have but faintly outlined—'mid lingering torments 'neath which the *heart*, yet more than the frame, was crushed—that FAITH is regarded with scorn as a blinded, wilful misbelief. Could man endow his own spirit with this devotedness? Pride might lead him to the stake, but not to bear what Israel had borne, aye, and will bear till the wrath of his God is turned aside. No; the same God who strengthened Abraham to offer up his son, enables His wretched people to give up all for Him. Would He do this, had they denied and mocked Him?

Imri saw the cold shuddering creeping over the blighted form of his beloved, and he led her to a sheltering rock, whose projecting cliffs partly concealed the wretched objects on the beach. There was one vessel on the broad ocean, and in her he determined at once to secure a passage, if to do so cost the forfeit of the few valuables he had been enabled to secrete. He lingered awhile by the side of his Josephine, for he saw, with anguish, the noble spirit, which had so long sustained and consoled her, now for the first time appear to droop. The sudden appearance of a Spanish officer, and his apparent advance towards them, arrested him as he was about to depart. He was attired richly, his whole bearing seeming to denote a person of some rank and consequence. Josephine's gaze became almost unconsciously riveted upon him. He came nearer, nearer still; they could trace his features, on which sorrow or care had fixed its stamp. A moment he removed the plumed cap from his head, and passed his hand across his brow. An exclamation of recognition escaped the lips of Imri, and in another moment Josephine had bounded forward and was kneeling at his feet. "My father! my father!" she sobbed forth. "O God, I thank Thee for this unlooked-for mercy. I have seen him once again."

"Thou—art thou my child, my Josephine, whom I left in such bright, blooming beauty—whom I have sought in such trembling anguish from the moment I might reach these shores? Child of my Rachel, art thou, canst thou be? Oh, yes, yes, yes! 'Twas thus she looked when I departed. Could I hope to see thee as I left thee, when blight and

misery fell upon thy native vale, as on all the dwellings of thy wretched race? And I—O God!—my child, my child, curse me, hate me—I hurled down destruction on thy house.”

But even as he spoke in those wild accents of ungovernable passion, but too familiar to the ears that heard, he had raised and strained her convulsively to his breast, covering her cheeks and lips with kisses, till his burning tears of agonized remorse mingled with those of softer feeling on the cheeks of Josephine. But not long might she indulge in the blessed luxury of tears; shuddering, she repeated his last words, gazing up in his face with eyes of horrified inquiry.

“Yes, I, even I, my child. I was not sufficiently wretched—the bitter cup of remorse was not yet full. The edict was proclaimed. On all sides there was but wretchedness and unutterable misery, beyond all this woe-built world hath known. Then came a wild yearning to look again upon my native vale—to know if in truth its concealed and sheltered caves had escaped uninjured by the wide-spreading, devastating scourge that edict brought—to look on thee, my child, if I might without endangering that precious life—to know the fate of my unborn babe. I dared not dream my wife yet lived. Josephine, I looked upon her tomb, and by its side beheld my own, my beautiful, my unknown boy. O God! O God! my crime was visited upon his innocent head; and where—oh, where is he? Why may I not look upon his sweet face again?”

He ceased, choked by overwhelming emotion, and some minutes passed ere either of his agitated listeners could summon sufficient composure to reply. But the anguish of Castello seemed incapable of increase. For several minutes, indeed, he was silent; the convulsive workings of his features denoting how deeply that simple narrative had sunk.

When he spoke, it was briefly and hurriedly to relate how he had lingered in the vicinity of Esheol, till at length discovered by a party of Spaniards sent to seek him, with a message from the sovereigns. His wanderings had been tracked, and that which he had most desired to avert he had been the means of accomplishing—the discovery of the vale. And then convulsively clasping the hands of Josephine and Imri in his own, he besought them to remove in part the load

of misery from his heart—to say they would not leave him more.

“Goest thou then forth, my father? Hast thou indeed tarried for us, that we may seek a home together?” The father’s eyes shrunk beneath those mild inquiring eyes.

“My child, I go not forth,” he said at length, and his voice trembled. Josephine gently withdrew herself from his arms, and laid her hand on her husband’s.

“My child! my noble child,” he said, in smothered accents, “I am not perjured. I am still a son of Israel, though to the world a Catholic. Oh, do not turn from me. Come with me to my home, and thou shall see how the exiled and the persecuted can defy the power of their destroyers. Life, with every luxury, shall be thy portion; thine Imri shall have every dream of ambition and joy fulfilled. The children of Sigismund Castello will be courted, cherished, and loved. ’Tis but to kneel in public before the cross of the Nazarene—in private, we are sons of Israel still.”

“Father, urge me not; it cannot be,” was her calm and firm reply.

“Hast thought on all that must befall thee in other, perchance equally hostile, lands? My child, thou knowest not all thou mayest have to endure.”

“It is welcome,” she answered; “the more rugged the path to heaven, the more blessed will seem my final rest.”

“And thou wilt leave me to all the agonies of remorse; to struggle on with the blackening thought, that not only have I murdered those I love best on earth—my wife, my boy—but sent ye forth to poverty, privation, and misery. Josephine, Josephine, have mercy!” and the father threw himself before his child, grovelling in the sand, and clasping his hands in the wild energy of supplication.

“Father, father, drive me not mad! I cannot, cannot bear this. Imri, my husband, if thou wouldst save my heart from treachery, raise him—in mercy raise him. I cannot answer with him there!—God, God of Israel! leave me not now. My brain is reeling—save me from myself.”

She staggered back, and terrified at those accents of almost madness, her father sprang from the ground, he caught her again in his arms, while Imri, kneeling beside her, chafed

her cold hands in his, imploring her to speak, to look on him again.

"My child, my child, wake, wake! I will not grieve thee thus again. But oh, thy husband's look would pray thee not to go forth! The God of love, of pity, demands not this self-sacrifice. Imri, one word from thee would be sufficient. Look on her. Think to what thou bearest her, when peace, comfort, and luxuries await ye, with but one word. Speak, speak! Thou canst not, wilt not take her hence."

Though well-nigh senseless, well-nigh so exhausted alike in body and mind that further exertion seemed impossible, Josephine roused herself from that trance of faintness to gaze wildly and fearfully on the face of her husband. It was terribly agitated. She threw herself on his neck, and gasped forth, "Canst thou bid me do this thing, my husband?" He struggled to answer, but there came no word. Strength, the mighty strength of virtue, returned to that sinking frame. She stood erect, and spoke without one quivering accent or one failing word.

"Imri, my husband! by the love thou bearest me, by all we both hold sacred, by that great and ineffable name we are forbidden to pronounce, I charge thee answer me truly. Didst thou stand alone—were Josephine no more—how wouldst thou decide? The eye of God is upon thee—deceive me not!"

He turned from that searching glance, his strong frame shook with emotion; his voice was scarcely audible, yet these words came—

"I NEVER could deny my God! Exile and death were welcome—but for thee!"

"Enough, my husband!" she exclaimed, and throwing her arms around him, she turned again to her father, a glow of holy triumph tinging her pallid cheek. "And wouldst thou tempt him to perjury for my sake? On, no, no! father, beloved, revered, from the first hour I could lisp thy name, oh, pardon me this first disobedience to thy will! Did I linger, how might I save thee from remorse; when each day, each hour, thou wouldst see me fade beneath the overwhelming weight of perjury and falsity? No, no! Bless me, oh, bless me, ere I go, and the prayers of thy child shall rise each hour for thee!"

Again she knelt before him, and Castello, inexpressibly affected, felt he dared urge no more. How might he agonize that heart ; when in neither word, nor hint, nor sign did she utter reproach on him ? Again and again he reiterated blessings on her sainted head ; and when he could release her from his embrace, it was to secure their speedy passage in the vessel, which his command had detained in her moorings ; though the hope that he should once more look upon his child had well-nigh faded ere she came.

The exiles stood upon the deck. A hundred other of the miserable fugitives had found a refuge in this same vessel, whose captain, somewhat more humane than many of his fellows, and richly bribed by Castello, set food before the famishing wanderers directly they had weighed anchor. But even the cravings of nature were lost in the one feeling, that they gazed for the last time on the land they loved. There were dark thunder-clouds sweeping over the sky, mingled with others of brilliant colouring, that proclaimed the hour of sunset. The ocean-horizon seemed buried in murky gloom ; but the shores of Spain stood forth bathed in a glow of warm red light, as if to bid the unhappy wanderers farewell in unrivalled brilliance. For awhile there was silence on the vessel, so deep, so unbroken, that the flapping of the sails against the masts was alone distinguishable. It was then a wild and wailing strain burst simultaneously from the fugitives ; the young and the old, the strong man and exhausted female, joined almost unconsciously. In the language of Jerusalem they chanted forth their wild farewell, which may thus be rendered in English verse.

Farewell ! farewell ! we wander forth,
 Doom'd by th' Eternal's awful wrath ;
 With nought to bless our lonely path,
 Across the stormy wave.
 Cast forth as wanderers on the earth ;
 Torn from the land that hailed our birth,
 From childhood's cot, from manhood's hearth,
 From temple and from grave.

Farewell ! farewell ! thou beauteous sod,
 Which Israel has for ages trod ;
 We leave thee to the oppressor's rod,
 Weeping the exiles' doom.

We go ! no more thy turf we press ;
 No more thy fruits and vineyards bless ;
 No land to love—no home possess,
 Save earth's cold breast—the tomb.

Where we have roamed the strangers roam ;
 The stranger claims each cherished home ;
 And we must ride on ocean's foam,
 Accursed and alone.

False gods pollute our holy fane,
 False hearts its sacred precincts stain ;
 False tongues our fathers' God profane ;
 But we are still HIS OWN.

Farewell ! farewell ! o'er land and sea,
 Where'er we roam, our soul shall be,
 Land we have loved so long, with thee,
 Though sad and lone we dwell.
 Thou land, where happy childhood played ;
 Where youth in love's sweet fancies strayed ;
 Where long our fathers' bones have laid ;
 Our own bright land—farewell !

Wilder and louder thrilled the strain until the last verse, when mournfully the voices for a few seconds swelled, and then gradually died away to silence, broken only by sobs and tears. Imri and Josephine alone sat apart ; they had not joined the melody, but their souls in silence echoed back its mournful wailing. Josephine half sat, half reclined on a pile of cushions, where she might command the last view of Spain. Imri leaned against a mast, close beside her ; but few words passed between them, for each felt the effort to speak was made only for the other, and they ceased to war thus with nature.

A sudden gloom darkened the heavens. The glow passed from the beautiful shores. A heavy fall of dense clouds hung over them, and concealed them from the eyes which in that direction lingered still. The last gleam of light disclosed to Imri his Josephine in the attitude of calm and happy slumber. Her head reclined upon her arm, and the long dark curls had fallen over her face and neck. He rejoiced ; for he thought nature had at length found the repose she so much needed. His own eyelids felt heavy, and his limbs much exhausted ; but he remained watching, untired, the sleep of his beloved. Heavy gusts now at intervals swept along the ocean. The blackened waves rolled higher and

higher at the call, now crested by the snowy foam. The vessel rocked and heaved, and speedily driven from her course, mocked every effort to guide her southward, one moment riding proudly on the topmost wave, the next sinking in a deep valley, as about to be whelmed by huge mountains of roaring water. Distant thunder, mingled with the moaning gust, coming nearer and nearer, till it burst above their heads, louder and longer than the discharge of a hundred cannons. The forked lightning streamed through the ebon sky, illumining all around for above a minute by that blue and vivid glare, and then vanishing in darkness yet more terrible.

The elements were at war around them, cries of human terror joined with the roar of the ocean, the rolling thunder, the groaning blasts; but there was no movement in the form of Josephine. Could she still sleep? Could exhaustion render her insensible to sounds like these? Imri knelt beside her and called her by name:—"Josephine, my beloved! Oh, waken!"

There was no answer. At that moment a bright flash darted through the gloom, and sea and sky appeared on fire. A strange and crashing sound succeeded, followed by a cry of agony, which, bursting from a hundred throats, echoed far and near, drowning even the noise of the raging storm, for it was the deep tone of human terror and despair. The topmast fell, shivered by the lightning, in the very centre of the deck; flames burst forth where it fell, and on went the devoted vessel, a blazing pile on the booming waters.

Imri Benalmar moved not from his knee—he heard not the cries of suffering echoing round—he knew not the cause of that livid glare, which had so suddenly illumined every object—he knew nothing, felt nothing, save that he gazed on the face of the DEAD.

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A fearful sound, seeming distinct from the warring elements, called forth many of the hardy inhabitants of Malaga from their homes. They hurried to the beach, and appalled and startled, beheld one part of the horizon completely bathed in living fire; sea and sky united by a sheet of flame. Presently it appeared to divide, and borne onwards

by the winds and waves, a ball of fire floated on the water. It came nearer—and horror and sympathy usurped the place of superstition, as a burning vessel rose and fell with every heaving wave. The storm was abated, though the sea yet raged, and many a hardy fisherman pushed out his boat in the pious hope of saving some of the unfortunate crew. Their efforts were in vain; ere half the distance was accomplished, there came a hissing sound; the flames for one brief moment blazed with appalling brilliance—then sunk, and there was a void on the wide waste of waters.

The Group of Sculpture.

"I have no hope in loving thee,
I only ask to love ;
I brood upon my silent heart,
As on its nest the dove ;

But little have I been beloved--
Sad, silent, and alone ;
And yet I feel, in loving thee,
The wide world is my own.

Thine is the name I breathe to heaven--
Thy face is on my sleep ;
I only ask that love like this
May pray for thee and weep."

L. E. L.

"We know not love till those we love depart."
L. E. L.

"WHY will you sing that old-fashioned song, dear Annie, when you have so many much better suited to your voice?" expostulated Reginald de Vere, as he led the young songstress from her harp to a more retired seat. "I do not like your throwing away so much power and sweetness on a song which, of all others, I hate the most."

"Do not say so, Reginald. You are not usually fastidious, or I would say, had that sweet melody Italian words instead of English, you would acknowledge its beauty, and feel it too."

"Perhaps so, as it is not the melody, but the words I quarrel with--'Home, sweet home.' What charm has home ever had for me? Change the words, dear Annie, English or Italian, I care not, only remove all association of home, and I will learn to love it more."

"Nay, Reginald ; to banish such association would be to banish its greatest charm. One day you, too, may feel its truth."

"Never, never!" he answered, passionately ; "there is a blighting curse around me, which it were worse than folly to resist. I must toil on, lonely, and unblessed by one sweet

tie of home—seeking for no love, and receiving none—isolated in a world! There are many others whose destiny is the same. Bound by the iron chain of fate, he is but a madman who would seek to break it.”

“Destiny—fate! I thought you had long ere this banished their baneful influence,” said Annie, in a tone of mild reproach.

“From your ear, my gentle friend, because I saw you loved not their expression; but not from my own heart. Yet you, too, believe all things to be pre-ordained; that not a sparrow falls to the ground unmarked. Then, why so start at me—is not our creed the same?”

“It cannot be, Reginald. I am not wise enough to know wherein the difference lies, I can only judge from effects; and when they are so opposed, I fancy the cause must be so also. I do believe that all things are ordained, but yet I am no fatalist.”

“Will you try and explain the distinction, for your words seem somewhat contradictory.”

“I fear they do,” she replied, simply; “and I am overbold to speak on this weighty subject at all. Your creed appears to me to consist in this: that before your birth, your path was laid down—your destiny fixed; that you are, in consequence, bound in chains, enclosed in walls, from which no effort of your own will can enable you to escape; that you must stand the bursting of the thunder-cloud—for you have no force or energy to seek shelter, no free will to choose—swayed by an irresistible impulse, and, consequently, not a responsible being. Such seems to me the creed of a fatalist.”

“And you are right. Now, then, for yours; less difficult, I should imagine, to explain, than that in which you have no interest.”

“I differ from you, Reginald. It is comparatively easy to define the subject of a passing thought or an hour’s study; but that which we feel, feel to our inmost soul, is not so easily clothed in words. I believe that an eye of love is ever watching over me—a guiding arm is ever round me; that nothing can happen to me, unless willed for my good by my Father in heaven; but I do *not* believe my lot in life marked out before I saw the light. Such a creed at once changes the law of love into a dark and iron-bound necessity, from

which my whole soul revolts. Where would be the comfort of prayer in such a case—the blessedness of pouring forth one's whole soul in the hour of affliction? for how could prayer avail us were our lot marked out?"

"And do you think prayer ever does? Do you believe that you are answered?"

"I do, indeed, dear Reginald; not always as our own will would dictate, but as a loving Father knows it best. I was not answered as my heart implored when my only parent was taken from me; but I was answered in the strength that was granted me to feel that he was happy, and God's will kinder and better than my own. I am not here because it is my destiny, but because it is better for me than the calm and quiet life I have hitherto enjoyed."

"Your creed is indeed that of a gentle, loving woman, Annie," said her companion, more playfully; but he smiled not, for he knew how chillingly a smile will fall on young enthusiasm. "But it is too visionary, too ethereal, for cold-hearted man; perhaps not for some, but for me there are no such dreams. My heart was once full of hope and faith, and all things bright, and fond, and beautiful; but now crushed, blighted, trampled on, how may it dream again? but this is folly," and with a strong effort he subdued emotion, and spoke more calmly. "Let us talk of something else. You alluded but now to your change of life, and I thought, sadly. Are you not happy?"

"I shall be in time, Reginald," answered Annie, on whose fair sweet face a shade had flitted at her companion's bitter words. "All are kind to me. My mother was Lord Ennerdale's favourite niece, and he loves me for her sake, and so pets me that I cannot but love him most dearly."

"And Lady Emily?"

"I shall learn to love as soon as she will let me. I fancy she thinks me but a simple romantic girl and I have not courage to undeceive her—that I can love and reverence other things besides poetry; but it is the change of circumstances that sometimes makes me sad. Clair Abbey is so far removed from Luscombe Cottage, that time has not yet reconciled me to the great change."

"Time is slow in effecting changes in you, Annie; yet ere we meet again, trust me, you will have learned to love Clair

Abbey, or changed it for another home as high in sounding, and yet more dear."

"Changed it ere we meet again? What can you mean, Reginald?" said Annie, startled yet more by his tone than by his words, but she was not answered; for Reginald turned away directly he had spoken, his attention called by Lord Ennerdale; and another quadrille being formed, her hand was claimed, and she was led off almost unconsciously—so strangely was she preoccupied—to join it.

There had been nothing in the quiet yet earnest conversation of Reginald de Vere and Annie Grey to cause remark amongst the light-hearted group who were that night assembled in Lord Ennerdale's hospitable halls. They had been intimate from childhood, and as Annie was almost a stranger to all present, and merely regarded as a simple country girl hardly emerged from childhood, no one was surprised that she should prefer Reginald's society; though there were some young men who, attracted by the timid yet intelligent style of her beauty, half envied De Vere the privileges of intimacy which he so evidently enjoyed. Annie's place seemed not amidst the followers of fashion; the long, rich, chesnut hair owned no law but that of nature, and flowed at will from her pale, high brow over a neck and shoulders, whose exquisite form and whiteness were displayed to advantage by the simple fashion of her plain black dress; the eye so "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue," the fair soft cheek ever varying in colour, revealed every thought and feeling that stirred within. The world's lesson of concealment and reserve she had not yet learned, for living in perfect retirement with a kind and judicious father, of whom she was the idol, her enthusiasm had been regulated, not chilled, and every high and poetic sentiment raised up to and purified in the only rest for such minds—the religion of the Bible and of Nature. Her life had passed in a small cottage on the banks of Windermere, diversified only by occasional visits to an old relation in Scotland; where, in fact, the first six months of her mourning had been passed. And there, had it not been for one cogent reason, she would have preferred remaining, as more congenial to her taste and feelings, than the form and grandeur which she imagined must surround the dwelling of an Earl.

Lord Ennerdale and his family had often sought to draw

Sir Edward Grey from his seclusion, anxious to notice his child; but fearing to disturb Annie's tranquil happiness by an introduction to a mode of life and pleasures which her very limited fortune must prohibit her enjoying, he had invariably declined these solicitations. Yet when Lord Ennerdale, notwithstanding his age and infirmities, made a rapid journey from London to Luscombe Cottage, purposely to soothe his dying hours by the assurance that his Annie was amply, even richly provided for, and therefore there could be no objection to her making Clair Abbey her future home, Sir Edward placed his weeping child in the arms of her aged uncle, and died with a prayer for both upon his lips.

But much as Annie loved and venerated her father, it was scarcely so much his last wish as the restlessness of her own heart, which, even while she preferred the simple mode of living at Kelmuir, yet reconciled her to a residence at Clair Abbey. She was restless because her quondam playmate and chosen friend, Reginald de Vere, was far away in his own most wretched home, with none to sing or smile him into peace, or cautiously and gently argue away his fits of morbid sensitiveness or overwhelming gloom. That Lord Ennerdale not only sympathised in the young man's causes of depression, but loved his better qualities, admired his talents, and regretted his failings, was sufficient to excite the warm affections of his great-niece towards him. No spell is so powerful in opening the heart as sympathy, with regard to the character of those we love.

Clair Abbey's great attraction, then, to Annie Grey was, that there she should constantly see Reginald; his concluding words, therefore, had both startled and pained her; but she vainly waited for their solution. She looked earnestly for Reginald to return to her; but he was constantly engaged in apparently earnest conversation with one or other of Lord Ennerdale's guests. She was too guileless to believe he shunned her merely because he failed in courage to tell her more.

The evening closed at length; and passing along the corridor leading from the library to the stairs, a well-known step suddenly sounded behind her, and the voice of Reginald de Vere called her by name.

"I thought you intended to retire without even wishing

me good night," she said, playfully, her spirit rallying with his appearance. "What do you mean, sir, by such treatment? Be better behaved to-morrow, and I will be merciful, and forgive."

"You must forgive me to-night, dearest Annie; for to-morrow will see me many miles on my road to Portsmouth, thence speedily to embark for Spain."

"Portsmouth—Spain!" repeated the bewildered girl; and her hand so trembled, that the lamp she held dropped from it, and was instantly extinguished.

"Yes, Annie, to Spain!" he answered, struggling for calmness. "I am of age now; poor, but not so utterly dependent as I have been. My father's house I will never enter more. You start, Annie, but do not—do not condemn me. Judge me by no reasoning but that of your own kind gentle heart. I can bear no more than that which I have borne. Boyhood must submit to a parent's tyranny; but manhood owns no such law. You know how I would have loved my father, and how he has spurned me. Still I lingered, vainly striving to elicit one softer feeling, hoping—idiot that I was—that he would yet love me. But the dream is over! He drew the reins still tighter, and so snapped them; there is a measure to endurance even in a son. Do not weep thus, Annie," he continued, conquering his own emotion to soothe hers, and passing his arm round her, as he had so often done in earlier years, when as a brother he had soothed her griefs and shared her joys. "I will not burden you with the final cause of my present resolution. I have neither means nor influence to tread the path to which my inmost soul aspires; and to toil for lingering years behind a merchant's desk or tradesman's counter my spirit will not bear. I have obtained a commission amongst the brave fellows now about to join General Mina in his gallant defence of the young queen; and with him these restless yearnings may be stilled in the activity of martial service, or the quiet of the grave. And who will mourn for me?" he continued, rapidly and bitterly; "who, in the wide world, will think of me, or shed one tear for me, save thine own sweet self? Oh, Annie, speak to me! Tell me you will think of me sometimes. I know there will be many, very many, to supply my place to you; but, oh, who will ever be to me as you have been?"

"And yet you have decided on this plan, endured more

than ever, and told me not a word. Reginald, was this kind?" she said, struggling with the tears that nearly suffocated her.

"You were in grief already, Annie; how might I ask your sympathy in mine? I know it never was refused me. I know it would not be, even in your own sorrow; but oh, Annie, I felt if I waited to look on you again, I should fail in courage to leave England. Yet why should I linger? Changed as your prospects are, loved as you will be by those so much more deserving, what could I be to you?"

"Reginald!" murmured poor Annie, wholly unconscious of the nature of her own feelings, yet unable to utter another word.

"I know you will not forget me, Annie, dearest Annie, your nature is too good, too kind, too truthful for such change; but, fated as I am, how dare I ask for, hope for more than a sister's love? Say you will sometimes think of me, love me as—as a brother, Annie, darling! and life will not be so wholly desolate."

Her reply was almost inarticulate, and passionate words rose to Reginald's lips, but they were not spoken. He led her to the door of her apartment without another word, wrung both her hands in his, bade "God bless her!" and was gone. Annie stood for a few minutes as if stunned; mechanically she loosed the wreath of white rosebuds from her hair, the fastening of her dress, which seemed to stifle her very breath, and then she sunk on her knees beside the bed, and the hot tears gushed forth; and long, long she wept, as that young guileless girl had never wept before.

Reginald de Vere was the youngest son of a private gentleman of moderate fortune, residing in a populous city in the north of Yorkshire. It is not necessary to dilate on feelings which Reginald's own words but too painfully portrayed; the "iron rule" of tyranny is best described in the effect which it produces. The Calvinistic principles of the elder De Vere found no softening of their natural austerity in the acidity and moroseness of his temper; the evil had been increased by his union with a young Spaniard—lively, frivolous, and a Roman Catholic. How this marriage had ever come about, nobody succeeded in discovering. Strange unions there are, but seldom between such antipodes in

character and feeling as were Mr. and Mrs. De Vere. Their large family grew up amidst all the evils of domestic dissension, and its subsequent misery—a father's unjustifiable tyranny, and a mother's as blamable weakness. Basil de Vere sought to instil his peculiarly stern doctrines in the minds of his children; his wife prayed, in their hearing, that they might be saved from such cold, comfortless belief; they shrunk from the one, and learned no religion from the other. To shield them from the father's tyranny, the mother taught them deceit, lavished on them weak indulgences, which were to be forfeited if ever revealed. Ever witnessing and suffering the effects of dissension, what affection, what harmony could exist between themselves? The ill effects of this training were more discernible in some of their matured characters than in others; some pursued an honest course, as soon as their departure from their father's house permitted the influence of their better qualities, but these were mostly dwelling in foreign lands; some had married with, some without his consent; and in his old age Basil de Vere found himself master of a deserted hearth, with none of his once blooming family beside him but one, and that one was Reginald. The weak indulgence of his mother had never softened for Reginald the tyranny of his father. She died in giving him birth, and he had to battle through his unhappy childhood alone. Shrinking almost in agony from his father's voice, yearning, with all the clinging confidence of childhood, for love, but finding none, he turned in loathing from the continued scenes of discord which characterised his home. He spurned with contemptuous indignation offers of indulgence and concealment, to act as he saw others do, and thus constantly drew upon himself the enmity of his more wily brothers and sisters. He shrunk, in consequence, more and more within himself, striving to keep peace with his father, but in vain; for De Vere often raged at his children without knowing wherefore, and the calm, dignified bearing of his youngest son would chafe him into greater fury than palpable offence. But there were seeds of virtue, aye, of the "nobility of genius," in the disposition of Reginald, that bloomed and flourished despite the unhealthy soil and blighting atmosphere in which he moved; perhaps the kindly notice of Sir Edward Grey assisted their development. The pale, silent, suffering boy had appealed irresistibly to his

kind heart, and for Reginald's sake he condescended to make acquaintance with his father.

As long as they remained in Yorkshire, Sir Edward permitted Reginald to share much of the instruction which he himself bestowed upon his Annie; a kindness so delicately and feelingly bestowed, that Reginald by slow degrees permitted his whole character to display itself to Sir Edward, and allowed himself to feel that, with so kind a friend and so sweet a companion, he was not utterly alone. Even when Sir Edward removed to Windermere their intercourse continued; for there was ever a room prepared and a warm welcome for Reginald, who turned to that cottage as a very Eden of peace and love.

As Reginald increased in years, felt more fully his own powers, and through Sir Edward's friendly introductions associated with other families, his morbid feelings did not, as the baronet had fondly hoped, decrease, but rather strengthened, in the supposition that his fate alone was desolate. He saw happy homes and kindly hearts; no exertion, no effort, no sacrifice could make such his, and he believed an iron chain of fate was round him, dooming him to misery. The kindness of Sir Edward, of Lord Ennerdale, and others, only deepened the vain, wild yearnings for home affections—the peace, the confidence of home. A peculiarly fine organization of mind and an acute perception of character caused him to shrink with pain from general notice. The talented and gifted he admired at a distance, feeling intuitively that such would be his chosen friends; yet, from a sense of inferiority, refusing to come forward and permit his fine talents to be known; at the same time shrinking from the common herd, convinced that amongst them he should meet with neither sympathy nor appreciation. A happy home would have been all in all for Reginald; there the incipient stirrings of genius would have been fostered into bloom, and the morbid feelings too often their accompaniment regulated into peace.

The death of Sir Edward Grey and the future destination of his daughter were, however, the final cause of his determination to leave England. He knew it not himself; and if a light did flash upon the darkness, it only deepened the gloom around him, by the conviction that his doom was ever to love alone. More and more earnestly he sought to soften

his father's temper, even to conquer his own repugnance to the path of life his parent might assign him ; but in vain. To enumerate all the petty miseries this struggle cost him would be impossible. The mind rises purified and spiritualized from great sorrows ; but there is no relief from the trial of an unhappy home, no cure for the *wounds of words*. If domestic love and peace be ours, we can go forth with a firm heart and serene mind to meet the trials of the world ; alas ! alas ! for those who have no such haven, no such stay !

Never did Reginald De Vere make a greater mistake than in the supposition that a military life would bring him the happiness for which his parched soul so thirsted. He could not associate the favourite pastime of his childhood, carving in wood, stone, or whatever material came first to hand, with the feverish yearning for exertion and excitement, which possessed his whole being. He could not feel that the one sprang from the other, or rather that the power which urged the former was secretly working in his mind, and causing an utter distaste for all mechanical employment. He was too unhappy to examine the source of his restlessness, and knew no one who could explain it for him.

Lord Ennerdale and his sons were all men of worth and talent, and firm encouragers of art and literature ; but not themselves children of genius, they failed in the subtle penetration which could discover its embryonic existence. Had Sir Edward lived he would have seen further ; but still all his friends had dissuaded Reginald from entering on a military career, but he was firm ; and in less than a week after his agitated parting with Annie, a fair wind was rapidly bearing him to the shores of Spain.

Days and weeks passed, and Annie Grey sought with persevering effort to regain her former calm and happy temperament ; and she succeeded so far as to conceal from her relatives the secret of her heart. The agony of that parting moment had transformed her, as by some incomprehensible spell, from the child to the woman ; and so sudden had been the transition, that she felt for days a stranger to herself. Reginald had always been dear to her, but she knew not, imagined not how dear, until that never-to-be-forgotten evening ; his words returned to her again and again, and sad, desponding as they were, she would not have lost one of them. She

who had been so constantly active, flitting like a spirit from one favourite employment to another, now seemed to live but on one feeling; but her mind was too well regulated to permit its unrestrained indulgence. Young as she was, dependent on herself alone for guidance in this new and absorbing state of being, thrown in quite a new position for luxury and wealth, as a cherished member of her uncle's family, yet her character, instead of deteriorating, matured, uniting all the outward playfulness of the child with the inward graces of the woman.

Lord Ennerdale's domestic circle formed a happy contrast to that of the ascetic Basil De Vere. His children were all married except his eldest son, Lord St. Clair, and eldest daughter, Lady Emily; but the ties of family had never been broken, and happy youth and blooming childhood were almost always round the earl. With all these Annie was speedily a favourite; and easily susceptible of kindness and affection, Clair Abbey soon became endeared to her as home.

By a strange contradiction, Annie's interest and affection were, however, excited the strongest towards the only member of Lord Ennerdale's family who retained reserve towards her. What there was in Lady Emily St. Clair to attract a young and lively girl, Annie herself might have found it difficult to define; for not only her appearance, but her manners were against her. Stiff, cold, even severe, she usually appeared; and when she would at times relax, and seem about to enter with warmth and kindness into Annie's studies or pursuits, she would suddenly relapse into coldness and reserve. Sometimes, when eagerly conversing with Lord St. Clair, on the exquisite beauty of nature, or of some favourite poem, when the spirit of poetry breathed alike from her eyes and from her lips, Annie would catch the eye of Lady Emily fixed upon her sadly and pityingly; or if she smiled, the smile was peculiar, it might be even satirical; yet she was never satirical in words, nor did it seem in character—too feelingly alive to the dictates of kindness ever willingly to inflict a wound. To discover her real character was difficult; Annie judged more by her habits than her words. Lady Emily never said that her love of flowers amounted to a passion, that to have them around her in their freshness, to seek them alike from the garden and the wild, to collect, dry, and

arrange them in such tasteful groups and such brilliancy of colouring, that the choicest paintings looked dim beside them, was her favourite pleasure, but Annie was ever ready with some newly discovered plant, or the moss and weed she needed—ever the first to remove the dying buds, and supply their place around her boudoir with the freshest and fairest she could select. Lady Emily never spoke of poetry, never acknowledged that she could either admire or enter into it; but there were extracts in her writing, attached sometimes to drawings, sometimes to her books of flowers, that betrayed such a refinement of taste, and acute perception of the pure, the beautiful, and the spiritual, in nature and in man, that Annie suspected she was herself a poet; but yet how could she reconcile the unimpassioned coldness of her usual mood with the light and life of poetry? Yet though fairly puzzled, Annie so judiciously assisted her researches, that Lady Emily often wondered how a mark could come so exactly in the place she wished, when the thought, for whose echo she looked, had been breathed to none; but even had these attentions escaped her notice, it must indeed have been an icy heart to withstand the sweetness of Annie's manner; whenever her cousin's mood was irritable, her temper somewhat ruffled, there seemed a magic around Annie not only to bear with irritation, but to reconcile the subject of that irritation to herself and all around her; and when so languid and weak as really to be ill, though she would never allow it, who so active as Annie to prevent all annoyance to the invalid, or interfere with the only pursuits she could enjoy? Yet no show of affection acknowledged these attentions; but by very slow degrees the Miss Grey changed into Anne, and finally into the pretty denomination by which she was always addressed; and the smile and tone with which she spoke to her, satisfied the orphan that she had not worked in vain.

Even if Annie's conduct had failed to rivet the notice of Lady Emily, it had gained for her the interest and sincere affection of another. Lord St. Clair was devotedly attached to his sister, and all who had the good sense to appreciate her were sure to obtain his esteem; then in the prime of life, he foresaw no danger in his intimate association with and admiration of his young cousin, a girl but just seventeen; and it was a pleasure to him to draw her out, and repay by

every kindness on his part her attention to his sister. A disappointment when very young had caused him to remain single. "I do not say I shall never marry," he often said, in answer to his father's solicitations on the subject; "for then I should consider myself bound not to do so, however my heart might dictate; but it is unlikely."

Annie Grey had not, however, been domiciled many months in Clair Abbey, before Lord St. Clair's sentiments on this subject underwent some change.

From the time of Reginald's departure the public journals became suddenly endowed with an interest to Annie, equal to that of the most ardent politician. The disturbed state of Spain, the constant marchings and counter-marchings of General Mina's army, prevented any regular communication from Reginald; once or twice she had heard from him direct, and treasured indeed were those letters, honourably as the young man kept to his resolution, never by one word to draw Annie into an engagement, or even an avowal that she returned his love. In the papers she often read his name among the bravest and most daring of the British soldiers. One anecdote, officially reported and communicated to Lord Ennerdale, afforded her still dearer food for fancy. The service in which he was engaged was exposed to all the horrors of civil warfare; slaughter and desolation followed in the train of both armies. Young De Vere, at the head of a picked band, had thrown himself in the very midst of a *mêlée*, determined on saving the unoffending women and children, and aged peasants of the opposing party, all of whom were about to be sacrificed to the misguided rage of the royal troops; the village was in flames, and the peasants, neutral before, swore to be avenged. The exertions of the young Englishman, however, worked on both parties; he calmed the excited spirits of his own men, and promised protection and safety to the oppressed. One group particularly attracted him; a young mother, clasping an infant tightly to her breast, and two fine boys, twining their arms round her, as to protect her with their own lives. Reginald did not know that it was her infant he had saved from a brutal death, but his look was arrested by the intense feeling glistening in her large dark eyes, and by the impotent passion of her eldest boy, who, clenching a huge stick, vowed he would join his father, who was a Carlist soldier, and revenge the insults

offered to his mother. De Vere jestingly laid his hand on the stripling's shoulder, declaring he was a young rebel and his prisoner. The agonized scream of the poor mother changing on the instant into the wildest accents of gratitude, as she recognized in Reginald her baby's preserver, and to the earnest supplication that he would send them on in safety, removed all feelings of mere jest. Reginald soothed her fears, and selecting a guard of his own countrymen, on whom he could depend, sent her and her children under their care to the outposts of the Carlist camp. General Mina smiled sadly when this anecdote was told him. "The age of chivalry is over, my young friend," he said, mournfully. "Your act was kind and generous, but I fear of little service. The Carlists are not likely to check their career of devastating warfare because we have spared one insignificant village; nor will you have any demand upon their favour should you unfortunately fall into their hands."

"Chivalry and its romance may be over," thought Annie, as again and again her mind reverted to its one fond theme. "But my father once told me 'a deed can never die;' and, even if indeed it were to do no good, surely his motives will meet with the appreciation and admiration they deserve; there must be some among the good and noble to do him justice."

How the young heart revels in every proof, however trifling, of the worth of him it loves. The restlessness of a scarcely acknowledged passion merged into a species of glowing happiness, the basis of which Annie might have found it difficult to define. In its indulgence she forgot the distance between them, the darkening aspect of his future, the despondency breathing in his last farewell—forgot all but the passionate words, "Who will be to me as you have been?" And what will so elevate the character and purify the heart, and shed such sweet rosy flowers over every thought, and act, and feeling, as the first fresh feelings of all-hoping, all-believing love? Annie's beauty, matured beneath the magic of such dreams, excited universal admiration; but the young girl knew it not.

"No breakfast for loiterers!" exclaimed Lord St. Clair, playfully holding up his hand, as Annie sprang through an open French window into the breakfast-room one lovely summer morning, her cottage bonnet thrown back, her

luxuriant hair somewhat disordered, her cheek and eye bright with health and animation, and laughing gaily at Lord St. Clair's threat.

"Here has Emily been looking starch and prim for the last half-hour, thinking unutterable things of the folly and romance which can be the only reason of young ladies' early wanderings in the lonely districts about Keswick Lake. Ah, you little fox, prepared with a bribe to ward off the weight of her displeasure," he said, as Annie laid the fruit of her researches, a rare and exquisite plant, on the table by her cousin, and Lady Emily half smiled.

"And there's my father in a complete fever fearing that his blooming little niece had been carried off, or eaten up by one of the wild men or monsters of the mountains, and threatening to search for her himself, directly after breakfast."

"Thank you, my dear, kind uncle," replied Annie, gaily, bending over Lord Ennerdale to kiss his forehead. "Never be anxious about me. I have suffered no further inconvenience than extreme hunger, which I satisfied at Nanny's cottage, by a slice of her brown bread and a cup of warm milk. No romance in that, Lord St. Clair, at least."

"A fortunate occurrence for you, as it may save you from a lecture on the impropriety of indulging love-lorn dreams in solitude. Why, Annie, you are actually blushing; if it were not an utter impossibility for romantic young ladies to feel hungry, I should say your very looks pleaded guilty. Look at her, Emily—you had better begin."

"No, I thank you, Henry; I never give lectures, even when deserved, in public," was his sister's quiet reply.

"Well, the offence brings with it its own punishment, for here come the contents of the postman's bag, and so a truce to our sage converse; and you, Miss Annie, must eat your breakfast in meditative silence."

"Or in perusing what she likes better. Here, my little politician; your eyes are pleading, though your lips are silent," said Lord Ennerdale, gaily throwing to her a packet of newspapers without opening them.

"You are much too young to be a politician; besides, I hate women to dabble in politics, so give me a better reason for being the first reader of all the papers, or you shall not have them," interposed Lord St. Clair, keeping firm hold of the packet, which he had caught.

"On my honour, I never read a word of politics," replied Annie, half playfully, half eagerly, but blushing deeply as she met Lord St. Clair's penetrative glance. He relinquished them with a half sigh, and bent over his despatches. Silence ensued for several minutes, each seemingly engrossed with his occupation. Lady Emily was the first to move, and after carefully sorting and arranging the flowers Annie had brought her, was about to leave the room.

"Annie, my dear child! what is the matter?" she exclaimed, in a tone which electrified her father and brother, so utterly was it unlike her usually measured accents; and startled out of all stiffness and dignity, she was at the poor girl's side in an instant. Annie's cheek, lips, and brow were cold and colourless as marble, and there was such rigid agony imprinted on every feature, that Lady Emily well-nigh shuddered as she gazed. "Speak to me, Annie, love! What is it? Try and speak, dearest; do not look at me with such a gaze," she continued, as Annie slowly raised her eyes, which were bloodshot and distended, and fixed them on her face; she evidently tried to speak, but only a gasping cry escaped, and that terrible agony was lost for a time in an unconsciousness so deep that it almost seemed of death.

Lord St. Clair stood paralysed, but then he snatched up the fatal paper, and one glance sufficed to tell him all, all that he had suspected, all that for his own happiness he had feared; but he could only think of Annie then, and perceiving how ineffectual were all the usual efforts to restore animation, he threw himself on horseback, and never rested till he had found and dragged back with him the medical attendant of the family, whose skill was finally successful. Annie woke from that blessed relief of insensibility to a consciousness of such fearful suffering, that as she lay in the perfect stillness enjoined by the physician, she felt as if her brain must reel, and fail beneath it. It was not alone the death of him she loved, that the idol of her young affections was lost to her for ever, but it was the horrid nature of his fate which had so appalled her. In the gallant defence of a royal fort he had been left almost alone, all his companions falling around him; severely wounded, and overpowered by numbers, he was taken by the Carlists, dragged to their camp, and twenty-four hours afterwards shot, with other ill-fated men, literally murdered in cold blood. Three times Annie's eyes had glared

on the paragraph, reading again and again the list of the unfortunate men who had thus perished, as if Reginald's name could not be amongst them; alas! it was there, pre-eminent, from the courage, the youth, and the official rank of the bearer. And in that dreadful stillness the whole scene rose before her, vivid as reality—ghastly figures flitted before her; and then she saw Reginald as they parted; and then full of life and excitement in the field; and then covered with blood and wounds. She seemed to see him bound and kneeling for the fatal stroke, and the shot rung in her ears, clear, sharp, and strangely loud, till she could have shrieked from the bewildering agony: she tried to banish the vision, to escape its influence, but it gained strength, and force, and colouring, and before midnight Lady Emily watched in grief and awe beside the couch where her young cousin lay, and raved in the fearful delirium of a brain fever.

Many weeks elapsed ere Annie could again take her place amongst her family; alternate fever and exhaustion had so prostrated her that her life was more than once despaired of. Had she been aware who it was so constantly and gently tended her, teaching her voice to forget its coldness, her manners its reserve, to soothe and comfort those hours of agony, she would have felt that some simple "deeds indeed could never die;" and that to her own sweetness of temper, and forbearing and active kindness, she owed the blessings of a sympathy and tenderness almost equalling a mother's. But it was long before she was conscious of anything, or even capable of rousing herself from the lethargic stupor which still lingered even when sense and strength returned. That she sought earnestly to appear the same as usual—to evince how gratefully she felt the kindness lavished on her—to return to her employments, was very evident; but it seemed as if bodily weakness prevented all mental exertion. She shrunk in anguish from the thought that she had betrayed her love, though by neither word nor hint did her companions ever allude to the immediate occasion of her illness.

"Would she but shed tears—but speak her grief," exclaimed Lord St. Clair to his sister, one day, after vainly endeavouring to excite a smile, "she would suffer less then; but she has never wept since; and before, the most trifling emotion, even of pleasure, would draw tears. Could you but

draw forth her confidence—but make her weep. Is there no possible way?"

"I fear none: she shrinks from the slightest approach to the subject. I feel as if I dared not speak poor Reginald's name."

Chance, however, did that for which even Lady Emily's courage failed. Annie was reclining, one morning, in a favourite boudoir, her eyes languidly wandering over the beautiful landscape, which stretched from the window. When last she had noticed it, the trees were bending beneath the weight of their glorious summer dress, and the gayest and brightest flowers were flinging their lavish beauties on the banks of the small but picturesque lake. The scene was still lovely, but it had changed; the trees which still retained foliage were all in the "sere and yellow leaf," the ground was strewn with fallen leaves, the flowers were all gone, and Nature herself seemed emblematical of the change in Annie's heart. Lady Emily watched her some time in silence, and then gently drew her attention to some beautiful groups of flowers which she had lately arranged. Annie turned from the window with a heavy sigh, and bent over the flowers; while Lady Emily continued her employments without further notice. She forgot that amongst those groups there was the plant, to find which Annie had rambled over hill and dale that fatal morning. From its extreme rarity and beauty she had placed it alone upon the page; and as Annie gazed upon it, a rush of feeling of the bright, sweet memories which had thronged her mind during that solitary ramble came back upon her—the dreams of hope, and joy, and love—with the force, the intensity of actual presence; as if they might still be realized, and the intervening time had been but a dark and troubled blank. She pushed the flower from her, and her head sunk on her clasped hands.

"My poor child, I forgot that flower was amongst them!" exclaimed Lady Emily, in a tone at once of such self-reproach and earnest sympathy, that Annie, with an uncontrollable impulse, suddenly sprung up, and folding her arms round her neck, burst into a passion of tears. All her cousin's previous kindness she had attributed to pity for bodily suffering. That she could sympathise in her mental affliction, she had fancied—as the young are too prone to do of the colder and more experienced—was impossible; but the tone, the allusion to that

little flower, betrayed that she, too, could believe in and understand the association of the material with the immaterial world; and Annie now wept upon her bosom, in the consoling consciousness that, cold as that heart seemed, it could yet feel and weep for her.

Lady Emily trembled; for the deep emotion she beheld recalled passages of equal suffering in her own life, which she had thought buried and at rest for ever. She trembled, lest in this appeal to her inmost soul her long striven-for calmness should fail, and her weakness should increase rather than soothe Annie's anguish. Her hand shook, and her lip so quivered, that it was some minutes ere she could speak. We need not linger on the words which followed. The ice, which had seemed to close round Annie's heart, dissolved—Reginald's name was spoken—the fond secret of her life revealed; and from that day she found more strength to struggle with depression—to leave no effort untried to regain serenity, and conquer that worse foe to happiness, indifference, which the human heart contains. Once convinced, by the representations of affection and experience, that it was her duty *actively to do*, as well as passively to endure—to prove her resignation to the blow, which, though heavy, was still dealt by a Father's hand, she did not fail. A yet more earnest desire to seek the happiness of others, and complete disregard of self—a calm and still serenity of word and look, were now her outward characteristics; while, within, though her spirit had gained new strength in its upward flight—new clinging love for that world where all is peace, the thought of the departed yet remained, gaining, it seemed, increase of power with every passing month. It had lost its absorbing anguish; but not its memories. Too truly did she feel, with that sweet chronicler of woman's heart—

“We dream not of Love's might,
Till Death has robed, with soft and solemn light,
The image we enshrine. Before *that* hour
We have but glimpses of the overmastering power
Within us laid.”

There were times when the thought would come, and so vividly, she could scarcely believe it only a thought, that Reginald might yet live, the public records be deceivers. But Lady Emily's assurances that her father and brothers had made every inquiry, but that all the information obtained

only confirmed the first statement, proved the utter fallacy of the dream.

II.

"Ah ! let the heart that worships thee
By ev'ry change be proved."

L. E. L.

"I could forgive the miserable hours
His falsehood, and his only, taught my heart ;
But I can not forgive that for his sake
My faith in good is shaken, and my hopes
Are pale and cold, for they have looked on death.
Why should I love him ? he no longer is
That which I loved."

L. E. L.

"Thou livest ! thou livest !
I knew thou couldst not die !"

De Chatillon—MRS. HEMANS.

Nearly two years had elapsed since the death of Reginald De Vere ere any event of sufficient importance occurred in Annie's life for us to resume the thread of our narrative. A shock like that, and on such a disposition, could never be forgotten, though time, the softener of all ills, had restored her to some degree of her wonted animation, and though the elastic spirits of the young girl had given way, the woman had become yet more attractive and lovable. The first London season after Reginald's death she had not accompanied her uncle's family to the great metropolis, but spent the period of their absence quietly in Scotland. The second, she did not refuse to join them ; but scenes of festivity were so evidently distasteful, that her friends did not urge her entering more into society than her own inclinations prompted. But in her uncle's house she was seen and known only to be admired and loved, receiving, to her extreme astonishment, an unexceptionable offer of marriage before she had been two months in London. It was declined gratefully, but so decidedly as to give no hope. Some weeks afterwards, Lord St. Clair one morning entered Annie's room. She was alone, so intently engaged in drawing as not to observe the very peculiar expression of countenance with which he regarded her some minutes without speaking.

"I would give something to read your thoughts, cousin mine," she said, playfully, at length raising her eyes to his face, which instantly resumed its usual kind and open expression. "I could hardly believe you were in the room, you were so silent."

"I was thinking how very wise the world is, Annie. It knows and vouches for so many things concerning individuals, of which they are utterly ignorant themselves."

"Why, what is the report now?"

"Only—" he paused for a second, then rallied so quickly, that the huskiness of his first words was unperceived, "that you and I are engaged in marriage, and that I only wait till you are of age, that the disparity of years may seem less."

"The world must think much too highly of me for such a report to gain credence," replied Annie, simply, yet gravely, though she did start at the intelligence.

"What can you mean?"

"That they must hold me in much greater respect than I deserve to unite my name, even in thought, with yours."

"My dear Annie, can you mean that you are undeserving of the regard of any man, however high his worth? How little do you know yourself! Believe me, it is I who should feel proud that the world should believe this so strongly that not even the disparity of years between us is considered an objection."

"Do not talk so, dear Henry, or I shall fear I am losing one of the truest friends I have. You have always treated me with such regard as never to flatter me; pray do not begin now."

"Indeed you do me injustice, Annie; might I not return the charge, and accuse you of flattering me?"

"No, dear cousin. How can I do otherwise than look up to, and venerate your worth, associating with you at home, as I have done for nearly three years, and receiving such constant kindness, that had I been your own young sister you could not have shown more? Do I not see you as a son and brother? and if I did not venerate you, should I not be the only one, either at home or in the world, who did not do you the justice you deserve?"

"And may I not equally have learnt to know and love you?"

"Yes, as a child, a sister, but not as the wife you need."

"Is the disparity of years, then, in your mind so great an obstacle? Do you thing it quite impossible a man of eight-and-thirty can love a girl of twenty?"

"No, not impossible."

"But impossible that a girl of twenty could love a man of eight-and-thirty; is that it?"

"Far less unlikely than the other case," replied Annie, half smiling, for her complete unconsciousness caused her to be amused at her companion's pertinacity.

"Then why should the world's report be so utterly without foundation, dearest Annie?" inquired Lord St. Clair, with such a sudden change of countenance and tone that it startled her almost into consciousness. The arch and playful look vanished, her cheek paled, and the tears started to her eyes, and laying her hand confidently on his arm, she said, with quivering lip—

"Dearest Henry, do not let me lose the kind brother, the true friend I have so long believed you."

"You shall not, Annie," he answered fervently, "even if to retain such appellatives makes me more miserable than you imagine."

"Do not, do not say so! my thoughts are all memories, and were the world's report indeed true, would be faithless every hour; could this make your happiness?"

"But must this always be? Is devotion to the departed a higher duty than giving happiness to the living? So purely unselfish as you are, would you not in time better secure your own peace by giving inexpressible happiness as the beloved and cherished wife of the living, who would never expect you to love as you have loved, than by indulging in the luxury of memory and devotedness to one who is in heaven? Is not this a question worth considering, Annie?"

"Not now, not now! oh, do not urge me now!" she implored, bursting into tears; and her companion on the instant banished every word and thought of self to soothe and calm her.

A month or two afterwards Lord St. Clair, to the astonishment of his friends, by whom he was regarded as a particularly quiet stay-at-home sort of person, accepted a diplomatic embassy to the courts of Germany and Russia, likely to detain him twelve or eighteen months. He had besought and re-

ceived Annie's permission to correspond with her. Letters from a mind and heart like his could not be otherwise than interesting. His words returned repeatedly to her thoughts; she loved him sufficiently to feel a degree of pleasure in the idea of adding to his happiness, and six months after he had left England, her answer to a letter from him, in which generalities had merged into personalities, contained the following words:—

“If, dearest Henry, the gratitude and reverence of one whose best affections still linger with the dead are indeed of sufficient worth to give you the happiness which you tell me rests with me, I will not refuse to become yours, if a twelvemonth hence you still desire it. Give me that time. The painful feelings with which I now look to marriage, as almost faithlessness to one who, though the actual words never passed his lips, I do believe loved me most truly, will then perhaps, in some degree at least, have subsided, and I may be able to give you all that your wife should bestow. I know and feel that time is the comforter as well as the destroyer, and that though it is actual agony to think that my heart will ever so change as to feel less acutely the loss I have sustained, I know it will and must, and that it is right and best it should do so. Give me but time then, dearest Henry—let the memories of the dead be so softened that I may do my duty lovingly as well as faithfully to the living; and till that may be, let us continue as we have been to the world and to each other.”

Lord St. Clair did not hesitate to accede to this request. Even his letters did not change their tone; he was still the friend more than the lover; but he contrived to shorten the period of his voluntary banishment, and eleven months after he had quitted England beheld his return.

There was a change in Annie, however, which alarmed and pained him; she was pale and thin, and strangely and feverishly restless. Lady Emily, from being constantly with her, had not remarked the great alteration, but acknowledged, in answer to St. Clair's anxious queries, that she had seemed more unhappy the last four months, that the calm and tranquil cheerfulness which had characterised her had given place to alternations of fitful gaiety and more frequent depression; but what had occasioned it she could not tell; she thought it might be physical, as she had had a slight

cough hanging about her for weeks, which nothing she took seemed to remove. Four months previous! was it possible that she might regret the promises she had so ingenuously given? Lord St. Clair more than once caught her glance fixed with a degree of pleading earnestness upon him, as if she failed in courage to speak; and as he was not one to encourage painful doubts where a word might solve them, he took an opportunity of kindly and affectionately inquiring why she was so changed.

The cause was soon revealed. About ten days after she had written to him, as we related, she had seen, amongst other despatches directed to Lord St. Clair, which were lying on the library table waiting to be arranged and forwarded, a single letter, the writing of the direction of which had caused such a sudden thrill and subsequent faintness, that it had been with difficulty she refrained from involuntarily tearing it open, to know from whom it came. She said that she had endeavoured to conquer the strange fancy; to reason with herself, that the resemblance to a writing she but too well remembered was mere accident. Yet so powerful had been its effect, that even when she recalled the superscription, the same feelings of heart-sickness returned as had overpowered her when it first met her eye. It had been put up with other public despatches—the family having before its arrival closed and sent more private letters; that as he had never alluded to it, she had struggled to believe it could have been nothing of interest to her, and yet the subject would not leave her mind, allowing her neither sleep at night nor rest by day. She knew it folly, she said, but conquer it she could not.

And that fearful state of internal restlessness was fated to continue; for, most unfortunately, the packet of despatches in which that was had been lost, in the overflow of a river which the messenger who bore it had to ford, and Lord St. Clair had never alluded to it, for his letters to Annie had been shorter than he liked, from the annoyance and increase of trouble which the loss of this very packet had occasioned him in his political employment. That the post-mark seemed Italian was all she could tell him, and his anxiety became as great as hers, though that it could really be what it was easy to discover Annie really imagined it, he believed impossible.

Meanwhile, the poor girl's health—under a suspicion which,

however 'maginary, was very fearful—did not improve, and her relatives rested not till a skilful physician had been consulted; his opinion instantly decided them, and, despite of Annie's resistance, a tour on the Continent was resolved on, Lord Ennerdale desiring her not to let him see her again, till she could bring back her own rosy smiling self.

The party consisted of only Lord St. Clair, Lady Emily, and Annie; and, making only a brief stay at Paris, they proceeded in a south-easterly direction, crossed the Jura, and fixed their residence for some weeks in the vicinity of Geneva. The complete change of air and scene seemed so to renovate Annie, that physical strength gradually returned, and with it more apparent calm of mind. Congeniality of taste in our companions is indispensable for the real enjoyment of travelling, and this Annie fully possessed; those three years of intimate association with the apparently cold and passionless Lady Emily had deepened Annie's regard, but not altered her cousin's chilling manner. But this delicious commune with nature, uninterrupted by intercourse with the world, caused her more than once so to relax as to excite even Annie's surprise, and convince her more than ever that Lady Emily had not always been what she then was.

They were sitting one evening under the projecting roof of a jutting gallery belonging to a cottage in the beautiful valley of Chamouni; Lord St. Clair had that day left them to join a party of excursionists, in an expedition somewhat too fatiguing for his companions. The cottage, situated on a projecting mount or cliff, commanded a more extensive view than the parish of Prieuré itself permits. The rich luxuriance of the vale stretched beneath them, intersected with cliffs covered with foliage and large patches of emerald moss, and variously-tinted lichen clothing the grey stones. Here and there a true Alpine cottage peeped through dark woods of fir and larch, and the blue and sparkling Arve glided noiselessly along, still more lovely in the evening hour, as the glowing rays of sunset are contrasted with the deep shadows falling all around. Above them towered mountains of every form, blending their separate charms in a whole so sublime and extensive that height and breadth were lost in distance; misty vapours, or light fleecy clouds, were ever wreathing their snow-capped brows, while Mont Blanc itself stood alone in its sublime grandeur, and in the unsullied

purity of its snowy robe. The sun itself was invisible, but its glowing rays were shed upon the mountain, dyeing it with a deep, rosy flood of light peculiar to that locality, and only to be described by its thrilling resemblance to that fearfully brilliant flush sometimes traced on the countenance of mortal beauty, when life is fading imperceptibly away, and the strange yet perfect loveliness rivets not alone the eye but the imagination with a species of fascination which we have no power to resist. The period of its continuance might have been from fifteen to twenty minutes, when it suddenly changed into a pale greyish tinge, of a shade and appearance so peculiar that it affected the heart and mind with the same species of awe as that with which we regard the sudden change from brilliant life to the ashy hues of death.

An exclamation of admiration, even of delight, broke so naturally from the lips of Lady Emily St. Clair, that her young companion looked up in her face with astonishment.

"Have I not surprised you, Annie?" she said, with a quiet smile. "Are you still amongst those who believe that one so cold and silent as I am now can have no feeling for enjoyment, can see no beauty in nature, no poetry in the universe?"

"No," replied Annie, earnestly; "I know so much of you that mere superficial observers can never know, that I can well believe there is still more which my inexperienced eye can never reach. I wish," she added, after a short pause, and with some hesitation, "that I were worthy to know you as you are, that you loved me sufficiently to unveil sometimes that which is so studiously concealed."

"Do not do me such wrong, dearest Annie, as to doubt that I love you, because I am to you, in general, as to indifferent persons. I cannot change the manner acquired by months, nay, whole years of suffering, even to those whose affections I would do much to win. There is little of interest and much of suffering in my past life; but you shall hear it if you will."

"Not if it give you pain, my kind friend," said Annie; but she looked inquiringly as she seated herself on a cushion at her companion's feet, and rested her arm on her knee. Lady Emily paused, as if collecting firmness for the task, then briefly spoke as follows.

"Few, who have only known me the last fifteen or sixteen years, would believe that I was once, Annie, far more enthusiastic and dreamy, and what the world calls romantic, than you were when I first knew you. An ardent love for the exalted and the beautiful, alike in man and nature; a restless craving for the pure and spiritual; an almost loathing for all that was mean and earthly: these were the elements of my romance, but carried to an excess, that instead of being beneficial, as they might have been, became indeed the height of folly, which is the world's meaning for such feelings. I was a poet, a visionary, an enthusiast, feeding a naturally vivid imagination on the burning dreams of minds whose wings soared even higher than my own. By my family I was regarded with admiration and love, as one whose talents would raise me far higher than my rank. I had the advantage of association with the genius and the student; and their opinion of my powers, their sympathy, urged me on till I was astonished at myself. But there was a blank in the midst of pleasure; I soared too high in the moments of excitement. My mind, unable to sustain itself in the airy realms of an ill-regulated imagination, was fraught, on its return to earth, with a gloom and void even more exquisitely painful than its precious mood had been joyful. Yet had poetry been my only gift, its pains and pleasures might have been confined to my own breast; but the powers of satire, mine in no ordinary degree, were far more dangerous to myself in their baneful influence upon others. I indulged in the most cutting irony, careless whom I might wound, regardless of any feeling but my own pleasure; I knew religion only as a name, whose every ordinance was fulfilled by attending public service once a week. I heard and read that, to some minds, poetry vitalizes religion, for every throb unanswered upon earth lifted up the whole soul to that world where all was love and all was joy. I laughed at such romance, as I termed it, for I could not understand it. In the gloom and void occasionally felt, pride and triumph at my own superiority to my fellows were the constant occupants of my heart, urging me but too often to level the dart of venomed satire on those whose more worldly sentiments and coarser minds excited my contempt; even the young and gentle often bled beneath that cruel lash, if in the merest trifle of word or manner they differed from my idea of excellence. My own family loved me too indulgently to be aware of the dreadful

extent of this vice; Henry, the only one whose noble nature and judicious feeling would have guided me aright, was a student in Germany, and I had no one whose counsels might have spared me, in some measure at least, the bitter self-reproach which heightened the chastisement preparing for me.

"But I am lingering. Amongst the numerous guests at my father's was one, combining noble birth, genius, light and ready wit, with all the fascination of sparkling features, graceful form, and a manner whose elegance I have never yet seen equalled. He courted my society; he did not *flatter*, for that I ever scorned, but he *appreciated*. His manner always evinced respect for me, and pleasure at having found one to whom he could converse on nobler subjects than the mere chit-chat of a fashionable world. It needs not to enlarge upon our intimacy, or the means he took to make me believe, without in the least committing himself, that I was to him the object not of esteem or admiration alone.

"Why should I hesitate to speak that which is now as if it had never been? I loved him, Annie, how deeply and passionately! till my whole soul was wrapped in his image, and my very nature so changed, that I looked on this world with gentler feelings, and believed that the earth which contained him could not be as little worth as I had deemed it. All this would be useless to repeat; the blank in my heart was filled up; my woman's soul, which neither fame nor talent could satisfy, was at rest; the actual words had not passed his lips indeed, but yet I did not, could not doubt him. That is not love in which a doubt can enter. I was visiting a mutual friend, and daily in expectation of his arrival; to relieve the yearning restlessness of anticipation, I had taken my tablets to a concealed nook in the garden, and was pouring out my whole soul in burning words, when his voice arrested me. The remark preceding his words I had not heard, but all which followed is written on my brain.

"'Propose to Emily St. Clair!' he said, in a tone which, while it retained its beautiful harmony, was so changed in expression that I only knew it his by the agony thrilling through my whole being at the words, 'Percy, you are mocking me! Marry a blue—a wit! worse still, a poet. Pray procure me an admission into a lunatic asylum the very hour I make the proposal; for, at least, were I sufficiently mad to say, Will you have me? certain as I am of being ac-

cepted, I should escape being rendered more so. No, my good fellow, the lady is agreeable enough as long as I am unchained ; but once fettered, her folly and romance would send me to heaven much sooner than I have the least inclination for. Why, were I in such a predicament as marriage with her, how do you suppose I could live for ever the actor I am now, when conversing with her, drawing her out as it were, to afford me amusement afterwards ? The very idea is exhaustion !”

“‘It is well her brothers have not seen the progress of your attentions,’ was the reply. ‘You might have to answer for such species of amusement.’

“‘Nonsense, man ! Were the Courts of Love in vogue as they were once, she could allege nothing against me to make me her prisoner for life. Why, it was the very effort to keep up the *liaison*, and yet not say one word which her romantic fancy could construe into an offer, that was so fatiguing. Her delight in my society was so evident, that I was obliged to be on my guard ; words meaningless to others would have been seized upon by her, and then *miseri-cordia* !’

“‘Out upon your consummate self-conceit ; she never forgot her self-respect,’ was the reply, and the voices faded in the distance.”

“And you heard this !” exclaimed Annie, indignation compelling the interruption. “Gracious heaven ! can there be such men ?”

“Be thankful you can still ask such a question, dearest Annie. I did hear—and more, remained outwardly calm ; at that moment I believe I was conscious but of one feeling, not indignation ; no, he might have spoken yet more cruelly, more contemptuously. I heard but one, felt but one truth—that he did not love me—that the deep whelming passion he had excited was unreturned—that he scorned those gifts which I had lately only valued as I believed them valued by him. My brain reeled for the moment ; but sense and energy returned, as gradually, but with fearful distinctness, his every word and tone resounded in my ear. Anguish, which had been the first feeling, was as nothing, literally nothing, to that chaos of misery which followed—to disrobe the idol my heart had so madly worshipped of the bright colouring of honour and worth, to teach myself he was *unworthy*, had

deceived, wilfully deceived. What was the suffering of unrequited love compared with this? He had said, too, that my preference was so evident, I would have grasped the faintest whisper of an offer. I knew the charge was false as himself; but that he should have believed it, added its bitter pang. How was I to act? My brow was burning, my pulses throbbing, yet return to my own home I would not; I would not feign illness, though God knows it would have been little feigned. I would meet him, pass in his company the period I had promised to my friend, and then I cared not."

"And you did this?" asked Annie, clasping Lady Emily's hand in both hers, and almost startled at its coldness—the only proof that the narrator told not her tale unmoved.

"I did more, my child. Though poetry and satire were now to me but fearful spectres, from which a tortured spirit shrank—though that very hour I burned every fragment of composition once so precious, yet, during three long weary weeks, I was to him and to all around me as I had always been; perhaps even more sparkling, more animated, and far more joyous. Without any visible effort, I so far changed in bearing towards him, that instead of finding in his conversation as before an echo to my own, I questioned, I doubted, and more than once I saw him quail beneath my glance or tone, compelled, ere we parted, to doubt the influence which he had boasted he possessed. But what availed all this? It did not, could not quench the burning fever within; and when I returned to the quiet of my father's roof, the tight-strung cord was snapped, and overwrought energies so gave way, that for months, nay, years, the effects of that struggle were visible in a state of health so precarious, so exhausted, that I have seen my poor father pace my chamber hour by hour in silent agony, without the power to address him. For many months all was to me a blank; yet I believe I was not wholly insensible nor always under the influence of fever. Ere I recovered sufficiently again to mingle with the world, he who had so deceived me became the husband of another; and that other, one who had been my dearest friend, and who has shunned me since as if she too had deceived, and had courted me from policy, not love. I have had no proof that this really was the case, but my faith in all that was good, and beautiful, and true was so shaken, I

believed it as a thing that must be, for such was human nature. This marriage sufficiently accounted to my family for my mysterious illness. Indignation was so generally felt, that had I been awake to outward things, my mind might have been perfectly at rest that I had given him no undue encouragement: and his manner had indeed been such as to give, not alone to myself, but to all who had observed, no doubt of his apparent meaning; but I knew nothing of all this. While chained to my couch by bodily exhaustion, memories of my past life rose to appal me, and to add the bitter agony of unmitigated self-reproach to that of unrequited affection. Precious gifts had been intrusted to me, and what account could I render of them at that awful throne, before which daily, almost hourly, I expected to be summoned? They had estranged me from my God, and from His creatures. I learned to feel His words were true. Unguided by either religion or reason, what could I have been but the idle follower of folly and romance. No throb of kindness or of gentle feeling had interfered to check the contempt I felt for, and breathed in cutting satire upon, others. I had wilfully trampled on many a young kind heart, and it was but just that I should have been thus trampled on myself. Presumption and self-conceit caused me to smile, to scorn the censure of the world, and in all probability my manner had been too unguarded. This bitter self-humiliation only increased the struggle to forget that I had loved. In reproaching myself I ceased to reproach him; the pride that had supported me was gone. These thoughts continually pressing on heart and brain were, I am well aware, the sole sources of my long and incurable disease, but I had no power to shake them off; and, fearfully as I suffered, I have never ceased to bless the gracious hand that sent the chastening and recalled me, ere it was too late, unto Himself."

Lady Emily paused; the quivering of her voice and lip betraying emotion which she evidently struggled to suppress. Annie's tears were falling on her hand, and ere she spoke again, she bent down and kissed her forehead.

"You now know, dearest Annie, more of me than I ever breathed to mortal ear," she resumed, in her usual calm and quiet tone, "more than I ever thought could pass my lips. But do not weep for me, my child; I am happier, safer now, than

I could have been had the wild, misguided feelings of earlier life continued. It was no small portion of my suffering so to control myself as never to give vent to the satirical bitterness that, when I rejoined the world, tinged my words and thoughts more darkly than ever. The determination never to use that dangerous gift, gave to my words and manner a stiffness and cold reserve which have banished from me all those whose regard I would have done much to win. Many young loving hearts have shrunk from me, perceiving no sympathy in their warm imaginations and glowing feelings; and I dared not undeceive them, for I felt no confidence in myself, and feared again to avow sentiments I had buried so deeply in my own heart. Others again shunned me, because terrified at a semblance of austerity, which they could not know was exercised only towards myself; and frequently have I wept in secret at the loneliness which seemed to characterise my path on earth. Even you, my Annie, gentle and forbearing as you were, till I could not but love you, have often checked your animated words beneath the cold, withering influence of my glance or smile."

"Do not call it cold and withering, my dear, kind friend," replied Annie, warmly. "I learned to love you long before I dared hope to win your regard; but could I doubt you in my hour of anguish? Though even then I did you wrong; for I thought I was alone in my misery—and you had suffered doubly more."

"You needed not such awful chastisement, my love; I brought it on myself. But you are right; fearful as is the death of a beloved one, it is happiness compared to the *death of love*, to the blasting of our belief in the good and true; the disrobing an idol, till we ask what it is we have loved. My dearest Annie, bless God that this you have been spared."

Annie was silent several minutes, and then raising her head, she abruptly and strangely asked, "Aye, this; but there are other trials. Oh, Lady Emily, what must be the agony of that heart, who, sacrificing for the sake of the living the memories of the supposed dead, finds too late, that circumstances, not death, have come between her and the object of her first affections; that they love each other still, yet must be strangers, parted more completely than by death. What must be her duty then?"

"You ask me a difficult question, my dear child. If the heart clings to such a thought, better never wed."

A bright gleam, as of relief, flitted over Annie's features; but, changing the subject as abruptly as she had entered upon it, she asked, with hesitation, "And that poetic talent to which you have alluded, do you never exercise it now?"

"Never," replied Lady Emily, taking her companion's arm, and entering the house. "On my first recovery I dared not, for my sinful abuse of the power had been too recent; though I do believe, that as my taste had completely changed in the poets which I read, so too would my writings have done. But year after year passed; gradually I destroyed every memorial of my passed life, and found peace and happiness in the employment which you have seen and aided, until at length even the inclination to write passed away; and I forgot, even as you must, dear girl," she added, with a smile, "that I had been a poet, and one of no mean grade."

The silent pressure of Annie's hand was sufficient guarantee for Lady Emily that her confidence had not been misplaced; and she was happier, for she no longer feared that, misunderstanding, Annie would at length shrink from her.

We will not linger with our travellers while *en route*. They visited all of interest in Naples and Rome, and resolved on passing the winter at Florence. Many weeks had passed in their delightful tour; Annie's health was decidedly renovated; but there were still times when her spirits seemed to sink beneath a weight of depression for which neither of her relatives could account. Each month that passed diminished the time specified by Annie as the term of mourning, and yet Lord St. Clair vainly tried to rejoice; he saw that, instead of decreasing, the memory of Reginald became stronger—that the extraordinary impression made by the superscription of the letter would remain—and ardently he wished that Annie had followed her impulse, and opened it ere it was sent on. He never spoke of love, he never recalled her promise, and Annie so blessed him for his forbearance that, could she but have realized the universal belief in the death of Reginald, she would at once have given him her hand, glad to exchange the torturing doubts which engrossed her for the tranquil calm which must, she thought, attend devotion to one who so nobly proved the love he bore herself.

The many interesting works of ancient art in Florence, so

riveted the attention and occupied the time of our English travellers, that the one subject engrossing the whole attention of the Florentines was for some little time unheeded. The town was full of the unrivalled success of a young sculptor, who had burst into fame, no one knew how or where. He had been studying the last two years, amidst the superb specimens of art, in the galleries of Florence, but so silently, so unassumingly, that he was only known as famous. His copies of Canova and other celebrated sculptors had been pronounced perfect by able judges ; but it was not till he had completed an original group that he at all seemed to sue for notice, and when that did appear, the easily-excited Italians received it with such universal admiration, that the unknown artist was sought for on all sides, courted, flattered, and, better far, appreciated by those whose opinions were of value. Italy is indeed the country where talent may rise to eminence, fostered and cherished by the encouragement for which it so thirsts. In this case, however, the interest excited originally by genius was heightened by the reserved manners of the young sculptor, who rather shrunk from than courted notice, except from the Italians themselves. It was rarely an English *soirée* could obtain the favour of his presence. His appearance and name declared him Spanish, a supposition which, as he never contradicted it, gained universal belief. That he spoke English, French, and Italian as fluently as Spanish, and was intimately acquainted with their literature, only proved that his mental capabilities were not confined merely to his art. How he found time to execute all the orders for busts, ornamental groups, etc., which he received, was a mystery to the idler, and a wonder even to the brethren of his craft, greatly heightened when his first original group appeared. It was not alone the execution, but the daring boldness of his subject which had occasioned such universal notice. Boldly leaving the beaten path of classic subjects, his group, though consisting only of three figures, embodied a striking incident in the earliest stage of the French revolution. A young and beautiful girl had flung herself before an aged parent, clasping his neck with one hand, and by the attitude of the other, combined with the expression of the face, was evidently imploring life for him, even by the sacrifice of her own. On the touching and, to the Italian eye, somewhat peculiar beauty of the face, the

matchless grace of the attitude, and exquisitely modelled limbs, the sculptor appeared to have lingered till he had out-done himself. The countenance of the father breathed but admiring love for the heroic being whom his arm encircled, as if every thought centred in her, to the total exclusion of all terror for himself. Before them, in a crouching attitude, as in the act of filling a goblet with the loathsome fluid which deluged the streets, was a half-naked form, whose ruffian features and muscular limbs contrasted well with the graceful beauty and nobleness of form in the other figures. The head was upraised, a withering sneer upon the lips, a combination of triumph and barbarity on the whole countenance, which so explained the tale it recorded, that, as an animated Italian told Lord St. Clair, the heart of the gazers throbbed, and the cheek paled, as if life itself were before them. It stood in an apartment of the Palazzo Vecchio, where he entreated his English friends to go and see it. "I will not only see this wonderful group, but make acquaintance with its artist," he replied; "for, after hearing all this, know him I will."

"That you will find some difficulty in doing," was the rejoinder. "He shrinks from all you English; besides, he is, I believe, now at Bologna, and his return is uncertain."

"Never mind, trust me for making acquaintance with this lion, shy though he be."

"There is but one fault in his female figure," observed a gentleman who had joined the group, and was greeted with much warmth by Lord St. Clair, "a fault which we English ought to consider a virtue, but yet is in contradiction to Signor Castellan's apparent reserve towards our countrymen. The beauty of the female is too English for a French incident and purely French characters. It is very lovely, I grant, but the loveliness is our own."

The observation naturally produced a warm discussion, which ended as most discussions do, in each party retaining his own opinion, and Lord St. Clair taking his newly-found old friend home with him, introduced him to Lady Emily and Annie.

"And are you settled down at last, Kenrich, tired of wanderings and adventures? though last time I heard of you, you were actually enjoying the wars and cabals of Madrid."

"I am not very sober yet, St. Clair; but I was fool

nough to join the Carlists three or four years ago, and their barbarity to my own countrymen so sickened me of war, that I threw up my commission, and have never drawn sword since."

"What barbarity?" asked Lord St. Clair, catching almost by instinct more than look the expression of Annie's face.

"Why, you must have heard—the English papers were full of it—that fine fellow Captain De Vere was amongst them. He and eight or ten others were taken prisoners, and were all murdered—for it was nothing else."

"But are you sure he was amongst them? We all knew and loved De Vere, and long hoped he might have escaped, and only been reported amongst the killed."

"Escaped, my dear fellow! how was that possible? Besides, he was so terribly wounded, that he could not have survived, even had they not so cruelly dealt with him. I could not save him, but I saw him decently interred, and from that moment loathed military service, and left Spain."

"It was full time, I think," quietly rejoined Lady Emily. "Annie, will you try if you can match this shade for me among the chenilles in my room? I cannot finish this leaf without it, and your eyes are better than mine."

Annie took the chenille designated from the frame, over which her cousin was bending so intently in seeming, that she did not even look up as she addressed her, and quietly left the room. The moment she did so, Edward Kenrich burst into lavish praises of her beauty, declaring that was the exact style of Castellan's figure, and therefore he was right, and it must be too English for perfect art, so running on in his usual wild strain, that Lord St. Clair had great difficulty in bringing him back to the point from which he had started, and gathering from him every particular of the death of Reginald De Vere.

Annie did not reappear, and Lady Emily's great desire to finish her leaf seemed to have subsided with her absence, for she made no effort to recal her. Just before dinner, however, Lord St. Clair, noticing the flutter of her white dress between the orange trees, which almost concealed the balcony leading from the drawing-room, hastily rejoined her. She looked up in his face without a word, but he answered her

thoughts, tenderly and gently repeating all the information he had gained. There could be no doubt, and for one brief minute the poor girl's head sunk on his arm, with a sudden burst of tears.

"I know it is all folly, Henry. I had no right to hope; forgive me, I do but distress you; and yet that writing—that strange writing, whom could it have been from?"

"Not from Reginald, dearest, or it would have been to you, not to me. Has that never struck you, Annie?"

It had not till that moment, and it convinced her. She remained alone that evening, in deep meditation and earnest prayer; and the result was a firm conviction that nothing but a new and solemn duty would restore her to the calm of mind for which she yearned—that devotion to another well worthy of it must draw her from herself. A sleepless night confirmed this resolution, and the very next day the promise passed her lips to be the wife of Lord St. Clair, within a week of their return to England. A few days afterwards they went to the celebrated church of Santa Croce, during vesper service. The magnificent interior, heightened in its effect by the light and shadow flung by huge waxen tapers, the superb monuments, the white-stoled monks and dark dresses of the officiating priests, the kneeling and standing groups, silent and motionless as the marble monuments around—the deep-toned organ, and swelling voices of the choristers, completely enchained the imagination of our travellers. It was strange, excited almost to pain as she was, that Annie at length found her whole attention unconsciously fixed on a single figure, who was leaning against the tomb of Michael Angelo. His face was turned from her, but there was something in his bearing and his attitude which riveted her as by a spell, and the longing to look on his face became strangely and indefinitely intense. The soft light of a taper burning over the tomb brought out in good relief the stranger's uncovered head, whose small and classic shape was shaded by clustering hair of glossy black.

"There he is! there is our sculptor, Renaud Castellan!" whispered one of the Italians who had accompanied them, directing Lord St. Clair's attention to the very figure on whom Annie's gaze was so strangely fixed; but even as he spoke, the young man moved his position, and disappeared in one of the aisles, leaving Annie's desire to see his face un-

gratified, and only permitting Lord St. Clair to catch the outline of his figure.

"Was not Mrs. de Vere's maiden name Castellan?" St. Clair asked of Annie, as they walked together from the church to the house of their Italian friend, who had claimed them for a *petit souper*, and some music. The answer was in the affirmative, and Lord St. Clair remarked it would be strange if this young Spaniard proved to be of the same family. "I must seek him out,"

"See his group first," was the rejoinder of one of the party; while to Annie the words seemed to disperse the miserable doubts again thronging round her—being of the same family might account for a casual resemblance.

It was with some little difficulty Annie was prevailed upon to sing; but when once seated at her harp, timidity gave place to her real love of the art, and the simple purity, the touching pathos of her style charmed all who heard. The entrance of a guest had not interrupted her, nor disturbed the listeners. Lord St. Clair was amused at the look of admiring perplexity with which he regarded Annie, not himself perceiving that, where the Italian stood, the light fell upon her countenance, so as to give it a different appearance and expression to that which was generally perceivable.

Approaching her, as soon as the buzz of admiration had somewhat subsided, he engaged her in animated conversation; nor was Lord St. Clair's curiosity lessened by hearing him inquire "if the signorina were not acquainted with the young sculptor, of whom all Florence raved?" Much surprised, she answered in the negative.

"But surely you have been introduced to him, have you not?"

"No," replied Annie, smiling at his earnestness. "I never even heard of him till I came here; and he has been at Bologna, till this evening, ever since."

"Then he has seen you, signora, either in his sleeping or waking dreams," was the rejoinder, in so animated a tone that it arrested the attention of the whole party; "for never did marble and life so resemble each other as the beauty of your face and of his creation. Surely you must all see it," he continued, turning to his friends with the sparkling vivacity peculiar to his countrymen when excited. "Why, it is

not feature alone, but the character, the grace, the similarity is perfect!"

"I told you so, but you would not believe me," bluntly answered Kenrich. "I told you it was an English face and English character; but you all denied it. I am glad my lovely countrywoman has opened your eyes."

"Why this is better and better, Annie; do not blush so prettily about it," whispered Lord St. Clair, as, attention once aroused, the similarity was universally acknowledged. "If the resemblance be chance, it is something to marvel at; if intentional, why I shall be jealous of the sculptor."

"You need not, Henry," was the reply, in a tone so sad that it pained him.

"Well, well, we will go and see it at least, love, and judge of its merit with our own eyes."

The next day accordingly they went, and (the most convincing proof of the perfection of the work) were not disappointed. Neither its beauty nor its eloquence had been exaggerated, and the resemblance to Annie was so extraordinary that the eyes of all the spectators within the room were attracted towards her; but the expression of the countenance of the father in the group riveted her attention far more than the female figure. It was with a heavy sigh she turned from it, and was pale and silent during their way home; but St. Clair was so engrossed by the beauty of the work, the strange resemblance, and his resolution to leave no stone unturned to gain the acquaintance of the young artist, that it passed unnoticed even by him.

"Why, what ails you, Annie? are you not well, dear?" kindly inquired Lady Emily, some hours later. Wondering why her young companion did not join her as usual, she had sought her in her own room, and found her with her face buried in her hands, and her whole attitude denoting suffering. "Henry has gone to seek out this Signor Castellan, to find out, if he can, in what this strange similarity originated, and who and what he is."

"Shall I tell you?" answered Annie, in a tone so strange that it startled almost as much as the whiteness of her face. "Reginald Castellan de Vere! Was not his mother's name Castellan? and has he not often and often boasted his descent from Spanish heroes, and from this feeling fought for Spain in preference to any other country? Did he not always love the

art of sculpture? Can it be chance that has marked the father and daughter of that group with the characteristics of the revered friend and favourite companion of his youth? No, no, no! Oh! Lady Emily, you bade me once thank God that I had never been deceived; teach me how to bear this."

"Bear what, my poor child?" replied her companion, soothingly, as Annie threw herself on her neck in fearful agitation. "If this be indeed as you say, what can there be but happiness for you? It is for another we must feel."

"Happiness for me! and he has never even so far thought of me as to tell me the report of his death was false, and he still lived—never recalled himself to one whom, when he departed, he so loved—loved! how know I that? he never said it; why should I believe him different to others?"

"My dearest Annie, this is not like yourself. Why, if he have ceased to love you, should the work of his hand—a work which must have employed his mind and heart long days and nights—bear the impress of your face and form?"

"Memory, association, mere casualty—the days of his boyhood may be dear to his mind; but how can affection, even a brother's, have inspired that group, when—when he has allowed me so long to believe him dead?"

"It is all a mystery, my dear child; but I feel convinced it will be solved, if we can really prove his identity. May he not have written, and the letter miscarried?" Annie wildly raised her head. "May he not have been deceived? perhaps—for we can never trace rumours—but may he not have heard that of you which, to a mind like his, would cause him to shrink from recalling himself? He left you such a child, how might he build on having so won your regard that you would remain single for his sake? Dearest Annie, if this indeed be not all imagination, and Reginald really lives, trust me you will be happy yet."

How will a few judicious words change the whole current of thoughts and feeling! Before Lady Emily ceased to speak, Annie was weeping such blessed tears. The proud, cold mood which, had her companion spoken as her own experience of man's nature must have dictated, might have been retained, and made her miserable for life, dissolved before returning trust and hope. She dared not define what it was she hoped; but it

was not till she heard Lord St. Clair's voice, and she tried to spring forwards to meet him and know the truth, that a sudden revulsion of feeling so completely overpowered her that she sunk back upon the couch. How dared she rejoice, even if Reginald lived? what could he be to her who was the promised bride of another?

"Emily!" exclaimed Lord St. Clair, in utter astonishment, as, on his entering the drawing-room, his cold and dignified sister hastily met him, and taking both his hands, tried to speak, but failed; and leaning her head against him, he felt that she was in tears. "What is the matter, love? something very dreadful for you to weep."

She controlled herself with a strong effort, and entered at once into the recital of the scene between her and Annie. "Could it possibly be as she supposed?"

"It may be," was the reply, in a calm firm tone; "there is nothing impossible in it. I went to his lodgings, but, as I supposed, he was either out or too much engaged to be seen; but I am to meet him to-night at the Contessa Corsini's, and this strange mystery will be unravelled."

"And you, dear Henry—" she could say no more, so holy seemed his feelings.

"And I, my dear sister, will act as that man should whose aim is not the gratification of his own desires, but the happiness of one far dearer than himself. I do not tell you I shall not feel, and deeply; but does the warrior shrink from the battle before him because he may be wounded? You may love me more, my Emily, if you will," he continued, fondly passing his arm round her, and kissing her cheek, "for affection is always balm; but I will have no tears—they are only for the unworthy. Where is Annie? poor child, she must be overwrought, from many causes; let me see her, she will be calmer then."

He was right. What passed between them it needs not to relate. Our readers can little enter into the high character of Lord St. Clair, if they cannot satisfy themselves as to the manner, as well the nature and extent, of the sacrifice he made. He was not one to wring the gentle heart he so unselfishly resigned, by the betrayal of personal suffering; he coveted the continuance, nay, the increase of her regard, and nobly he earned it.

It was a brilliant scene on which, a few hours later, he

entered, introduced by the same Italian, Signor Lanzi, who had been the first to trace the resemblance between Annie and the female figure of the group. But neither loveliness nor talent, both of which thronged the halls, had at that moment attraction for Lord St. Clair; his glance had singled out a tall, slight form, leaning against a marble pillar, and half shaded by the drapery of a curtain. His head was bent down; he seemed in the act of listening and replying to the smiling jests of the countess, who was sitting near him; the cheek and brow were very pale, and the mouth, when still, somewhat stern in expression; but it was a fine face, bearing the stamp of genius too visibly ever to be passed unremarked.

"You may smile, and look incredulous, signor," were the words that first met the ears of the English nobleman, from the young countess, in Italy's sweetest tone; but since you deserted us for Bologna, a living likeness has appeared of your beautiful Améle."

"Mademoiselle de Sombreuil herself, perhaps," he replied, half smiling. "Fancy would indeed have served me well, had such a chance occurred."

"You are quite wrong. I doubt whether Mademoiselle de Sombreuil would herself resemble your fancy statue, as much as *la bella Inglese* does."

"*La bella Inglese*! who may she be?" inquired the young sculptor, somewhat agitated.

"A lovely girl, who only appeared in Florence as you left it. Lanzi informed me the resemblance was so perfect, he imagined she must know you; but she had never even heard of you till she came here."

"And what may be her name?"

"As you seem so interested, I regret that I cannot tell you. It is so truly English that it will bear no Italian accent, therefore I cannot remember it; but find Lanzi, I expect him here to-night, and he will tell you all about *er*."

The arrival of new guests, and the attention of the countess called for from himself, the sculptor hastily turned, as in the act of seeking the individual she had named. He had not advanced many yards when he started violently, and with a sudden impulse retreated into a small withdrawing room, near which he had stood.

"Why shun me, Signor Castellan?" inquired a frank

kind voice in English; and Lord St. Clair's hand was extended, and, after a moment's visible hesitation, accepted and almost convulsively pressed. "Why this long, mysterious concealment, my young friend? were there none, think you, to rejoice that you were still amongst the living?"

"Was not your lordship aware of my existence, insignificant as it is, more than a twelvemonth since? My own hand and signature were surely sufficient guarantee," he answered, in a cold proud tone.

"Then you did write, and Annie was not deceived! Little did I know the precious intelligence contained in the packet, lost on its way to me in Russia, and the want of which, in a political view, caused me such annoyance. But why wait so long, my dear fellow, to give us tidings so many would have rejoiced to hear?"

"So many! There were more, then, to mourn me dead, than to love me living? But forgive me," he continued, less bitterly; "Your family would have been my friends, and therefore was it I wrote to tell you that I lived."

"But was there not one, Reginald, who deserved an earlier notice at your hands? why leave her so long to mourn you as dead, and then to learn such joyful tidings from others than yourself? The ties of early youth, of fond associations, I should have thought sufficient of themselves alone to prevent such wrong."

Reginald's very lip grew white as he replied, "Was not her husband the fittest person to give Lady St. Clair such tidings?"

"Her husband, Reginald? You speak enigmas."

"How!" gasped the young man, as he laid his cold and trembling hand on his companion's arm. "Is not Annie Grey your wife?"

"No!" replied Lord St. Clair, the peculiar expression clouding his noble countenance for the moment passing unnoticed; "her heart was with the dead!"

Reginald de Vere struggled with bursting emotion, but his trembling limbs refused to support him; and sinking powerlessly on a sofa, he covered his face with his hands, and wept such tears as only spring from manhood's unutterable joy.

* * * * *

It still wanted an hour to midnight, and Lady Emily was

in vain endeavouring to prevail on Annie to retire to rest.

"You are feverish and worn out already, Annie. How will you be able to support the excitement of to-morrow without rest to-night?"

"It would be no rest if I lie down; I cannot sleep. Only let me know he lives!" and she twined her arms round Lady Emily's neck, and looked so appealingly, so mournfully, no heart could have urged more.

There was a pause of several minutes, and then Annie started up.

"It is Henry's step!" she exclaimed and would have sprung forward, but her feet felt rooted to the ground; another moment Lord St. Clair was at her side.

"Promise me to bear the shock of joy better than you did the shock of grief, or I can tell you nothing," he said, gently; but there was no need for another word. Faint as she was, every object in the room seeming to swim before her eyes, every word to be indistinct, yet one figure was visible, one voice calling her his own, own Annie—beseeching her to forgive and bless him! reached her heart, and loosed its icy chains, till she could breathe again. She felt not that strength had entirely deserted her, for she was clasped to the heart of Reginald De Vere, and the deadly faintness passed in the gushing tears that fell upon his bosom.

* * * * *

Mysterious as was Reginald de Vere's silence, its causes may be summed up in a few words. To his own generous deed, recorded in the early part of our tale, he owed the preservation of his life. When bleeding and exhausted he was led a prisoner to the Carlist camp, he was instantly recognised by the poor woman whose child he had saved, and whom he had sent on to her husband. The tale of his kindness, his generosity, his bravery had been repeated again and again by the happy wife, and created amongst the common soldiery a complete sensation in his favour; so that very many were found eager and willing to aid Juan Pacheco in his resolution to return the good conferred, and save his wife's benefactor at the hazard of his own life. He had already been disgusted with his life in the camp; the beauty of his young wife had exposed him and her to

insults which, as he had no power to retaliate, urged him to seize the first opportunity to desert. One by one the prisoners had been led to execution, and one by one had fallen. Reginald, unable to support himself from wounds and exhaustion, though quite conscious he was placed there to die, was loosely bound to a post, as a better mark to the soldiers who fronted him. They fired—the girthings which bound him gave way, and a dead faint succeeded; but they had fired with harmless weapons, and when Reginald awoke from what he fancied death, he found himself in a covered cart, carefully watched and tended by the young mother and her boy, whom he recognized at once; his captain's uniform placed on the body of a young Spaniard who had fallen in battle, and whose features were not unlike those of De Vere, no doubt causing Edward Kenrich's belief in his being really Reginald, and his having been in consequence honourably interred. Juan Pacheco's knowledge of the wilds and intricate windings of his native country enabled him ably to elude the pursuit to which, as a deserter, he was liable; but De Vere suffered so dreadfully from alternate fever and exhaustion, during the journey, that many times his kind preservers feared their care would be in vain, and death would release him ere earthly rest and shelter were obtained. But at length the goal was gained—a small cottage belonging to a monastery of Saint Iago, situated in so retired a pass of the Pyrenees that none but mountaineers knew of its existence. Under the skilful medical aid of one of the fathers Reginald slowly regained health; but it was not till nearly a year after his supposed death that he regained the elasticity and entire use of his limbs, such as he had previously enjoyed. The severity of monastic discipline did not characterise the monks of Saint Iago. They were but few in number; old and respectable men, who had turned from the distracting turmoils of their unhappy country, and sought peace in study and deeds of kindness. In one of these aged men Reginald discovered an uncle of his mother—one who had always mourned her departure to another land, and union with a heretic, but who had loved her to the end, and was willing to receive with affection any of her children. The fearful sufferings and deep melancholy of the young Englishman had attracted him, even before the picture of his mother, which Reginald constantly wore discovered the re-

lationship between them. For nearly two years De Vere remained in this solitude; the fear of drawing down ruin and misery on his preservers prevented his writing to his commanding officer, to state his escape—Padre Felipo alleging the state of the country was such, that his letter might not only be seized and himself retaken, but Pacheco exposed to the danger of execution as a deserter and abettor of his escape. After the first year he made many attempts to communicate with his friends in England—Annie Grey amongst the number—but he never heard in return; therefore concluded, and with justice, that his letters had never reached a post.

But the two years of solitude, instead of being a mental blank, was the hinge of circumstances on which his whole after-career turned. To amuse his confinement and please the children, he resumed the favourite amusement of his boyhood, carving in wood and stone, and with such success as to astonish himself. He found an admirer and instructor where he little expected it, in one of the monks; and under his guidance, and emboldened by encouragement, made such rapid progress, that his whole soul became wrapt in the desire to visit Italy, and study there. His pantings for fame were now defined—a flash of light seemed to have irradiated his whole being, and to burst the chains of destiny, which still cramped energy and life. It was the consciousness of genius, the proud conviction that he might indeed win the object of his love; win, and be worthy of her, and give her a name proud as those of the men of genius whose lives they had read and venerated together.

The days when all the fortunes of the monks were devoted to their abbeys or to a patron saint were over, and Padre Felipo rejoiced at possessing the means effectually to aid his young relative. He settled on him a sum more than sufficient to gratify all his desires, and Reginald hesitated no longer to concentrate all his energies on this one pursuit. He went to Italy, adopting the name of his benefactor, which was also that of his mother; and the wish not to be known in England, until he had perfected himself in his art, caused him to retain it, even when no danger was attached to the acknowledgment of his existence.

But once in Italy, the yearning to hear of his family and friends became intense, while a strange feeling of dread with-

held him from again addressing Annie. It was two years and a half since they had parted, two since he had been reported dead. What might not have occurred in that interval? He had left her free, and so childlike, so simple in character, that how could he, how dared he indulge the hope that she had so returned his love, as to remain single for his sake? He had never spoken of love to her; his affection was so pure and true, that it had withheld him from linking, by a too impetuous avowal, her fate with one so gloomy as his own. His genius seemed now to promise a fairer destiny, but his heart, still darkened by the fearful creed of fatalism, believed that his very promise would be dashed with gloom, and from the ascendancy of this unhappy feeling, failing in courage to address Annie herself, he wrote to one of his sisters, beseeching a speedy reply, with information of his father, and all she could learn of Miss Grey. The reply was many weeks before it came, pleading the usual excuse for unjustifiable silence—stress of occupation and dislike to letter-writing. Basil De Vere was in America, and Miss Grey on the eve of marriage with Lord St. Clair; the whole London world was full of it, on account of the disparity of years between the parties, and because Lord St. Clair had never seemed a marrying man; but that it was a settled affair there was not the smallest doubt. She wrote as if it could concern Reginald but little; but the pang was such as to confirm his fearful creed of an inexorable fate, and plunge him into a despondency, that genius itself seemed unable to remove. At first he worked at his art mechanically, but gradually his mind became aroused, and he tried to forget the heart's anguish in such persevering labour, that though to mere observers its effects were marvellous in so speedy a perfection, it was, in fact, but the natural consequence of unceasing mental and manual work. He constantly reproached himself for the agony he felt; what right had he to suppose he had had any hold upon her? Why could he not rejoice in her happy prospects, and write to tell her so? But weeks merged into months ere he could do this, and then he could not address herself, but wrote to Lord St. Clair, revealing his escape, his concealment, and finally the promised success of his art, with a calm, affectionate message to Annie. The letter cost him a bitter struggle, and with feverish restlessness he awaited the reply; but when none

came, bitter thoughts possessed him. He believed himself entirely forgotten and uncared for by his friends; and every energy cramped (save for his art) by his spiritless belief, he determined to remain so, and shun alike England and her sons. It was his fate, he inwardly declared, and he must bend to it; and thus, as is ever the case with these dark dreamers, he created for himself the lonely doom he imagined his destiny marked out. The death of his aged relative, in the monastery of St. Iago, placed a moderate fortune at his disposal, and enabled him still more successfully and earnestly to pursue his art. For a time the excitement attendant on the creation of his group roused him from himself, but the reaction was plunging him still deeper into the dark abyss of misanthropy and gloom when his discovery, through his own beautiful work, the sudden and almost overwhelming happiness bursting through the darkness of his spirit, in the consciousness that Annie was free, that she had ever loved him, completely changed the current of his thoughts, and permitted him a realization of joy, before which the dark creed of destiny fled for ever.

It is in a cheerful sitting-room of a picturesque dwelling on the banks of Keswick Lake that our readers may once more look on Annie Grey, ere they bid her farewell—Annie Grey indeed she was not; but there was little change visible, save that her fair cheek bore the rose, and her beautiful form the roundness of more perfect health, than when we last beheld her. The large French windows opened on a small but beautiful garden, where the taste of England and Italy was so combined, as to render its flowers and statues the admiration of every beholder. The opposite window opened on a conservatory of beautiful exotics, and exquisite specimens of painting and sculpture adorned the room itself. An uncovered harp filled one corner, on which the evening sun, shining full from the stained glass of the western window, flung tints as bright and changing as those of the kaleidoscope. A *hortus siccus*, opened on a group half arranged, was on a table, at which Lady Emily St. Clair was seated, and Annie was standing at her side, with a volume of poems in her hand.

“You idle girl! you would have found what I wanted in five minutes a few years ago. What are you thinking about?

Ah, Reginald, you are just in time, or Annie's restlessness would have invaded your sanctum, depend upon it."

"And had I not cause? A whole hour, nearly two, after your promised time; and your cheek pale, and your brow burning! Dearest, do not let your art be dearer than your wife!"

"What! jealous of all my marble figures, love? For shame!" replied her husband, playfully, twining his arm round her, and kissing her cheek; "but I will plead guilty to fatigue to-night, and you shall cure me by my favourite song."

Annie flew to her harp, and De Vere, flinging himself on an easy chair, drank in the sounds with an intensity of delight which he never believed *that* song could have had the power to produce. "Yes!" he exclaimed, as her sweet voice ceased, "what are palaces and their pleasures compared to an hour like this? There is, indeed, 'no place like home;' what, oh! what would the artist and the student be without it?"

"Why, how is this, Signor Rinaldo? what extraordinary spell has been flung over you, so to change your opinion of a song that once you would not even hear?" laughingly exclaimed Lord St. Clair, springing from the balcony into the room. Good evening, Mrs. De Vere; I have some inclination to arrest you for using unlawful witchcraft on this gentleman, even as I once thought of seizing him for allowing you to die of grief for his loss, when he was all the time in life!"

"Guilty, guilty; we both plead guilty," replied Reginald, in the same tone; "but my guilt is of far deeper dye; my Annie's witchery has but thrown such a halo over my home, that all which speaks of its charm is as sweet to my ear as to my heart. I am changed, St. Clair, and not merely in loving a song I once despised," he added, with much feeling, "but in being enabled to trace a hand of love, where once I beheld but remorseless fate; and my wife has done this, so gently, so silently, that I guessed not her influence until I found myself joining her own lowly prayers, and believing in the same sustaining faith."

"And has she explained its mystery?" inquired Lady Emily, with earnest interest.

"No, dear friend ; nor do I need it now. The belief that a God of infinite love and compassion ordains all things, yet leaves us the perfect exercise of our free will, and in that freedom, and the acts thence ensuing, works out His divine decrees, constraining no man, yet bringing our most adverse wills to work out His heavenly rule—this is a belief that must be *felt*, it cannot be explained, and thrice blessed are they on whom its unspeakable comfort is bestowed !"

“Cast thy Bread upon the Waters; thou shalt find it after many days.”

“WHY, Willie, what is the matter?” inquired Edward Langley, entering his father’s office one evening after business hours, and finding its sole tenant, a boy of fourteen or fifteen, leaning both arms on one of the high desks, and hiding his face within them, whilst his slight figure shook with uncontrollable sobs. “And how came that drawer open?” he continued, more sternly, perceiving a bureau drawer half open, so as to display its glittering contents, which looked disturbed. “I hope you have not been doing anything wrong, Willie.”

“Oh, sir, indeed—indeed I have not! Count the money, Mr. Edward; pray count it; see that it is all right, or I can never hold up my head again. The temptation was misery enough,” returned the boy, as well as his sobs would permit, and displaying such a countenance of suffering, as to enlist all Edward’s sympathy at once.

“But, my good boy, what could have tempted you? You seem so to feel the enormity of the sin, that I cannot imagine what thought came into your head.”

“I only thought of my poor father, sir. Oh, Mr. Edward, he is in prison, and my mother is too ill to work; and she and my poor little sisters are starving,” he replied, bursting again into tears. “I did not know what to do to help them; I give them all I earn, but that is so very little it only gives them a meal now and then; and then, when I saw that drawer accidentally left open, and remembered twelve pounds, only twelve pounds, would get my father out of prison, and he could work for us again, the horrid thought came into my head to take them; they would never be missed out of so many; and I had them in my hand. But then I thought what could I tell them at home? It would break my poor mother’s heart to think her Willie was dishonest; she could better bear hunger and grief than that, sir; and I knew I could not hide it from her; and so I dashed them back! They seemed to scorch me! Oh, Mr. Edward, indeed, indeed I speak the truth!”

Edward did believe him, and he told him so. There was little need to speak harshly; the boy's own conscience had been his judge. To satisfy him, however, he counted the money, found it correct, and after talking to him a little while, kindly yet impressively, promised to do what he could for his father, and left him, indelibly impressing that evening upon Willie's mind, by never reverting to it again.

The tale, which his inquiries elicited, was a very common one. Willie's father had been an artificer in one of the manufacturing towns; but too eager for advancement, he imprudently threw up his situation and tried independent business. Matters grew worse and worse; his family increased and his means diminished. Hearing of an excellent opening at New York, for an artificer like himself, he worked day and night to obtain sufficient means to transport himself and family across the Atlantic, and support them till a business could be established. His wife ably aided him, when unhappily he was tempted to embark all his little savings in one of the bubbles of the day, which he was confidently assured would be so successful as to permit his embarking for America at once, and so seize the opening offered. Few speculators had, perhaps, a better excuse; but fortune did not favour him more than others; it failed, and he was ruined. Three months afterwards he was thrown into prison for the only debt he had ever incurred, and though he had friends to persuade him to his ruin, he had none to liquidate his debt. His wife's health, already overworked, sunk under privation and sorrow; and though she toiled even from her fevered pallet, her feeble earnings were not sufficient to give her children bread.

Edward Langley was a creature of impulse; but in him impulse was the offspring of high principle, and, therefore, though the following it often caused him unlooked-for annoyance, it never led him wrong; and Willie's tale called forth sympathies impossible to be withstood.

"Edward," said one of his numerous sisters one evening, about three weeks afterwards, as they were sitting at tea—a meal which, bringing them all together, was universally enjoyed, "what have you done with grandpapa's birthday present? You were to do so many things with that money; and I have not heard you speak of it since my return."

"Because wonderful things have occurred since you left,

Fanny," said another shily. "He is going to accompany Mr. Morison's family to Italy and Paris; and bring us such splendid presents. His fair Julia cannot go without him, and he has promised to join them."

"Wrong, Miss Ellen, I am not going," was the reply, with rather more *brusquerie* than usual.

"Why, have you quarrelled?"

"Not exactly."

"But she will be offended, Ned; I am sure I should be."

"No, you would not, Annie, if you knew my reasons."

"What are they, Edward, dear? Do tell me, I am so curious."

"Of course, or you would not be a woman!"

Against this all his sisters expostulated at once; and even his mother expressed curiosity, adding, that he had talked of this continental trip so long, and with so much glee, it must be a disappointment to give it up.

"It is; but I do not regret it."

"But you must have a reason."

"The very best of all reasons; I cannot afford it."

"Come to me for the needful, Edward," said his father.

"I cannot give you luxuries; but this is for your improvement."

"Thank you most heartily, my dear father, but I am, rather I was, richer than any of you know. I earned so much for my last engraving."

"And you never told us," said his mother and sisters, reproachfully.

"I did not, because it was already appropriated. I wanted exactly that sum to add to my grandfather's gift; and that was what I worked so hard for."

"To purchase some bridal gift," said Fanny, archly.

"No, Fan, I never mean to purchase love."

"But if the lady requires to be so conciliated?"

"Then she is not worth having."

"Of course not," rejoined Annie. "But come, Edward, you have never kept anything from us before. What is this mystery?"

"Out with it," laughingly pursued Ellen. "Julia Morison will not thank you for preferring anything to accompanying her, I can tell you; so, as Annie says, what is this mystery?"

"No mystery at all, girls. You will all be disappointed when I tell you ; so you had better let it alone."

But beset on all sides, even by his father and mother, Edward told the simple truth, which our readers no doubt have already guessed. His money had been applied in releasing Willie's father from prison ; restoring his mother to health, by giving her and her children nourishing food, securing a passage for them all to New York, and investing the trifling surplus for their use on their arrival. He told his tale hurriedly, as if he feared to be accused of folly, and his father did somewhat blame him. He was provoked that the little scheme of pleasure and improvement, which Edward had anticipated so many weeks, should be frustrated ; and annoyed that he should be disappointed, though the disappointment was perfectly voluntary. How could he tell that the man's story was true ? How was he sure the money would produce the good effect he hoped ? He must say he thought it a pity, a very great pity ; a visit to Paris would be so improving ; Mr. Morison's family such a desirable connection—and other regrets, which, without being a very worldly parent, were not perhaps unnatural.

"My dear father," was Edward's earnest and affectionate rejoinder, "do not be vexed for my sake. A visit to the Continent would no doubt have been improving ; but I will work doubly hard in dear old England, and that, though it may not be as much pleasure, will be just as serviceable. With regard to Miss Morison," his cheek slightly flushed, "if her affections are only to be secured by being constantly at her side, and always playing the lover, there could be no happiness in a nearer connection for either. A separation for three or four months can surely have no effect on real regard, and I am quite willing to subject both myself and Julia to the ordeal. As to not being sure of doing the good I hope—who can be ? I do believe that poor fellow's story, I confess, and strongly believe he will do well ; but I do not mean to give the subject another thought, except to work the harder. The money is as much gone as freely given, and I expect as little reward as if I had thrown it on the waters—"

"Where thou shall find it after many days," continued his mother, so affectionately and approvingly, that Edward threw his arm round her and kissed her tenderly. "You have

done right, my dear boy ; and if Julia Morison does not think so, she is not worthy your love."

How quick is woman's, above all, a mother's penetration. From the first allusion to Miss Morison in the preceding conversation, she knew that something had occurred between them to annoy, if it did not wound her son ; and the moment she heard the story she guessed the actual fact. Perhaps her penetration in this instance was aided by previous observation. She had never liked Miss Morison, desirable as from worldly motives the connection might be. Edward, youth-like, had been captivated by her beauty and vivacity, and gratified by her very marked preference for himself. His complete unconsciousness that he really was the handsomest and most engaging young man of the town of L——, by depriving him of all conceit, increased Miss Julia's fascination. Mr. Morison was member for the county, and had made himself universally popular ; and certainly took marked notice of Edward. The good people of L—— were too simple-minded to discover that their member's attractions were merely graces of manner ; and that he noticed Edward only because he was perfectly secure that his daughter would never do such a foolish thing as to promise her hand to the son of a country attorney, however agreeable he might be.

Edward's wish to accompany them to the Continent met with decided approval. Mr. Morison thought the young man would save him a great deal of trouble, as a kind of gentleman valet, without a salary ; and Miss Julia was delighted at this unequivocal proof of his devotion, and at the amusement she promised herself in playing off her country beau on the Continent, his simplicity being the shield to cover her manœuvres ; besides, he would be such an excellent *pis aller*, that she need never be without a worshipper.

That such a person could appreciate Edward's real character, or enter into his motives for, and his disappointment in, not accompanying her, was impossible. For regret, even for anger, he had prepared himself, nay, might have been disappointed had she evinced no emotion ; but for the cold sneer, first of doubt, then of unequivocal contempt, which was her sole rejoinder to his agitated confession, he was not prepared, and it chilled his very heart. Still he tried to deceive himself, and believe that all she said of benevolence, disinterestedness, and a long et-cetera, was the sympathy he yearned

for ; but the tone and manner with which she informed her father in his presence of his change of purpose, and its praiseworthy cause, could not, even by a lover more infatuated than Edward, have been misunderstood ; his spirit rose, and with it his self-respect. He said very little, but that little convinced both Julia and her father that he was not quite the simpleton which they had supposed him.

He left them, wounded to the core ; to his warm, generous nature, worldliness was abhorrent even in a man, and in a woman it seemed to him something so unnatural, so revolting, that it dispersed at once the bright creation of his enthusiastic fancy, and displayed Miss Morison almost in her true character.

Still, notwithstanding all this pain and disappointment, Edward never once regretted the impulse he had followed ; and when, about six or seven months afterwards, he received the most grateful letters from Willie and his father, informing him that the opening offered, though attended with many difficulties, promised fair, he felt the sacrifice was more than recompensed, and from that hour never thought of it himself again. But his assertion, that he would work the harder to make up for those continental advantages which he had lost, was no idle boast ; he did so well, that even his father forgot his vexation ; and his industry united with great personal economy, enabled him to give his sisters richer and more useful presents than the *bijouterie* which he had laughingly promised to bring them from France.

The marriage of Miss Julia Morison with some foreign Count, before six months elapsed, had happily no effect on Edward's equanimity ; it might, nay, it did cause a transient pang, but he recovered it much sooner than his father did the loss of so desirable a connection.

"Never mind it, sir," was Edward's laughing entreaty ; "I would rather earn my own independence, and make a connection through my own exertions than by the richest marriage I could make."

"That's just like your mother, boy," said his father, somewhat pettishly, "as if all depended on one's self."

"Thank you for the likeness, father. When I can bring you a daughter to be to me what my mother is to you, I shall have formed a desirable connection, though my wife be not set in gold."

And this even his father acknowledged, when, two years

afterwards, Edward married the daughter of their vicar, who proved in his own person that influence is not always inseparable from wealth, but may be found with worth as well. Time rolled on ; twenty, thirty years. In the multitude of great and trifling events, which make up the sum of human life, during those years Edward Langley had so entirely forgotten the generous deed of his early youth, that he would have found it difficult to recal even the name of Willie's parents. His perseverance and talent had been crowned with such success, that when only eight-and-twenty he was taken into partnership by one of the first engravers of the metropolis. For twenty more years the business so flourished as to make all the principals very wealthy men ; and Edward looked forward in two or three more years to resign in favour of his son and retire himself from active business. He had never been ambitious, and a series of domestic trials in the loss of six children out of nine, all of that most interesting age when childhood is giving place to youth, caused him to turn with clinging love to those who remained, longing more to enjoy an Englishman's home than to continue amassing wealth.

Greatly against his wishes and advice, engagements and speculations had been entered into by the firm to an immense extent, more especially with establishments abroad. The dishonesty of distant agents, and the careless supineness, if not equal dishonour, of one of the principals at home, occasioned ruin to all, of course including Langley, though he had been most unjustifiably kept in ignorance of the real extent of their speculating schemes. Yet his high integrity enabled him to bear up against this sudden change of circumstances with more fortitude than any of his companions.

His wife's little property had never been touched, and he was therefore enabled to retire to a very small cottage in Cheshire, which soon displayed the refined taste and artistic skill of its gentle-minded inmates, to an extent that completely concealed their very humble means. Not that they were ashamed of their poverty ; but the same self-respect that prompted their horror of all pretension, and resolution to live strictly within their means, threw a comfort and refinement around and within their lowly home, which the wealthiest might have envied.

For himself, Edward Langley would have been as happy as in the height of his prosperity ; but he could not help feeling

a very pardonable pang at this sad change in the prospects of his children. His son, emulating his firmness, sought and obtained an excellent situation in a thriving engraving establishment in Edinburgh, where his father's name and character spoke for him more forcibly than the highest premium. It was on Helen Langley the blow had fallen heaviest; the only one of his daughters who had reached the age of nineteen (for Fanny was still a child), frail, delicate in seeming as a beautiful flower. She had been nursed in luxury and affection, and guarded from even the approach of a storm; the deserved darling of all who knew her, rich and poor, her parents' love for her amounted almost to idolatry. Engaged to the son of one of her father's partners, then studying as a physician, a bright and happy future shone before them, when the thunderbolt fell before either had seen a cloud. George Ashley was summoned from Paris just as his diploma was obtained, and he was weaving fairy dreams of a speedy union with his Helen; recalled, not as he believed, still to study and gradually attain eminence, but to give up all ambitious dreams, and work as a general practitioner for actual subsistence. To marry before he had even the prospect of a connection and employment was absolute madness; to live any distance from Helen he felt was quite as impossible; so he settled himself in the old town of Chester, about three miles from her home, and for her sake exerted himself more than he had once believed was in his nature. At first, youth and excitement beheld only the brighter side; but after six months' trial, so endless and little remunerating seemed his toil, that he sunk into the deepest despondency, which neither Mr. and Mrs. Langley's kind advice, nor Helen's sweet counsels could remove.

Fearfully would Mr. Langley look on his darling, dreading that this constant pressure of anxiety and suspense would be as fatal to her as disease had been to her sisters; but though more serious than had been her disposition before, it was not the seriousness of gloom, but rather of a firm yet gentle spirit, forming internally some resolution which required thought and time for development. Her smile was as joyous, her voice as gleeful, as in happier years; her pursuits continued with the same zeal, if not with deeper earnestness. To persuade her to annul her engagement never entered either parent's mind, but the long vista of

dreary years which they believed must intervene ere it could be fulfilled, was literally their only thought of anxious and unmitigated gloom.

"Give me up, Helen! I have no right to fetter your young life with an engagement which heaven only knows when we shall fulfil," passionately exclaimed young Ashley, about seven months after their misfortunes. "Your sweet face, and sweeter temper, and lovely mind must win you a position in life far higher than I can ever offer. You were only seen at the ball the other night to be admired."

"That unfortunate ball! I only went to gratify papa; and you are jealous, George, that your poor Helen was admired."

"No, Helen, no! I gloried in it; for I knew you were mine, mine in heart, faith, all but name. But then I thought how selfish, how utterly selfish I was still to claim you; to behold you wearing out your young life in all the sickness of hope deferred; when, by resigning you, you might be rich, admired, followed, occupy the station you deserve, and—"

"Be very happy, dearest George? This is a strange mood," she said, half reproachfully, half playfully. "Come, send it away, for it is not like you. I am very sorry I cannot oblige you; but as I consider myself as much yours as if the sacred words had actually been said, *you* may divorce me if you will, but *I* will never give you up."

"Helen, darling Helen! forgive me," he replied, his repentance as impetuous as all his other feelings. "Oh! if you would but be mine at once, I am sure I should succeed; with such a comforter, such a cheerer, work would be welcome. I would never despond again, dearest; loving as we do, why should we not wed at once? We must then do well."

"Must do well because we love, George? Yes, and so we shall, but not if we wed now. Ah, now you look reproachfully again. Dearest, you know I would not shrink from any hardship shared with you. I will work with you, work for you, if needed; but, young as we both are, is it not better to work apart a few years, that we may rest together? Think what five years may do for both, it may be less; I put it only to the extent. You are succeeding, and will succeed still more, the more you are known; but had you a wife and an establishment to support now, even with my very

hardest exertions, we could not keep free from debt; and love, potent as it is, could not then guard sorrow from our dwelling. When wedded, if unlooked-for misfortunes come, we will bear them, and comfort and strengthen each other; but would it be right, would it be wise to invite them by a too early marriage? My own dear George, let us work while we have youth and hope, and trust me we shall be very happy yet."

It was scarcely possible to remain unconvinced by such fond reasoning; but still Ashley referred with deep despondency to the long, long interval which must elapse ere that happiness could be obtained.

"Not so long as you fancy, George. I never mean to be a rich man's wife, though you invited me to be so just now. I do not even intend to wait for comforts, but only just for that competency which will prevent those evil spirits, care and irritation, from entering our home; and to forward this, listen to my plan, dearest George." And with some little tremour, for she dreaded his disapproval, she told him that she had accepted an engagement as governess, in a family at Manchester; a Dr. Murray, who was a widower, with four or five children: she had been mentioned by a mutual friend, and the Doctor was so pleased with Mrs. Norton's account, that he agreed even to give the high salary Helen required, without seeing her. He had said that his mother, who lived with him, was too infirm to bear his children much with her, and he therefore wanted more from his governess than merely to teach; he was quite willing to pay for it, but a lady he must have."

"To bear with all his whims and fancies; to be tormented with spoiled children; put up with the old woman's infirmities; be insulted by pampered servants. Helen, you shall not go!" exclaimed George.

"Now, George, don't be foolish. I do not expect one of these evils; and if I meet with them I can bear them, with such a hope before me," she continued, fondly looking in his face.

"But governesses are so insulted, so degraded."

"Not insulted, if they respect themselves; not degraded, if those they love do not think so. But perhaps, George, you are too proud to marry a governess."

A passionate reproach was his reply.

"Well then, love, listen to me a little longer. Mamma still means to allow me enough for my quiet dress, so that I can put by every shilling that I earn; and only think what that may come to in a few years. Then I have a reason for choosing Manchester as a temporary home; you know I can draw, but do you not know that I can design—William took so much pleasure in teaching me—and, in a manufacturing town like Manchester, I may not only be able to use this knowledge, but perhaps gradually get introductions which will allow my successful pursuit of the art even as—as your wife, dearest George; and then, what with our mutual economy and mutual savings beforehand, and mutual work afterwards—oh, our future will shine as bright as it did before this storm!"

"God for ever bless you, Helen, my own darling! you are indeed my best hope, my best comforter already," murmured George, half choked with strong emotion, which he tried to conceal by pressing her to his bosom, and kissing her cheek. "How can your parents part with you, and what will drive away my fits of gloom, when I cannot come to you for comfort?"

"Hope!" was her instant reply, in a tone so glad, so thrilling, that it pervaded his whole being ever afterwards like a spell. "Think, dearest George, of the hundreds who have to labour on, through lonely years, uncheered by either love or hope; who must work, wearily and unceasingly, only for means of existence. We have health and youth and love, and, above all, mutual faith to sustain us; and therefore we must be happy. You do not know how powerful is a woman's will."

"Not more so than man's," replied Ashley, more cheerfully than he had yet spoken. "Helen, you have shamed me. I will become more worthy of such love."

Helen looked very much as if she thought that was impossible, but she did not say so.

It was no light task this gentle girl had undertaken. Hopefully as she had spoken and felt, her resolution had neither been formed nor matured without suffering, nor had it been the least portion of the trial to win over her parents to her wishes; but the wisdom of her plan was so evident, that they conquered all selfish feeling for their child's sake, and tried to be comforted by Mrs. Norton's assurance, that

in Dr. Murray's family Helen would be as comfortable as she could be away from home.

And so she was. In fact, so kindly was she welcomed and treated, that she could scarcely understand it. Dr. Murray was a man in reality under fifty, but looking much older, from a life of some hardship and much labour, the fruits of which he now enjoyed in the possession of a comfortable income. His manner, in general blunt and rough, always softened towards Helen, whom he ever addressed with such respect, as well as kindness, that all George's terror of her encountering insolence very speedily dispersed. Mrs. Murray had evidently not been born a lady, but her regard for Helen was shown in such a multiplicity of little kindnesses, that no feeling could be excited towards her but gratitude and love. Constantly as she was occupied with her pupils, Helen's careful economy of time yet enabled her actually to accomplish the purpose she had in her mind when she chose Manchester for her residence. The idle, nay even the less energetic, would have declared it was impossible for any one person to do what she did; but not even the Doctor or his mother knew how her moments of made leisure were employed.

So nearly three years glided by; Helen's health, instead of failing, as her friends had feared, actually improved; and George declared there must have been some spell in her words or her example, for his prospects were brightening every year. Helen only smiled, and told him that the spell was simply in his own more hopeful exertions.

Dr. Murray's house was the frequent resort not only of men of talent from the higher ranks, but frequently of clever manufacturers and artificers, in whose works the Doctor and his mother were always particularly interested. It happened that Helen was present one evening when one of these gentlemen was regretting his inability to procure an appropriate design for some window curtains, of a new material, which he had invented; being no artist himself, he could not perhaps define his wishes with sufficient technicality, but all which he had seen were either so small as to have no effect, or so large as to look coarse and common. Before he departed the conversation changed, and Dr. Murray thought no more about it, until at a very early hour the next morning Helen entered his study with a roll of paper, which

she asked him to examine, and tell her if he thought it the kind of thing Mr. Grey required. His astonishment that she should remember any thing about it was only equalled by his admiration of her work. So great was his delight, that he declared he would convey it to Mr. Grey himself, and get her something handsome for it. He was not disappointed. Mr. Grey seized it with rapture, declared it was the very thing he meant; offered to pay any sum for it, and was struck dumb with astonishment, when told it was designed by the elegant young lady to whom he had been introduced the previous night, and whom he had scarcely deigned to notice, believing her the same as most young ladies—a very pretty but a very useless piece of goods. One of his young men, who had been eagerly examining it, said he was sure it was by the same hand as several other elegant designs which they had been in the habit of purchasing the last two years, but the name of whose inventor they had never been able to discover. He brought some, and compared them, and even the Doctor's unpractised eye could discern the same hand throughout. But how could Miss Langley have accomplished all this, and yet so done her duty to his children? It was incomprehensible; and the good Doctor hurried home to have the mystery solved. Helen speedily explained it, adding ingenuously, that she had worked in secret, only because she feared the Doctor or his friends might think she must neglect her duty to her charge to pursue this employment; but since he had expressed such perfect satisfaction, she had resolved on taking the first opportunity to tell him all.

"But my good young lady, you must have some very strong incentive for all this exertion." Blushing deeply, Helen acknowledged that she had. "Is it a secret, my dear child?"

For a minute she hesitated, then frankly told her story. The Doctor was so much affected by it as to surprise her, and expressed the most unfeigned regret that he had not known it before.

Not a fortnight afterwards, Mr. Grey sought an interview with Miss Langley: he wished, he said, to monopolize her talents, and offered, in consequence, with sufficient liberality as to tempt her to adhere to his employment, instead of taking the chance of larger remuneration for occasional

designs. It was for this Helen had worked and prayed and hoped—this which she had looked to, to follow even as a wife, and in her husband's house; and therefore we leave to our reader's imagination the gratitude with which it was accepted, the joy with which she wrote to her parents, to George, to whom her woman's heart so yearned in that moment of rejoicing, that for the first time since she had loved him she could scarcely write for tears. But the letters she received in reply sadly alloyed this dawning happiness. Her sister Fanny was dangerously ill; the same age, the same disease which had been so fatal to her family. All George's skill, and it was great, had been ineffectual; nothing could save her, the distracted father wrote; she was doomed like all the rest. But to Helen there was no such word as doom. She flew to the Doctor, repeated to him as well as she could the symptoms, and the remedies applied, conjuring him to think of something which would alleviate, if it could not cure. What could she write?

"Write, my dear child! that will be of little use; we will go together." And though there were no railroads in that direction, man's omnipotent will carried Helen and the Doctor to Mr Langley's cottage in so short a space, that it seemed to Helen like the transfigurations of a dream.

For four days fearful were the alternations of hope and dread; the fifth, hope predominated, and by the end of the week, promptness and skill in the adoption of an entirely new mode of treatment were so successful, that Dr. Murray was blessed again and again by the enraptured parents as, under heaven, the preserver of their child. But, though all danger was over, the Doctor did not offer to quit the cottage for another week, which time he spent mostly in his patient's room, and in earnest conversation with young Ashley. Helen had intended to remain in his family till he could meet with some one to supply her place; but this he now declared should not be. She must be wanted at home, at least till she could finish her preparations for entering another; for, if he were George, he would not wait another month; she had had her own will too long already, and the future was bright enough now to permit him to have his. Helen's hand was clasped in her young sister's as the good Doctor spoke, but George's arm was round her, and her reply seemed to satisfy all parties.

All Mr. Langley's attempts to obtain a private interview with his guest were ineffectual until the day of his intended departure, when, with trembling hands and swimming eyes, he tried to press a pocket-book into the Doctor's hand. "It is inadequate, wholly inadequate," he said, with emotion. "You have saved my child; so restored her, that she is better than she has been since her birth. You have given us your time, your skill, and you shrink even from my thanks. Were I a rich man, I should feel as I do now, that a fortune could not repay you; but, as a poor man, do not insult me by refusing the fee I can bestow."

"Mr. Langley," was the reply, "I tell you truth, when I assure you that you owe me nothing. I am in your debt far more, far more than my professional skill ever could repay."

"In my debt, Doctor? Ah, you mean my Helen's services; but those you have so liberally remunerated, and treated her with such kindness, that you have made me your debtor even there. No, no, I cannot allow Helen, precious as she is, to come between me and justice."

"I do not allude to Miss Langley, sir," and the Doctor spoke as if addressing a superior. "Her inestimable services to me and mine, indeed nothing can repay; but it was not for her sake I came to you. The debt I allude to is of more than thirty years' standing, and is due to you alone. On my first return to England, your position was higher, your fortune far superior to mine; and had I then sought you, it might still have been to receive benefits at your hand. In your noble endurance of misfortune, it would have been an insult to have discharged my debt, and therefore I waited and prayed for some opportunity not only to do justice, but to evince gratitude. If I have made your child happy, and shortened the term of her heroic exertions, you owe it to yourself. I could not take from you even the full amount of this visit, regarding it merely as professional, for I owe you in actual money more than that." Mr. Langley looked and expressed bewilderment; the Doctor's manner was too earnest to permit a doubt; but he tried in vain to recollect to what he could allude.

"Have you so completely forgotten Willie Murray, Mr. Edward?" continued his companion, much agitated. "Willie Murray, the poor boy you not only saved from sin, but made so happy by your generous kindness to his family."

Mr. Langley, I am that boy ; my character, my success I owe to you. How can such a debt ever be repaid ?"

Mr. Langley's astonishment was so great, as literally to deprive him for the moment of words. He only remembered Willie Murray as a pale, thin, intellectual boy of fifteen. To recognise him in the tall, stout, somewhat aged-looking man before him, required more imagination than he chanced to possess ; but to doubt the identity was impossible. He grasped his hand warmly, and insisted on his giving him that very hour the history of his life. Our readers, however, must be contented with a very brief sketch of these details. Suffice it, that neither Willie nor his father rose to independence without constant toil and unwearying perseverance. Profiting by the trials of earlier years, the elder Murray laboured with an energy and skill which, until his timely release from prison, had appeared foreign to his character. Many difficulties he had to encounter ; but once the manufactory established, competence was secured ; and as his labour rather increased than slackened, fortune followed. His son's marked preference for the medical profession grieved him at first, but he lived long enough to see that he had chosen wisely, and at his death left all his children comfortably provided for, each possessing a share in the manufactory which his energy had established. Willie had always yearned to return to England, and did so directly he became a widower, his mother gladly accompanying him. He had finished his medical education in France, had a large practice in America, and, from his general intelligence, proved skill, and wide-handed benevolence, very speedily became popular in England. But amid all the chances and changes of his busy life, neither the fearful temptation of his boyhood nor Edward Langley's generous kindness had ever been forgotten.

Joyous indeed, and full of hope, was Helen Langley's bridal morn, though neither pomp nor fashion attended it, such as might have been the case some few years before. On retiring to change her dress, Helen found a heavy packet, directed to Mrs. George Ashley, on her table. It was a purse, containing three hundred sovereigns, with the following brief lines :—

"This is your father's gift, though it comes through me. I do but return a sum lent by him to me and mine, with the accumulated interest of three-and-thirty years. It is now added to the store earned by Helen Langley's meritorious exertions.

"WILLIAM MURRAY."

"Mother!" exclaimed Mr. Langley, after perusing this note, and turning to his now aged parent with some emotion, 'do you remember your words, when I told you the money was as freely given, and I expected as little reward as if I had thrown it on the waters, 'that I should find it after many days?' You were right, I have found it indeed!"

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

CHAPTER I.

Credulity is always the Cause of Misery.

IT is well known that the Grand Seignior amuses himself by going at night, in disguise, through the streets of Constantinople; as the Caliph Haroun Alraschid used formerly to do in Bagdad.

One moonlight night, accompanied by his grand-vizier he traversed several of the principal streets of the city, without seeing anything remarkable. At length, as they were passing a rope-maker's, the Sultan recollected the Arabian story of Cogia-Hasan Alhabal, the rope-maker, and his two friends, Saad and Saadi, who differed so much in their opinion concerning the influence of fortune over human affairs.

"What is your opinion on this subject?" said the Grand Seignior to his vizier.

"I am inclined, please your majesty," replied the vizier, "to think that success in the world depends more upon prudence than upon what is called luck, or fortune."

"And I," said the Sultan, "am persuaded that fortune does more for men than prudence. Do you not every day hear of persons who are said to be fortunate, or unfortunate? How comes it that this opinion should prevail amongst men if it be not justified by experience?"

"It is not for me to dispute with your majesty," replied the prudent vizier.

"Speak your mind freely; I desire and command it," said the Sultan.

"Then I am of opinion," answered the vizier, "that people are often led to believe others fortunate, or unfortunate, merely because they only know the general outline of their histories; and are ignorant of the incidents and events in which they have shown prudence or imprudence. I have heard, for instance, that there are at present, in this city, two men who are remarkable for their good and bad fortune—one is called *Murad the*

Unlucky, and the other *Saladin the Lucky*. Now, I am inclined to think, if we could hear their stories, we should find that one is of prudent and the other of an imprudent character."

"Where do these men live?" interrupted the Sultan. "I will hear their histories from their own lips before I sleep."

"Murad the Unlucky lives in the next square," said the vizier.

The Sultan desired to go thither immediately. Scarcely had they entered the square, when they heard the cry of loud lamentations. They followed the sound till they came to a house, of which the door was open; and where was a man tearing his turban and weeping bitterly. They asked the cause of his distress, and he pointed to the fragments of a china vase, which lay on the pavement at his door.

"This seems undoubtedly to be beautiful china," said the Sultan, taking up one of the broken pieces; "but can the loss of a china vase be the cause of such violent grief and despair?"

"Ah, gentlemen," said the owner of the vase, suspending his lamentations, and looking at the dress of the pretended merchants, "I see that you are strangers: you do not know how much cause I have for grief and despair! You do not know that you are speaking to Murad the Unlucky! Were you to hear all the unfortunate accidents that have happened to me, from the time I was born till this instant, you would perhaps pity me, and acknowledge I have just cause for despair."

Curiosity was strongly expressed by the Sultan; and the hope of obtaining sympathy inclined Murad to gratify it, by the recital of his adventures. "Gentlemen," said he, "I scarcely dare to invite you into the house of such an unlucky being as I am; but if you will venture to take a night's lodging under my roof, you shall hear at your leisure the story of my misfortunes."

The Sultan and the vizier excused themselves from spending the night with Murad; saying that they were obliged to proceed to their khan, where they should be expected by their companions: but they begged permission to repose themselves for half an hour in his house, and besought him to relate the history of his life, if it would not renew his grief too much to recollect his misfortunes.

Few men are so miserable as not to like to talk of their misfortunes, where they have, or where they think they have, any chance of obtaining compassion. As soon as the pretended merchants were seated, Murad began his story in the following manner:—

My father was a merchant of this city. The night before I was born he dreamed that I came into the world with the head of a dog, and the tail of a dragon ; and that, in haste to conceal my deformity, he rolled me up in a piece of linen, which unluckily proved to be the Grand Seignior's turban ; who, enraged at his insolence in touching his turban, commanded that his head should be struck off.

My father wakened before he lost his head ; but not before he had half lost his wits from the terror of his dream. Being a firm believer in predestination, he was persuaded that I should be the cause of some great evil to him ; and he took an aversion to me even before I was born. He considered his dream as a warning sent from above, and consequently determined to avoid the sight of me. He would not stay to see whether I should really be born with the head of a dog and the tail of a dragon ; but he set out the next morning on a voyage to Aleppo.

He was absent for upwards of five years ; and during that time my education was totally neglected. One day I inquired from my mother why I had been named Murad the Unlucky ? She told me that this name was given to me in consequence of my father's dream ; but she added that perhaps it might be forgotten, if I proved fortunate in my future life. My nurse, a very old woman, who was present, shook her head, with a look which I never shall forget, and whispered to my mother, loud enough for me to hear, "Unlucky he was, and is, and ever will be. Those that are born to ill luck cannot help themselves ; nor could any, but the great prophet Mahomet himself, do anything for them. It is a folly for an unlucky person to strive with his fate ; it is better to yield to it at once."

This speech made a terrible impression upon me, young as I then was ; and every accident that happened to me afterwards confirmed my belief in my nurse's prognostic. I was in my eighth year when my father returned from abroad. The year after he came home my brother Saladin was born, who was named Saladin the Lucky, because, the day he was born, a vessel freighted with rich merchandise for my father arrived safely in port.

I will not weary you with a relation of all the little instances of good fortune by which my brother Saladin was distinguished, even during his childhood. As he grew up, his success in everything he undertook was as remarkable as my ill luck in all that I attempted. From the time the rich vessel arrived we lived in splendour ; and the supposed prosperous state of my father's

affairs was of course attributed to the influence of my brother Saladin's happy destiny.

When Saladin was about twenty, my father was taken dangerously ill; and, as he felt that he should not recover, he sent for my brother to the side of his bed, and, to his great surprise, informed him that the magnificence in which we had lived had exhausted all his wealth; that his affairs were in the greatest disorder; for, having trusted to the hope of continual success, he had embarked in projects beyond his powers.

The sequel was, that he had nothing remaining to leave to his children but two large china vases, remarkable for their beauty, but still more valuable on account of certain verses inscribed upon them in an unknown character, which were supposed to operate as a talisman, or charm, in favour of their possessors.

Both these vases my father bequeathed to my brother Saladin; declaring he could not venture to leave either of them to me, because I was so unlucky that I should inevitably break it. After his death, however, my brother Saladin, who was blessed with a generous temper, gave me my choice of the two vases; and endeavoured to raise my spirits by frequently repeating that he had no faith either in good fortune or ill fortune.

I could not be of his opinion; though I felt and acknowledged his kindness, in trying to persuade me out of my settled melancholy. I knew it was in vain for me to exert myself because I was sure that, do what I would, I should still be Murad the Unlucky. My brother, on the contrary, was no ways cast down even by the poverty in which my father left us. He said he was sure he should find some means of maintaining himself, and so he did.

On examining our china vases, he found in them a powder of a bright scarlet colour; and it occurred to him that it would make a fine dye. He tried it; and after some trouble it succeeded to admiration.

During my father's lifetime, my mother had been supplied with rich dresses by one of the merchants who was employed by the ladies of the Grand Seignior's seraglio. My brother had done this merchant some trifling favours; and upon application to him, he readily engaged to recommend the new scarlet dye. Indeed it was so beautiful, that the moment it was seen it was preferred to every other colour. Saladin's shop was soon crowded with customers; and his winning manners and pleasant conversation were almost as advantageous to him as his scarlet dye.

On the contrary, I observed that the first glance at my melancholy countenance was sufficient to disgust every one who saw me. I perceived this plainly; and it only confirmed me the more in my belief in my own evil destiny.

It happened one day that a lady richly appavelled, and attended by two female slaves, came to my brother's house to make some purchases. He was out, and I alone was left to attend the shop. After she had looked over some goods, she chanced to see my china vase, which was in the room. She took a prodigious fancy to it, and offered me any price if I would part with it: but this I declined doing, because I believed that I should draw down upon my head some dreadful calamity if I voluntarily relinquished the talisman. Irritated by my refusal, the lady, according to the custom of her sex, became more resolute in her purpose; but neither entreaties nor money could change my determination. Provoked beyond measure at my obstinacy, as she called it, she left the house.

On my brother's return, I related to him what had happened, and expected that he would have praised me for my prudence: but on the contrary, he blamed me for the superstitious value I set upon the verses on my vase; and observed that it would be the height of folly to lose a certain means of advancing my fortune, for the uncertain hope of magical protection. I could not bring myself to be of his opinion; I had not the courage to follow the advice he gave. The next day the lady returned, and my brother sold his vase to her for ten thousand pieces of gold. This money he laid out in the most advantageous manner, by purchasing a new stock of merchandise. I repented when it was too late, but I believe it is part of the fatality attending certain persons, that they cannot decide rightly at the proper moment. When the opportunity has been lost, I have always regretted that I did not do exactly the contrary to what I had previously determined upon. Often, whilst I was hesitating, the favourable moment passed. Now this is what I call being unlucky. But to proceed with my story.

The lady who bought my brother Saladin's vase was the favourite of the Sultana, and all powerful in the seraglio. Her dislike to me, in consequence of my opposition to her wishes, was so violent that she refused to return to my brother's house while I remained there. He was unwilling to part with me; but I could not bear to be the ruin of so good a brother. Without telling him my design, I left his house, careless of what should become of me. Hunger, however, soon compelled

me to think of some immediate mode of obtaining relief. I sat down upon a stone before the door of a baker's shop: the smell of hot bread tempted me in, and with a feeble voice I demanded charity.

The master baker gave me as much bread as I could eat, upon condition that I should change dresses with him, and carry the rolls for him through the city this day. To this I readily consented; but I had soon reason to repent of my compliance. Indeed, if my ill-luck had not, as usual, deprived me at the critical moment of memory and judgment, I should never have complied with the baker's treacherous proposal. For some time before, the people of Constantinople had been much dissatisfied with the weight and quality of the bread furnished by the bakers. This species of discontent has often been the sure forerunner of an insurrection; and in these disturbances the master bakers frequently lose their lives. All these circumstances I knew, but they did not occur to my memory when they might have been useful.

I changed dresses with the baker; but scarcely had I proceeded through the adjoining street with my rolls, before the mob began to gather round me, with reproaches and execrations. The crowd pursued me even to the gates of the Grand Seignior's palace; and the Grand Vizier, alarmed at their violence, sent out an order to have my head struck off; the usual remedy in such cases being to strike off the baker's head.

I now fell upon my knees, and protested I was not the baker for whom they took me: that I had no connection with him; and that I had never furnished the people of Constantinople with bread that was not weight. I declared I had merely changed clothes with a master baker for this day; and that I should not have done so, but for the evil destiny which governs all my actions. Some of the mob exclaimed that I deserved to lose my head for my folly, but others took pity on me, and while the officer who was sent to execute the vizier's order turned to speak to some of the noisy rioters, those who were touched by my misfortune opened a passage for me through the crowd; and thus favoured I effected my escape.

CHAPTER II.

Folly has always an Excuse for itself.

I QUITTED Constantinople. My vase I had left in the care of my brother. At some miles' distance from the city, I over-

took a party of soldiers ; I joined them, and learning that they were going to embark with the rest of the Grand Seignior's army for Egypt, I resolved to accompany them. If it be, thought I, the will of Mahomet that I should perish, the sooner I meet my fate the better. The despondency into which I was sunk was attended by so great a degree of indolence that I scarcely would take the necessary means to preserve my existence. During our passage to Egypt I sat all day long upon the deck of the vessel, smoking my pipe ; and I am convinced that, if a storm had arisen, as I expected, I should not have taken my pipe from my mouth, nor should I have handled a rope, to save myself from destruction. Such is the effect of that species of resignation or torpor, whichever you please to call it, to which my strong belief in *fatality* had reduced my mind.

We, however, landed safely, contrary to my melancholy forebodings. By a trifling accident, not worth relating, I was detained longer than any of my companions in the vessel, when we disembarked ; and I did not arrive at the camp at El Arish till late at night. It was moonlight, and I could see the whole scene distinctly. There was a vast number of small tents scattered over a desert of white sand ; a few date-trees were visible at a distance ; all was gloomy, and all still ; no sound was to be heard but that of the camels feeding near the tents ; and as I walked on, I met with no human creature.

My pipe was now out, and I quickened my pace a little towards a fire, which I saw near one of the tents. As I proceeded, my eye was caught by something sparkling in the sand ; it was a ring. I picked it up and put it on my finger, resolving to give it to the public crier the next morning, who might find out its rightful owner ; but by ill-luck I put it on my little finger, for which it was much too large ; and as I hastened towards the fire to light my pipe, I dropped the ring. I stooped to search for it amongst the provender on which a mule was feeding, and the cursed animal gave me so violent a kick on the head, that I could not help roaring aloud.

My cries awakened those who slept in the tent near which the mule was feeding. Provoked at being disturbed, the soldiers were ready enough to think ill of me ; and they took it for granted that I was a thief, who had stolen the ring I pretended to have just found. The ring was taken from me by force ; and the next day I was bastinadoed for having found it : the officer persisting in the belief that stripes would

make me confess where I had concealed certain other articles of value, which had lately been missed in the camp. All this was the consequence of my being in a hurry to light my pipe, and of my having put the ring on a finger that was too little for it; which no one but Murad the Unlucky would have done.

When I was able to walk again after my wounds were healed, I went into one of the tents distinguished by a red flag, having been told that these were coffee-houses. Whilst I was drinking coffee, I heard a stranger near me complaining that he had not been able to recover a valuable ring he had lost; although he had caused his loss to be published for three days by the public crier, offering a reward of two hundred sequins to any one who should restore it. I guessed that this was the very ring which I had unfortunately found. I addressed myself to the stranger, and promised to point out to him the person who had forced it from me. The stranger recovered his ring; and being convinced that I had acted honestly, he made me a present of two hundred sequins, as some amends for the punishment which I had unjustly suffered on his account.

Now you would imagine that this purse of gold was advantageous to me. Quite the contrary: for it was the cause of new misfortunes.

One night, when I thought that the soldiers who were in the same tent with me were all fast asleep, I indulged myself in the pleasure of counting my treasure. The next day I was invited by my companions to drink sherbert with them. What they mixed with the sherbert which I drank I know not, but I could not resist the drowsiness it brought on. I fell into a profound slumber; and when I awoke I found myself lying under a date-tree, at some distance from the camp.

The first thing I thought of, when I came to my recollection, was my purse of sequins. The purse I found still safe in my girdle; but on opening it I perceived that it was filled with pebbles, and not a single sequin was left. I had no doubt that I had been robbed by the soldiers with whom I had drunk sherbert; and I am certain that some of them must have been awake on the night I counted my money: otherwise, as I had never trusted the secret of my riches to any one, they could not have suspected me of possessing any property; for ever since I kept company with them I had appeared to be in great indigence.

I applied in vain to the superior officers for redress: the

soldiers protested they were innocent; no positive proof appeared against them, and I gained nothing by my complaint but ridicule and ill-will. I called myself, in the first transport of my grief, by that name which, since my arrival in Egypt. I had avoided to pronounce: I called myself Murad the Unlucky! The name and the story ran through the camp; and I was accosted afterwards, very frequently, by this appellation. Some indeed varied their wit by calling me Murad with the purse of pebbles.

All that I had yet suffered is nothing compared to my succeeding misfortunes.

It was the custom at this time, in the Turkish camp, for the soldiers to amuse themselves with firing at a mark. The superior officers remonstrated against this dangerous practice, but ineffectually. Sometimes a party of soldiers would stop firing for a few minutes, after a message was brought them from their commanders; and then they would begin again, in defiance of all orders. Such was the want of discipline in our army, that this disobedience went unpunished. In the mean time the frequency of the danger made most men totally regardless of it. I have seen tents pierced with bullets in which parties were quietly seated smoking their pipes; whilst those without were preparing to take fresh aim at the red flag on the top.

This apathy proceeded, in some, from unconquerable indolence of body; in others, from the intoxication produced by the fumes of tobacco and of opium; but in most of my brother Turks it arose from the confidence which the belief in predestination inspired. When a bullet killed one of their companions, they only observed, scarcely taking the pipes from their mouths, "Our hour is not come: it is not the will of Mahomet that we should fall."

I own that this rash security appeared to me at first surprising; but it soon ceased to strike me with wonder; and it even tended to confirm my favourite opinion, that some were born to good and some to evil fortune. I became almost as careless as my companions, from following the same course of reasoning. "It is not," thought I, "in the power of human prudence to avert the stroke of destiny. I shall perhaps die to-morrow; let me, therefore, enjoy to-day."

I now made it my study every day to procure as much amusement as possible. My poverty, as you will imagine, restricted me from indulgence and excess; but I soon found means to

spend what did not actually belong to me. There were certain Jews, who were followers of the camp, and who, calculating on the probability of victory for our troops, advanced money to the soldiers, for which they engaged to pay these usurers exorbitant interest. The Jew to whom I applied traded with me also upon the belief that my brother Saladin, with whose character and circumstances he was acquainted, would pay my debts if I should fall. With the money I raised from the Jew I continually bought coffee and opium, of which I grew immoderately fond. In the delirium it created, I forgot all my past misfortunes and all fear of the future.

One day, when I had raised my spirits by an unusual quantity of opium, I was strolling through the camp, sometimes singing, sometimes dancing, like a madman, and repeating that I was not now Murad the Unlucky. Whilst these words were on my lips a friendly spectator, who was in possession of his sober senses, caught me by the arm, and attempted to drag me from the place where I was exposing myself. "Do you not see," said he, "those soldiers who are firing at a mark? I saw one of them just now deliberately taking aim at your turban; and observe, he is now reloading his piece." My ill-luck prevailed even at the instant, —the only instant in my life when I defied its power. I struggled with my adviser, repeating, "I am not the wretch you take me for; I am not Murad the Unlucky." He fled from the danger himself. I remained; and in a few seconds afterwards a ball reached me, and I fell senseless on the sand.

The ball was cut out of my body by an awkward surgeon, who gave me ten times more pain than was necessary. He was particularly hurried at this time, because the army had just received orders to march in a few hours, and all was confusion in the camp. My wound was excessively painful; and the fear of being left behind with those who were deemed incurable, added to my torments. Perhaps if I had kept myself quiet, I might have escaped some of the evils I afterwards endured; but as I have repeatedly told you, gentlemen, it was my ill fortune never to be able to judge what was best to be done till the time for prudence was past.

During that day, when my fever was at the height, and when my orders were to keep my bed, contrary to my natural habits of indolence, I rose a hundred times and went out of my tent, in the very heat of the day, to satisfy my curiosity as to the number of the tents which had not been struck, and of the soldiers who had not yet marched. The orders to march were

tardily obeyed, and many hours elapsed before our encampment was raised. Had I submitted to my surgeon's orders, I might have been in a state to accompany the most dilatory of the stragglers. I could have borne, perhaps, the slow motion of a litter, on which some of the sick were transported; but in the evening, when the surgeon came to dress my wounds, he found me in such a situation, that it was scarcely possible to remove me.

He desired a party of soldiers, who were left to bring up the rear, to call for me the next morning. They did so; but they wanted to put me upon the mule which I recollected, by a white streak on its back, to be the cursed animal that had kicked me whilst I was looking for the ring. I could not be prevailed upon to go upon this unlucky animal. I tried to persuade the soldiers to carry me, and they took me a little way; but soon growing weary of their burthen, they laid me down on the sand, pretending that they were going to fill a skin with water at a spring they had discovered, and bade me lie still and wait for their return.

I waited and waited, longing for the water to moisten my parched lips; but no water came—no soldiers returned; and there I lay for several hours, expecting every moment to breathe my last. I made no effort to move, for I was now convinced my hour was come, and that it was the will of Mahomet that I should perish in this miserable manner, and lie unburied like a dog,—a death, thought I, worthy of Murad the Unlucky.

My forebodings were not this time just. A detachment of English soldiers passed near the place where I lay; my groans were heard by them, and they humanely came to my assistance. They carried me with them, dressed my wound, and treated me with the utmost tenderness. Christians though they were, I must acknowledge that I had reason to love them better than any of the followers of Mahomet, my good brother only excepted.

Under their care I recovered; but scarcely had I regained my strength before I fell into new disasters. It was hot weather, and my thirst was excessive. I went out with a party, in hopes of finding a spring of water. The English soldiers began to dig for a well, in a place pointed out to them by one of their men of science. I was not inclined to such hard labour, but preferred sauntering on in search of a spring. I saw at a distance something that looked like a pool of water, and I pointed it out to my companions. Their man of science warned me, by his inter-

prefer, not to trust to this deceitful appearance, for that such were common in this country, and that when I came close to the spot I should find no water there. He added that it was at a greater distance than I imagined, and that I should in all probability be lost in the desert if I attempted to follow this phantom.

I was so unfortunate as not to attend to his advice. I set out in pursuit of this accursed illusion, which assuredly was the work of evil spirits, who clouded my reason, and allured me into their dominion. I went on, hour after hour, in expectation continually of reaching the object of my wishes; but it fled faster than I pursued; and I discovered at last that the Englishman, who had doubtless gained his information from the people of the country, was right; and that the shining appearance which I had taken for water was a mere deception.

I was now exhausted with fatigue. I looked back in vain after the companions I had left: I could see neither men, animals, nor any trace of vegetation in the sandy desert. I had no resource but, weary as I was, to measure back my footsteps, which were imprinted in the sand.

I slowly and sorrowfully traced them as my guides in this unknown land. Instead of yielding to my indolent inclinations, I ought, however, to have made the best of my way home before the evening breeze sprang up. I felt the breeze rising, and unconscious of my danger, I rejoiced, and opened my bosom to meet it; but what was my dismay when I saw that the wind swept before it every trace of my footsteps in the sand. I knew not which way to proceed. I was struck with despair, tore my garments, threw off my turban, and cried aloud; but neither human voice nor echo answered me. The silence was dreadful. I had tasted no food for many hours, and I now became sick and faint. I recollected that I had put a supply of opium in the folds of my turban; but, alas! when I took my turban up, I found that the opium had fallen out. I searched for it in vain on the sand where I had thrown the turban.

I stretched myself out upon the ground, and yielded without further struggle to my evil destiny. What I suffered from thirst, hunger, and heat, cannot be described. At last I fell into a sort of trance, during which images of various kinds seemed to flit before my eyes. How long I remained in this state I know not; but I remember that I was brought to my senses by a loud shout, which came from persons belonging to a caravan returning from Mecca. This was a shout of joy for their safe

arrival at a certain spring, well known to them in this part of the desert.

The spring was not a hundred yards from the spot where I lay, yet such had been the fate of Murad the Unlucky, that he missed the reality whilst he had been hours in pursuit of the phantom. Feeble and spiritless as I was, I sent forth as loud a cry as I could, in hopes of obtaining assistance; and I endeavoured to crawl to the place from whence the voices appeared to come. The caravan rested for a considerable time whilst the slaves filled the skins with water, and whilst the camels took in their supply. I worked myself on towards them, yet, notwithstanding my efforts, I was persuaded that, according to my usual ill fortune, I should never be able to make them hear my voice. I saw them mount their camels. I took off my turban, unrolled it, and waved it in the air. My signal was seen: the caravan came towards me.

I had scarcely strength to speak. A slave gave me some water, and after I had drunk, I explained to them who I was, and how I came into this situation.

Whilst I was speaking, one of the travellers observed the purse which hung to my girdle: it was the same the merchant for whom I recovered the ring had given to me. I had carefully preserved it, because the initials of my benefactor's name and a passage from the Koran were worked upon it. When he gave it to me, he said that perhaps we should meet again, in some other part of the world, and he should recognize me by this token. The person who now took notice of the purse was his brother; and when I related to him how I had obtained it, he had the goodness to take me under his protection. He was a merchant, who was now going with the caravan to Grand Cairo. He offered to take me with him, and I willingly accepted the proposal, promising to serve him as faithfully as any of his slaves. The caravan proceeded, and I was carried with it.

CHAPTER III.

Self-love is deaf to the Lessons of Experience.

THE merchant who was become my master treated me with great kindness; but on hearing me relate the whole series of my unfortunate adventures, he exacted a promise from me that I

would do nothing without first consulting him. "Since you are so unlucky, Murad," said he, "that you always choose for the worst when you choose for yourself, you should trust entirely to the judgment of a wiser or a more fortunate friend."

I fared well in the service of this merchant, who was a man of a mild disposition, and who was so rich that he could afford to be generous to all his dependents. It was my business to see his camels loaded and unloaded at proper places, to count his bales of merchandise, and to take care that they were not mixed with those of his companions. This I carefully did till the day we arrived at Alexandria, when unluckily I neglected to count the bales, taking it for granted that they were all right, as I had found them so the preceding day. However, when we were to go on board the vessel that was to take us to Cairo, I perceived that three bales of cotton were missing,

I ran to inform my master, who, though a good deal provoked at my negligence, did not reproach me as I deserved. The public crier was immediately sent round the city, to offer a reward for the recovery of the merchandise; and it was restored by one of the merchant's slaves, with whom we had travelled. The vessel was now under sail, my master and I, and the bales of cotton, were obliged to follow in a boat; and when we were taken on board, the captain declared he was so loaded that he could not tell where to stow the bales of cotton. After much difficulty he consented to let them remain upon deck, and I promised my master to watch them night and day.

We had a prosperous voyage, and were actually in sight of shore, which the captain said we could not fail to reach early the next morning. I stayed, as usual, this night upon deck, and solaced myself by smoking my pipe. Ever since I had indulged in this practice, at the camp at El Arish, I could not exist without opium and tobacco. I suppose that my reason was this night a little clouded with the dose I took, but towards midnight I was sobered by terror. I started up from the deck, on which I had stretched myself. My turban was in flames; the bale of cotton on which I had rested was all on fire. I awoke two sailors, who were fast asleep on deck. The consternation became general, and the confusion increased the danger. The captain and my master were the most active, and suffered the most in extinguishing the flames. My master was terribly scorched.

For my part I was not suffered to do anything. The captain ordered that I should be bound to the mast; and when at last the flames were extinguished, the passengers, with one accord,

besought him to keep me bound hand and foot, lest I should be the cause of some new disaster. All that had happened was indeed occasioned by my ill-luck. I had laid my pipe down, when I was falling asleep, upon the bale of cotton that was beside me. The fire from the pipe fell out, and set the cotton in flames. Such was the mixture of rage and terror with which I had inspired the whole crew, that I am sure they would have set me ashore on a desert island, rather than have had me on board for a week longer. Even my humane master, I could perceive, was secretly impatient to get rid of Murad the Unlucky, and his evil fortune.

You may believe that I was heartily glad when we landed, and when I was unbound. My master put a purse containing fifty sequins into my hand, and bade me farewell.

"Use this money prudently, Murad, if you can," said he, "and perhaps your fortune may change."

Of this I had little hopes, but determined to lay out my money as prudently as possible.

As I was walking through the streets of Grand Cairo, considering how I should lay out my fifty sequins to the greatest advantage, I was stopped by one who called me by my name, and asked me if I could pretend to have forgotten his face. I looked steadily at him, and recollected, to my sorrow, that he was the Jew Rachub, from whom I had borrowed certain moneys at the camp at El Arish. What brought him to Grand Cairo, except it was my evil destiny, I cannot tell. He would not quit me—he would take no excuses—he said, he knew that I had deserted twice, once from the Turkish and once from the English army—that I was not entitled to any pay—and that he could not imagine it possible my brother Saladin would own me, or pay my debts.

I replied, for I was vexed by the insolence of the Jewish dog, that I was not, as he imagined, a beggar; that I had the means of paying him my just debt, but that I hoped he would not extort from me all that exorbitant interest which none but a Jew could exact. He smiled, and answered, that if a Turk loved opium better than money this was no fault of his; that he had supplied me with what I loved best in the world, and that I ought not to complain when he expected I should return the favour.

I will not weary you, gentlemen, with all the arguments that passed between me and Rachub; at last we compromised matters—he would take nothing less than the whole debt, but he let me have, at a very cheap rate, a chest of second-hand

clothes, by which he assured me I might make my fortune. He brought them to Grand Cairo, he said, for the purpose of selling them to slave merchants, who, at that time of the year, were in want of them to supply their slaves, but he was in haste to get home to his wife and family at Constantinople, and therefore he was willing to make over to a friend the profits of this speculation. I should have distrusted Rachub's professions of friendship, and especially of disinterestedness, but he took me with him to the khan where his goods were, and unlocked the chest of clothes to show them to me. They were of the richest and finest materials, and had been but little worn. I could not doubt the evidence of my senses—the bargain was concluded, and the Jew sent porters to my inn with the chest.

The next day I repaired to the public market-place; and when my business was known, I had choice of customers before night—my chest was empty, and my purse was full. The profit I made upon the sale of these clothes was so considerable, that I could not help feeling astonishment at Rachub's having brought himself so readily to relinquish them.

A few days after I had disposed of the contents of my chest, a Damascene merchant, who had bought two suits of apparel from me, told me, with a very melancholy face, that both the female slaves who had put on these clothes were sick. I could not conceive that the clothes were the cause of their sickness; but soon afterwards, as I was crossing the market, I was attacked by at least a dozen merchants, who made similar complaints. They insisted upon knowing how I came by the garments, and demanded whether I had worn any of them myself. This day I had for the first time indulged myself with wearing a pair of yellow slippers, the only finery I had reserved for myself out of all the tempting goods. Convinced by my wearing these slippers that I could have had no insidious designs, since I shared the danger, whatever it might be, the merchants were a little pacified; but what was my terror and remorse the next day, when one of them came to inform me that plague boils had broken out under the arms of all the slaves who had worn this pestilential apparel. On looking carefully into the chest, we found the word Smyrna written and half-effaced upon the lid. Now, the plague had for some time raged at Smyrna, and, as the merchants suspected, these clothes had certainly belonged to persons who had died of that distemper. This was the reason why the Jew was willing to sell them to me so cheap; and it was for this reason that he would not stay at Grand Cairo him-

self, to reap *the profits of his speculation*. Indeed, if had paid attention to it at the proper time, a slight circumstance might have revealed the truth to me. Whilst I was bargaining with the Jew, before he opened the chest, he swallowed a large dram of brandy, and stuffed his nostrils with sponge dipped in vinegar; this he told me he did to prevent his perceiving the smell of musk, which always threw him into convulsions.

The horror I felt, when I discovered that I had spread the infection of the plague, and that I had probably caught it myself, overpowered my senses: a cold dew spread over all my limbs, and I fell upon the lid of the fatal chest in a swoon. It is said that fear disposes people to take the infection. However this may be, I sickened that evening, and soon was in a raging fever. It was worse for me whenever the delirium left me, and I could reflect upon the miseries my ill-fortune had occasioned. In my first lucid interval I looked round, and saw that I had been removed from the khan to a wretched hut. An old woman, who was smoking her pipe in the farthest corner of my room, informed me that I had been sent out of the town of Grand Cairo by order of the cadi, to whom the merchants had made their complaint. The fatal chest was burnt, and the house in which I had lodged razed to the ground. "And if it had not been for me," continued the old woman, "you would have been dead probably at this instant; but I have made a vow to our great prophet that I would never neglect an opportunity of doing a good action; therefore, when you were deserted by all the world, I took care of you. Here, too, is your purse, which I saved from the rabble, and (what is more difficult) from the officers of justice: I will account to you for every para that I have expended; and will, moreover, tell you the reason of my making such an extraordinary vow."

As I perceived that this benevolent old woman took great pleasure in talking, I made an inclination of my head to thank her for her promised history, and she proceeded; but, I must confess, I did not listen with all the attention her narrative doubtless deserved. Even curiosity, the strongest passion of us Turks, was dead within me. I have no recollection of the old woman's story. It is as much as I can do to finish my own.

The weather became excessively hot. It was affirmed by some of the physicians that this heat would prove fatal to their patients; but, contrary to the prognostics of the physicians, it stopped the progress of the plague. I recovered, and found my purse much lightened by my illness. I divided the remainder

of my money with my humane nurse, and sent her out into the city to inquire how matters were going on.

She brought me word that the fury of the plague had much abated, but that she had met several funerals, and that she had heard many of the merchants cursing the folly of Murad the Unlucky, who, as they said, had brought all this calamity upon the inhabitants of Cairo. Even fools, they say, learn by experience. I took care to burn the bed on which I had lain, and the clothes I had worn. I concealed my real name, which I knew would inspire detestation, and gained admittance, with a crowd of other poor wretches, into a lazaretto, where I performed quarantine, and offered up prayers daily for the sick.

When I thought it was impossible I could spread the infection, I took my passage home. I was eager to get away from Grand Cairo, where I knew I was an object of execration. I had a strange fancy haunting my mind. I imagined that all my misfortunes since I left Constantinople had arisen from my neglect of the talisman upon the beautiful china vase. I dreamed three times, when I was recovering from the plague, that a genius appeared to me, and said, in reproachful tone, "Murad, where is the vase that was intrusted to thy care?"

This dream operated strongly upon my imagination. As soon as we arrived at Constantinople, which we did, to my great surprise without meeting with any untoward accidents, I went in search of my brother Saladin, to inquire for my vase. He no longer lived in the house in which I left him, and I began to be apprehensive that he was dead; but a porter, hearing my inquiries, exclaimed. "Who is there in Constantinople that is ignorant of the dwelling of Saladin the Lucky? Come with me, and I will show it to you."

The mansion to which he conducted me looked so magnificent that I was almost afraid to enter, lest there should be some mistake. But whilst I was hesitating, the doors opened, and I heard my brother Saladin's voice. He saw me almost at the same instant I fixed my eyes upon him, and immediately sprang forward to embrace me. He was the same good brother as ever, and I rejoiced in his prosperity with all my heart. "Brother Saladin," said I, "can you now doubt that some men are born to be fortunate, and others to be unfortunate? How often you used to dispute this point with me!"

"Let us not dispute it now in the public street," said he, smiling; "but come in, and refresh yourself, and we will consider the question afterwards at leisure."

"No, my dear brother," said I, drawing back, "you are too good; Murad the Unlucky shall not enter your house, lest he should draw down misfortunes upon you and yours. I come only to ask for my vase."

"It is safe," cried he; "come in, and you shall see it; but I will not give it up till I have you in my house. I have none of these superstitious fears; pardon me the expression, but I have none of these superstitious fears."

I yielded, entered his house, and was astonished at all I saw. My brother did not triumph in his prosperity, but, on the contrary, seemed intent only upon making me forget my misfortunes. He listened to the account of them with kindness, and obliged me by the recital of his history, which was, I must acknowledge, far less wonderful than my own. He seemed, by his own account, to have grown rich in the common course of things, or rather by his own prudence. I allowed for his prejudices, and unwilling to dispute farther with him, said, "You must remain of your opinion, brother, and I of mine: you are Saladin the Lucky, and I Murad the Unlucky; and so we shall remain to the end of our lives."

I had not been in his house four days when an accident happened, which showed how much I was in the right. The favourite of the Sultan, to whom he had formerly sold his china vase, though her charms were now somewhat faded by time, still retained her power and her taste for magnificence. She commissioned my brother to bespeak for her at Venice the most splendid looking-glass that money could purchase. The mirror, after many delays and disappointments, at length arrived at my brother's house. He unpacked it, and sent to let the lady know it was in perfect safety. It was late in the evening, and she ordered that it should remain where it was that night, and that it should be brought to the seraglio the next morning. It stood in a sort of ante-chamber to the room in which I slept, and with it were left some packages, containing glass chandeliers for an unfinished saloon in my brother's house. Saladin charged all his domestics to be vigilant this night, because he had money to a great amount by him, and there had been frequent robberies in our neighbourhood. Hearing these orders, I resolved to be in readiness at a moment's warning. I laid my scimitar beside me upon a cushion, and left my door half open, that I might hear the slightest noise in the ante-chamber or the great staircase. About midnight I was suddenly awakened by a noise in the ante-chamber. I started up, seized my scimitar, and the

instant I got to the door I saw, by the light of the lamp which was burning in the room, a man standing opposite to me, with a drawn sword in his hand. I rushed forward, demanding what he wanted, and received no answer; but, seeing him aim at me with his scimitar, I gave him, as I thought a deadly blow. At this instant I heard a great crash, and the fragments of the looking-glass, which I had shivered, fell at my feet. At the same moment something black brushed by my shoulder; I pursued it, stumbled over the packages of glass, and rolled over them down the stairs.

My brother came out of his room to inquire the cause of all this disturbance, and when he saw the fine mirror broken, and me lying amongst the glass chandeliers at the bottom of the stairs, he could not forbear exclaiming, "Well, brother, you are indeed Murad the Unlucky."

When the first emotion was over, he could not, however, forbear laughing at my situation. With a degree of goodness which made me a thousand times more sorry for the accident, he came downstairs to help me up, gave me his hand and said, "Forgive me, if I was angry with you at first. I am sure you did not mean to do me any injury; but tell me how all this has happened?"

While Saladin was speaking, I heard the same kind of noise which had alarmed me in the ante-chamber; but, on looking back, I saw only a black pigeon, which flew swiftly by me, unconscious of the mischief he had occasioned. This pigeon I had unluckily brought into the house the preceding day, and had been feeding and trying to tame it for my young nephews. I little thought it would be the cause of such disasters. My brother, though he endeavoured to conceal his anxiety from me, was much disturbed at the idea of meeting the favourite's displeasure, who would certainly be grievously disappointed by the loss of her splendid looking-glass. I saw that I should inevitably be his ruin if I continued in his house, and no persuasions could prevail upon me to prolong my stay. My generous brother, seeing me determined to go, said to me, "A factor, whom I have employed for some years to sell merchandize for me, died a few days ago. Will you take his place? I am rich enough to bear any little mistakes you may fall into from ignorance of business, and you will have a partner who is able and willing to assist you."

I was touched to the heart by this kindness, especially at such a time as this. He sent one of his slaves with me to the shop in

which you now see me, gentlemen. The slave, by my brother's directions, brought with us my china vase, and delivered it safely to me, with this message, "The scarlet dye that was found in this vase and in its fellow was the first cause of Saladin's making the fortune he now enjoys; he therefore does no more than justice in sharing that fortune with his brother Murad."

I was now placed in as advantageous a situation as possible; but my mind was ill at ease when I reflected that the broken mirror might be my brother's ruin. The lady by whom it had been bespoken was, I well knew, of a violent temper; and this disappointment was sufficient to provoke her to vengeance. My brother sent me word this morning, however, that though her displeasure was excessive, it was in my power to prevent any ill consequences that might ensue. "In my power!" I exclaimed, "then, indeed I am happy! Tell my brother there is nothing I will not do to show him my gratitude, and to save him from the consequences of my folly."

The slave who was sent by my brother seemed unwilling to name what was required of me, saying that his master was afraid I should not like to grant the request. I urged him to speak freely, and he then told me the favourite declared nothing would make her amends for the loss of the mirror but the fellow-vase to that which he had brought from Saladin. It was impossible for me to hesitate; gratitude for my brother's generous kindness overcame my superstitious obstinacy, and I sent him word I would carry the vase to him myself.

I took it down this evening from the shelf on which it stood: it was covered with dust, and I washed it; but unluckily, in endeavouring to clean the inside from the remains of the scarlet powder, I poured hot water into it, and immediately I heard a simmering noise, and my vase, in a few instants, burst asunder with a loud explosion. These fragments, alas! are all that remain. The measure of my misfortunes is now completed! Can you wonder, gentlemen, that I bewail my evil destiny? Am I not justly called Murad the Unlucky? Here end all my hopes in this world! Better would it have been if I had died long ago! Better that I had never been born! Nothing I ever have done, or attempted has prospered. Murad the Unlucky is my name, and ill-fate has marked me for her own.

CHAPTER IV.

Prudence never overlooks nor neglects Trifles.

THE lamentations of Murad were interrupted by the entrance of Saladin : having waited in vain for some hours, he now came to see if any disaster had happened to his brother Murad. He was surprised at the sight of the two pretended merchants ; and could not refrain from exclamations on beholding the broken vase. However, with his usual equanimity and good-nature, he began to console Murad ; and, taking up the fragments, examined them carefully, one by one, joined them together again, found that none of the edges of the china were damaged, and declared he could have it mended so as to look as well as ever.

Murad recovered his spirits upon this. "Brother," said he, "I comfort myself for being Murad the Unlucky, when I reflect that you are Saladin the Lucky. See, gentlemen," continued he, turning to the pretended merchants, "scarcely has this most fortunate of men been five minutes in company before he gives a happy turn to affairs. His presence inspires joy : I observe your countenances, which had been saddened by my dismal history, have brightened up since he made his appearance. Brother, I wish you would make these gentlemen some amends for the time they have wasted in listening to my catalogue of misfortunes, by relating your history, which, I am sure, they will find more exhilarating."

Saladin consented, on condition that the strangers would accompany him home, and partake of a sociable banquet. They at first repeated the former excuse of their being obliged to return to their inn : but at length the Sultan's curiosity prevailed, and he and his vizier went home with Saladin the Lucky ; who, after supper related his history in the following manner :—

My being called Saladin the Lucky, first inspired me with confidence in myself ; though I own that I cannot remember any extraordinary instances of good luck in my childhood. An old nurse of my mother's, indeed, repeated to me twenty times a day that nothing I undertook could fail to succeed, because I was Saladin the Lucky. I became presumptuous and rash : and my nurse's prognostics might have effectually prevented their accomplishment, had I not, when I was about fifteen, been roused to reflection during a long confinement, which was the consequence of my youthful conceit and imprudence.

At this time there was at the Porte a Frenchman, an ingenious engineer, who was employed and favoured by the Sultan, to the great astonishment of many of my prejudiced countrymen. On the Grand Seignior's birthday, he exhibited some extraordinarily fine fireworks; and I, with numbers of the inhabitants of Constantinople, crowded to see them. I happened to stand near the place where the Frenchman was stationed; the crowd pressed upon him, and I amongst the rest: he begged we would, for our own sakes keep at a greater distance; and warned us that we might be much hurt by the combustibles which he was using. I, relying upon my good fortune, disregarded all these cautions; and the consequence was that, as I touched some of the materials prepared for the fireworks, they exploded, dashed me upon the ground with great violence, and I was terribly burnt.

This accident, gentlemen, I consider as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life; for it checked and corrected the presumption of my temper. During the time I was confined to my bed, the French gentleman came frequently to see me. He was a very sensible man: and the conversations he had with me enlarged my mind, and cured me of many foolish prejudices, especially of that which I had been taught to entertain concerning the predominance of what is called luck, or fortune, in human affairs. "Though you are called Saladin the Lucky," said he, "you find that your neglect of prudence has nearly brought you to the grave, even in the bloom of youth. Take my advice, and henceforward trust more to prudence than to fortune. Let the multitude, if they will, call you Saladin the Lucky: but call yourself, and make yourself, Saladin the Prudent."

These words left an indelible impression on my mind, and gave a new turn to my thoughts and character. My brother Murad has doubtless told you that our difference of opinion on the subject of predestination produced between us frequent arguments; but we could never convince one another, and we each have acted, through life, in consequence of our different beliefs. To this I attribute my success, and his misfortunes.

The first rise of my fortune, as you have probably heard from Murad, was owing to the scarlet dye, which I brought to perfection with infinite difficulty. The powder, it is true, was accidentally found by me in our china vases; but there it might have remained to this instant useless, if I had not taken the pains to make it useful. I grant that we can only partially foresee and command events: yet on the use we make of our own powers, I think, depends our destiny. But, gentlemen, you

would rather hear my adventures, perhaps than my reflections; and I am truly concerned, for your sakes, that I have no wonderful events to relate. I am sorry I cannot tell you of my having been lost in a sandy desert. I have never had the plague, or even been shipwrecked: I have been all my life an inhabitant of Constantinople, and have passed my time in a very quiet and uniform manner.

The money I have received from the Sultan's favourite for my china vase, as my brother may have told you, enabled me to trade on a more extensive scale. I went on steadily with my business; and made it my whole study to please my employers, by all fair and honourable means. This industry and civility succeeded beyond my expectations. In a few years, I was rich, for a man in my way of business.

I will not proceed to trouble you with the journal of a petty merchant's life. I pass on to the incident which made a considerable change in my affairs.

A terrible fire broke out in the suburb of Pera, near the walls of the Grand Seignior's seraglio. As you are strangers, gentlemen, you may not have heard of this event; though it produced so great a sensation in Constantinople. The vizier's superb palace was utterly consumed, and also the mosque of St. Sophia. Various were the opinions formed by neighbours respecting the cause of the conflagration. Some supposed it to be a punishment for the Sultan's having neglected, one Friday, to appear at the mosque of St. Sophia: others considered it as a warning sent by Mahomet, to dissuade the Porte from persisting in a war which we were just engaged. The generality, however, of the coffee-house politicians, contented themselves with observing, that it was the will of Mahomet that the palace should be consumed. Satisfied by this supposition they took no precaution to prevent similar accidents in their own houses. Never were fires so common in the city as at this period. Scarcely a night passed without our being awoke by the cry of fire.

These frequent fires were rendered still more dreadful by villains who were continually on the watch to increase the confusion by which they profited, and to pillage the houses of the sufferers. It was discovered that these incendiaries frequently skulked, towards evening, in the neighbourhood of the Bezestein, where the richest merchants store their goods. Some of these

* "A *coundak* is a sort of combustible that consists only of a piece of tinder wrapped in brimstone-matches, in the midst of a small bundle of

wretches were detected in throwing *coundaks*,* or matches, into the windows; and if these combustibles remained a sufficient time they could not fail to set the house on fire.

Notwithstanding all these circumstances, many even of those who had property to preserve continued to repeat, "It is the will of Mahomet," and consequently to neglect all means of preservation. I, on the contrary, recollecting the lesson I had learned from the sensible foreigner, neither suffered my spirits to sink with superstitious fears of ill-luck, nor did I trust presumptuously to my good fortune. I took every possible means to secure myself. I never went to bed without having seen that all the lights and fires in the house were extinguished; and that I had a supply of water in the cistern. I had likewise learned from my Frenchman that wet mortar was the most effectual thing for stopping the progress of flames. I therefore had a quantity of mortar made up, in one of my out-houses, which I could use at a moment's warning. These precautions were all useful to me. My own house, indeed, was never actually on fire; but the houses of my next-door neighbours were no less than five times in flames, in the course of one winter. But by exertions, or rather by my precautions, they suffered but little damage; and all my neighbours looked upon me as their deliverer and friend. They loaded me with presents, and offered more indeed than I would accept. All repeated that I was Saladin the Lucky. This compliment I disclaimed, feeling more ambitious of being called Saladin the Prudent. It is thus that what we call modesty is often only a refined species of pride. But to proceed with my story.

One night I had been later than usual at supper at a friend's house. None but the *passevans*,* or watch, were in the streets, and even they, I believe, were asleep.

As I passed one of the conduits which convey water to the city, I heard a trickling noise, and upon examination I found that the cock of the waterspout was half turned, so that the water was running out. I turned it back to its proper place, thought it had been left unturned by accident, and walked on;

pine-shavings. The method usually employed by incendiaries, is to lay this match by stealth behind a door, which they find open, or on a window; and after setting it on fire they make their escape."—*Memoirs of Baron de Tott*.

* "It is the duty of the guardians of the different quarters of the city, who are called *passevans*, to watch for fires. During the night they run through their district, armed with large sticks tipped with iron, which they strike against the pavement, and awaken the people with the cry of *Yangenvor*, or, There is a fire; and point out the quarter where it has appeared."—*De Tott's Memoire*.

but I had not proceeded far before I came to another spout, and another, which were in the same condition. I was convinced that this could not be the effect merely of accident, and suspected that some ill-intentioned persons designed to let out and waste the water of the city, that there might be none to extinguish any fire that should break out in the course of the night.

I stood still for a few moments to consider how it would be most prudent to act. It would be impossible for me to run to all parts of the city, that I might stop the pipes that were running to waste. I first thought of wakening the watch, and the firemen, who were most of them slumbering at their stations; but I reflected that they were perhaps not to be trusted, and that they were in a confederacy with the incendiaries: otherwise they would certainly, before this hour, have observed and stopped the running of the sewers in their neighbourhood. I determined to awaken a rich merchant, called Damat Zade, who lived near me, and who had a number of slaves, whom he could send to different parts of the city, to prevent mischief, and give notice to the inhabitants of their danger.

He was a very sensible active man, and one that could easily be awoken. He was not like some Turks, who are an hour in recovering their lethargic senses. He was quick in decision and action; and his slaves resembled their master. He despatched a messenger immediately to the grand vizier, that the Sultan's safety might be secured: and sent others to the magistrates in each quarter of Constantinople. The large drums in the Janissary-Aga's tower beat to rouse the inhabitants; and scarcely had this been heard to beat half an hour before the fire broke out in the lower apartments of Damat Zade's house, owing to a *coundak*, which had been left behind one of the doors.

The wretches who had prepared the mischief, came to enjoy it, and to pillage; but they were disappointed. Astonished to find themselves taken into custody, they could not comprehend how their designs had been frustrated. By timely exertions the fire in my friend's house was extinguished; and though fires broke out during the night in many parts of the city, but little damage was sustained, because there was time for precautions, and by the stopping of the spouts sufficient water was preserved. People were awakened and warned of the danger; and they consequently escaped unhurt.

The next day, as soon as I made my appearance at the Bezes-teir, the merchants crowded round, calling me their benefactor.

and the preserver of their lives and fortunes. Damat Zade, the merchant whom I had awakened the preceding night, presented to me a heavy purse of gold, and put upon my finger a diamond ring of considerable value. Each of the merchants followed his example, in making me rich presents. The magistrates also sent me tokens of their approbation; and the grand vizier sent me a diamond of the first water, with a line written by his own hand: "To the man who has saved Constantinople."

Excuse me, gentlemen, for the vanity I seem to show in mentioning these circumstances. You desired to hear my history, and I cannot therefore omit the principal circumstance of my life. In the course of four-and-twenty hours I found myself raised, by the munificent gratitude of the inhabitants of this city, to a state of affluence far beyond what I had ever dreamed of attaining.

I now took a house suited to my circumstances and bought a few slaves. As I was carrying my slaves home, I was met by a Jew, who stopped me, saying in his language, "My lord, I see, has been purchasing slaves: I could clothe them cheaply." There was something mysterious in the manner of this Jew, and I did not like his countenance; but I considered that I ought not to be governed by caprice in my dealings, and that, if this man could really clothe my slaves more cheaply than another, I ought not to neglect his offer merely because I took a dislike to the cut of his beard, the turn of his eye, or the tone of his voice. I therefore bade the Jew follow me home, saying that I would consider of his proposal.

When we came to talk over the matter, I was surprised to find him so reasonable in his demands. On one point, indeed, he appeared unwilling to comply. I required not only to see the clothes I was offered, but also to know how they came into his possession. On the subject he equivocated; I therefore suspected there must be something wrong. I reflected what it could be, and judged that the goods had been stolen, or that they had been the apparel of persons who had died of some contagious distemper. The Jew showed me a chest from which he said I might choose whatever suited me best. I observed that, as he unlocked the chest, he stuffed his nose with some aromatic herbs. He told me that he did so to prevent his smelling the musk, with which the chest was perfumed; musk, he said, had an extraordinary effect upon his nerves. I begged to have some of the herbs which he used himself, declaring that musk was likewise offensive to me.

The Jew, either struck by his own conscience, or observing my suspicions, turned as pale as death. He pretended he had not the right key, and could not unlock the chest; said he must go in search of it, and that he would call on me again.

After he had left me I examined some writing on the lid of the chest that had been nearly effaced. I made out the word Smyrna, and this was sufficient to confirm all my suspicions.

The Jew returned no more. He sent some porters to carry away the chest, and I heard nothing of him for some time; till one day, when I was at the house of Damat Zade, I saw a glimpse of the Jew passing hastily through one of the courts, as if he wished to avoid me. "My friend," said I to Damat Zade, "do not attribute my question to impertinent curiosity, or to a desire to intermeddle with your affairs, if I venture to ask the nature of your business with the Jew who has just now crossed your court?"

"He has engaged to supply me with clothing for my slaves," replied my friend, "cheaper than I can purchase it elsewhere. I have a design to surprise my daughter Fatima, on her birthday, with an entertainment in the pavilion in the garden; and all her female slaves shall appear in new dresses on the occasion."

I interrupted my friend, to tell him what I expected relative to this Jew and his chest of clothes. It is certain that the infection of the plague can be communicated by clothes, not only after months but after years have elapsed. The merchant resolved to have nothing more to do with this wretch, who could thus hazard the lives of thousands of his fellow-creatures for a few pieces of gold: we sent notice of the circumstance to the *cadi*; but the *cadi* was slow in his operations, and before he could take the Jew into custody, the cunning fellow had effected his escape. When his house was searched, he and his chest had disappeared. We discovered that he sailed for Egypt, and rejoiced that we had driven him from Constantinople.

My friend Damat Zade expressed the warmest gratitude to me. "You formerly saved my fortune: you have now saved my life; and a life yet dearer than my own, that of my daughter Fatima."

At the sound of that name I could not, I believe, avoid showing some emotion. I had accidentally seen this lady as she was going to the mosque; and I had been captivated by

her beauty, and by the sweetness of her countenance: but as I knew she was destined to be the wife of another, I suppressed my feelings, and determined to banish the recollection of the fair Fatima for ever from my imagination. Her father, however, at this instant, threw in my way a temptation which it required all my fortitude to resist. "Saladin," continued he, "it is but just that you, who have saved our lives, should share our festivity. Come here on the birthday of my Fatima: I will place you in a balcony which overlooks the garden, and you shall see the whole spectacle. We shall have a *feast of tulips*; in imitation of that which, as you know, is held in the Grand Seigneur's gardens.* I assure you the sight will be worth seeing; and besides, you will have a chance of beholding my Fatima, for a moment, without her veil."

"That," interrupted I, "is the thing I most wish to avoid. I dare not indulge myself in a pleasure which might cost me the happiness of my life. I will conceal nothing from you who treat me with so much confidence. I have already beheld the charming countenance of your Fatima; but I know that she is destined to be the wife of a happier man."

Damat Zade seemed much pleased by the frankness with which I explained myself; but he would not give up the idea of my sitting with him in the balcony, on the day of the feast of tulips; and I, on my part, could not consent to expose myself to another view of the charming Fatima. My friend used every argument, or rather every sort of persuasion he could imagine, to prevail upon me. He then tried to laugh me out of my resolution; and when all failed he said, in a voice of anger, "Go then, Saladin, I am sure you are deceiving me; you have a passion for some other woman, and would conceal it from me, and persuade me that you refuse the favour I offer you from prudence, when in fact it is from indifference and contempt. Why could you not speak the truth of your heart to me with that frankness with which one friend should treat another?"

Astonished at this unexpected charge, and at the anger which flashed from the eyes of Damat Zade, who, till this moment, had always appeared to me a man of a mild and reasonable temper, I was for an instant tempted to fly in a passion and

* "The Feast of Tulips, or Tchiragan, is so called because, at this feast parterres of Tulips are illuminated. Dancing and music prolong these entertainments until the night is far advanced, and diffuse a sort of momentary gaiety within these walls, generally devoted to sorrow and dulness."—*Memoirs of Baron de Tott*.

leave him : but friends once lost, are not easily regained. This consideration had power sufficient to make me command my temper, "My friend," replied I, "we will talk over this affair to-morrow. You are now angry, and cannot do me justice ; but to-morrow you will be cool. You will then be convinced that I have not deceived you ; and that I have no design but to secure my own happiness by the most prudent means in my power, by avoiding the sight of the dangerous Fatima. I have no passion for any other woman."

"Then," said my friend, embracing me, and quitting the tone of anger which he had assumed only to try my resolution to the utmost, "Then, Saladin, Fatima is yours."

I scarcely dared to believe my senses? I could not express my joy! "Yes, my friend," continued the merchant, "I have tried your prudence to the utmost ; it has been victorious, and I resign my Fatima to you, certain that you will make her happy. It is true, I had a greater alliance in view for her ; the Pasha of Maksoud has demanded her from me, but I have found, upon private inquiry, he is addicted to the intemperate use of opium ; and my daughter shall never be the wife of one who is a violent madmam one-half the day, and a melancholy idiot during the remainder. I have nothing to apprehend from the pasha's resentment, because I have powerful friends with the grand vizier here, who will oblige him to understand reason, and to submit quietly to a disappointment he so justly merits. And now, Saladin, have you any objection of seeing the feast of tulips?"

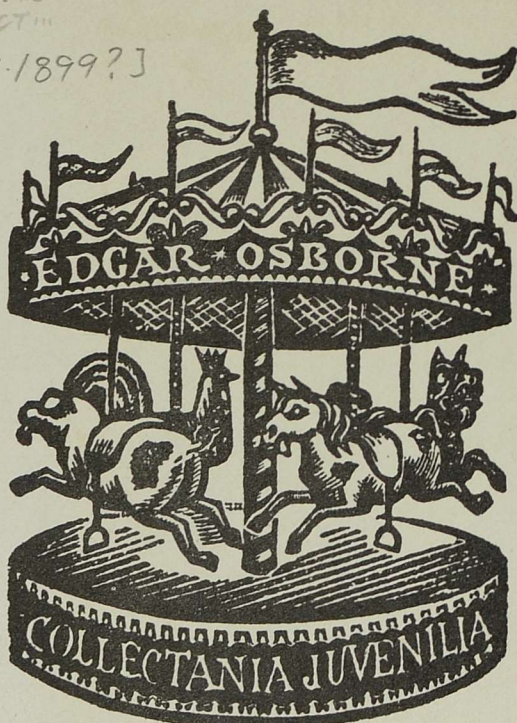
I replied only by falling at the merchant's feet, and embracing his knees. The feast of tulips came, and on that day I was married to the charming Fatima! The charming Fatima I continue still to think her, though she has now been my wife some years. She is the joy and pride of my heart, and from our mutual affection I have experienced more felicity than from all the other circumstances of my life which are called so fortunate. Her father gave me the house in which I now live, and joined his possessions to ours, so that I have more wealth, even than I desire. My riches, however, give me continually the means of relieving the wants of others, and therefore I cannot affect to despise them. I must persuade my brother Murad to share them with me, and to forget his misfortunes ; I shall then think myself completely happy. As to the Sultana's looking-glass, and your broken vase, my dear brother, continued Saladin, we must think of some means ——

"Think no more of the Sultana's looking-glass, or of the broken vase," exclaimed the Sultan, throwing aside his merchant's habit, and showing beneath it his own imperial vest. "Saladin, I rejoice to have heard, from your own lips, the history of your life. I acknowledge, vizier, I have been in the wrong in our argument," continued the Sultan, turning to his vizier. "I acknowledge that the histories of Saladin the Lucky and Murad the Unlucky favour your opinion, that prudence has more influence than chance in human affairs. The success and happiness of Saladin seems to me to have arisen from his prudence. By that prudence Constantinople has been saved from flames and from the plague. Had Murad possessed his brother's discretion he would not have been on the point of losing his head for selling rolls which he did not bake; he would not have been kicked by a mule, or bastinadoed for finding a ring; he would not have been robbed by one party of soldiers, or shot by another; he would not have been lost in a desert, or cheated by a Jew; he would not have set a ship on fire, nor would he have caught the plague, and spread it through Grand Cairo; he would not have run my Sultana's looking-glass through the body instead of a robber; he would not have believed that the fate of his life depended on certain verses on a china vase: nor would he at last, have broken this precious talisman by washing it in hot water. Henceforward, let Murad the Unlucky be named Murad the Imprudent; let Saladin preserve the surname he merits, and be henceforth called Saladin the Prudent."

So spake the Sultan, who, unlike the generality of monarchs, could bear to find himself in the wrong, and could discover his vizier to be in the right, without cutting off his head. History further informs us that the Sultan offered to make Saladin a pasha, and to commit to him the government of a province; but Saladin the Prudent declined this honour, saying he had no ambition, was perfectly happy in his present situation, and that when this was the case it would be folly to change, because no one can be more than happy. What further adventures befell Murad the Imprudent are not recorded. It is known only that he became a daily visitor to the *Teriakcy*,* and that he died a martyr to the immoderate use of opium.

* The market of opium-eaters in Constantinople.

58
AGUIAR
EDICT
[ca. 1899?]



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