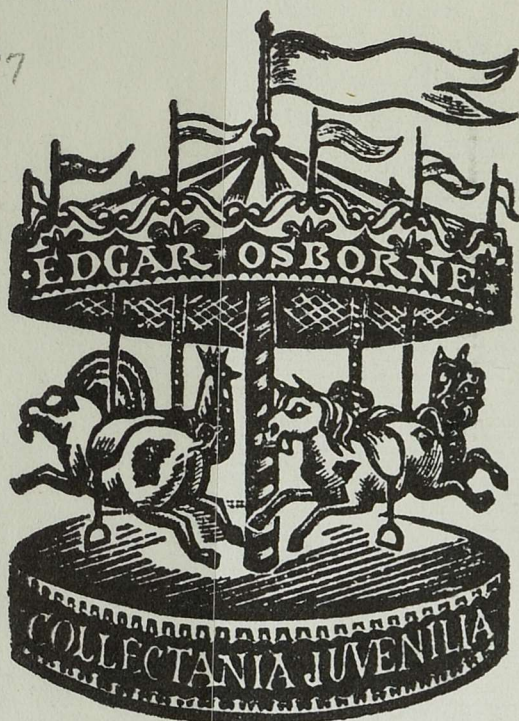


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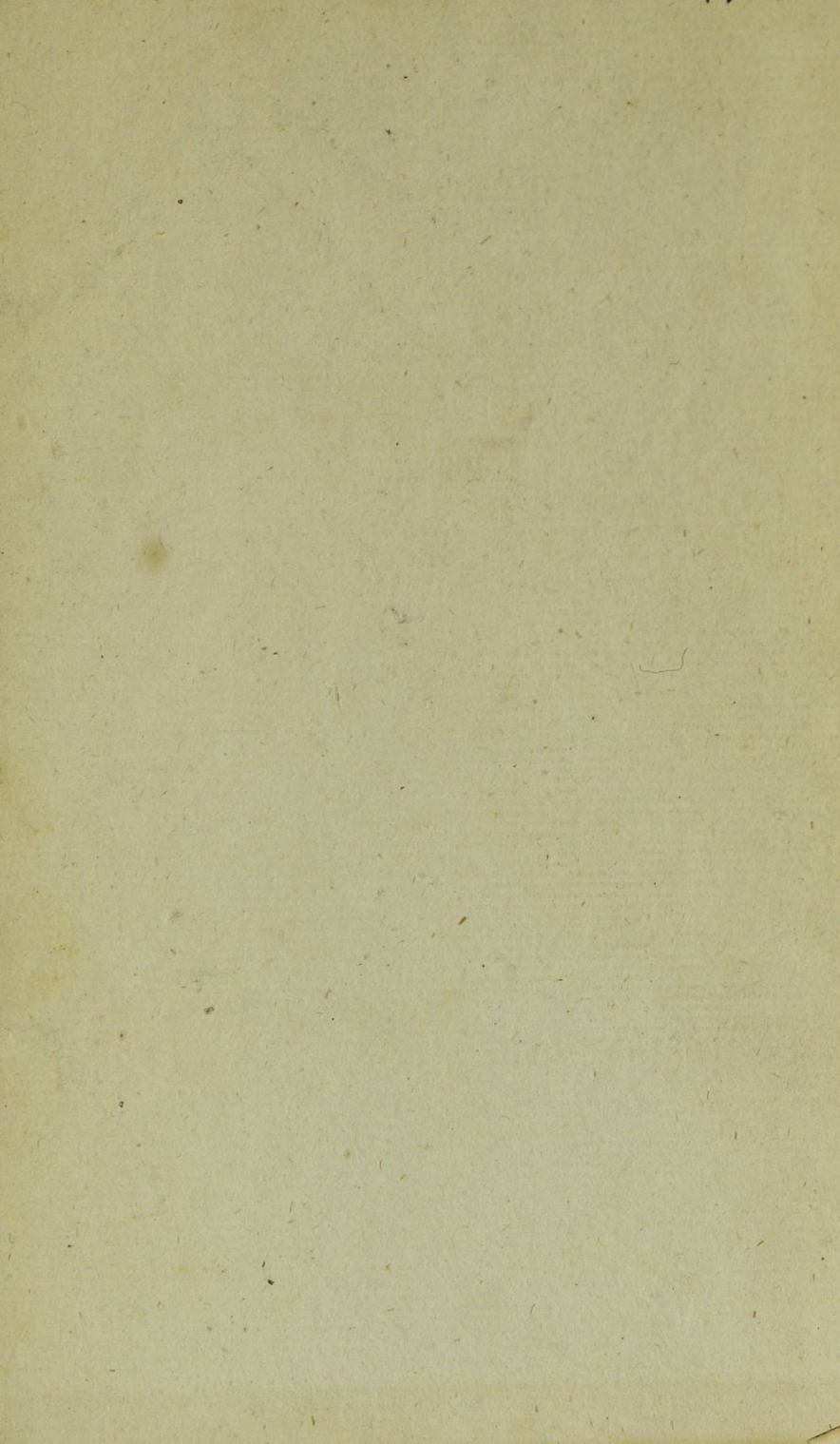
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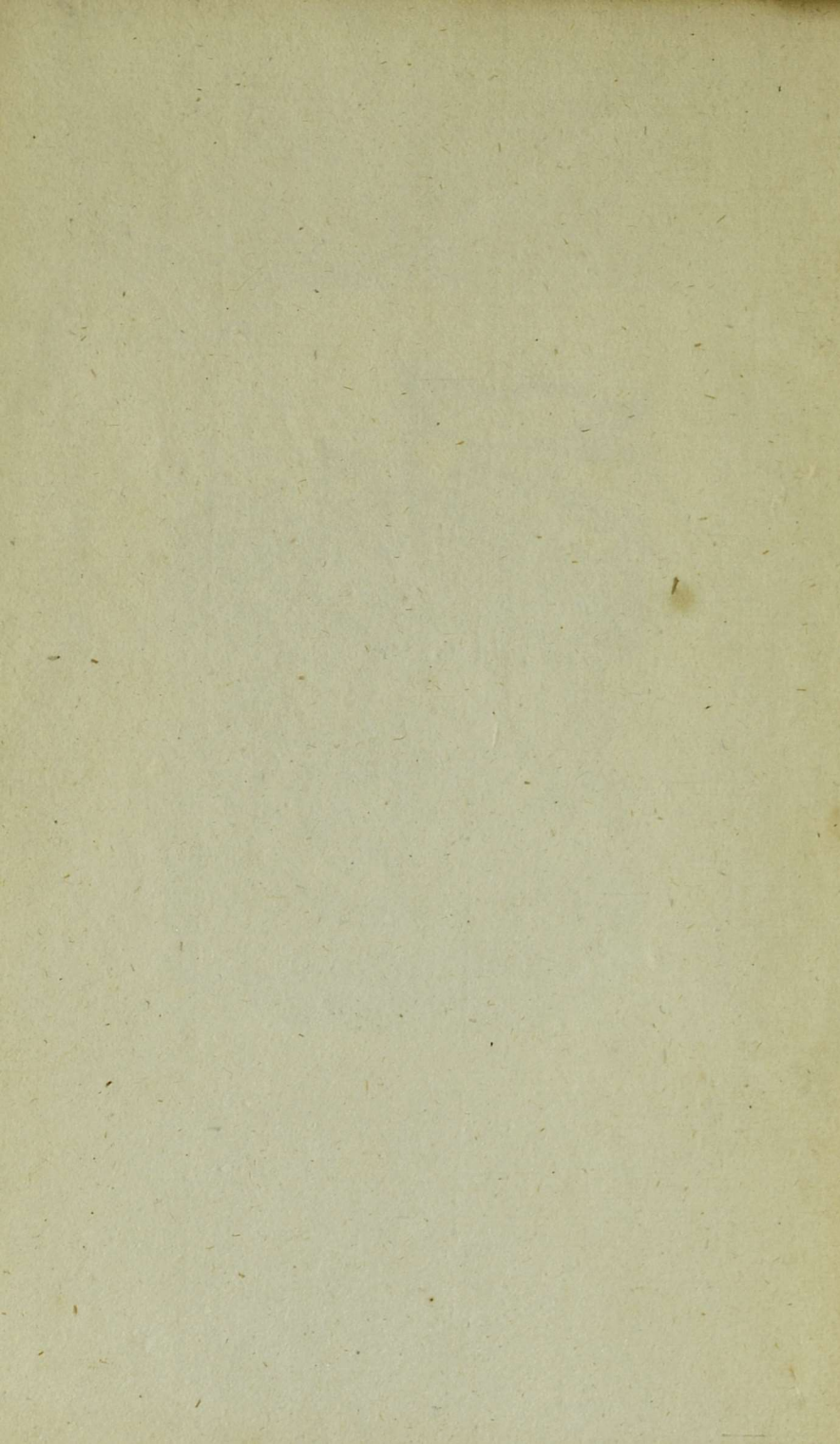
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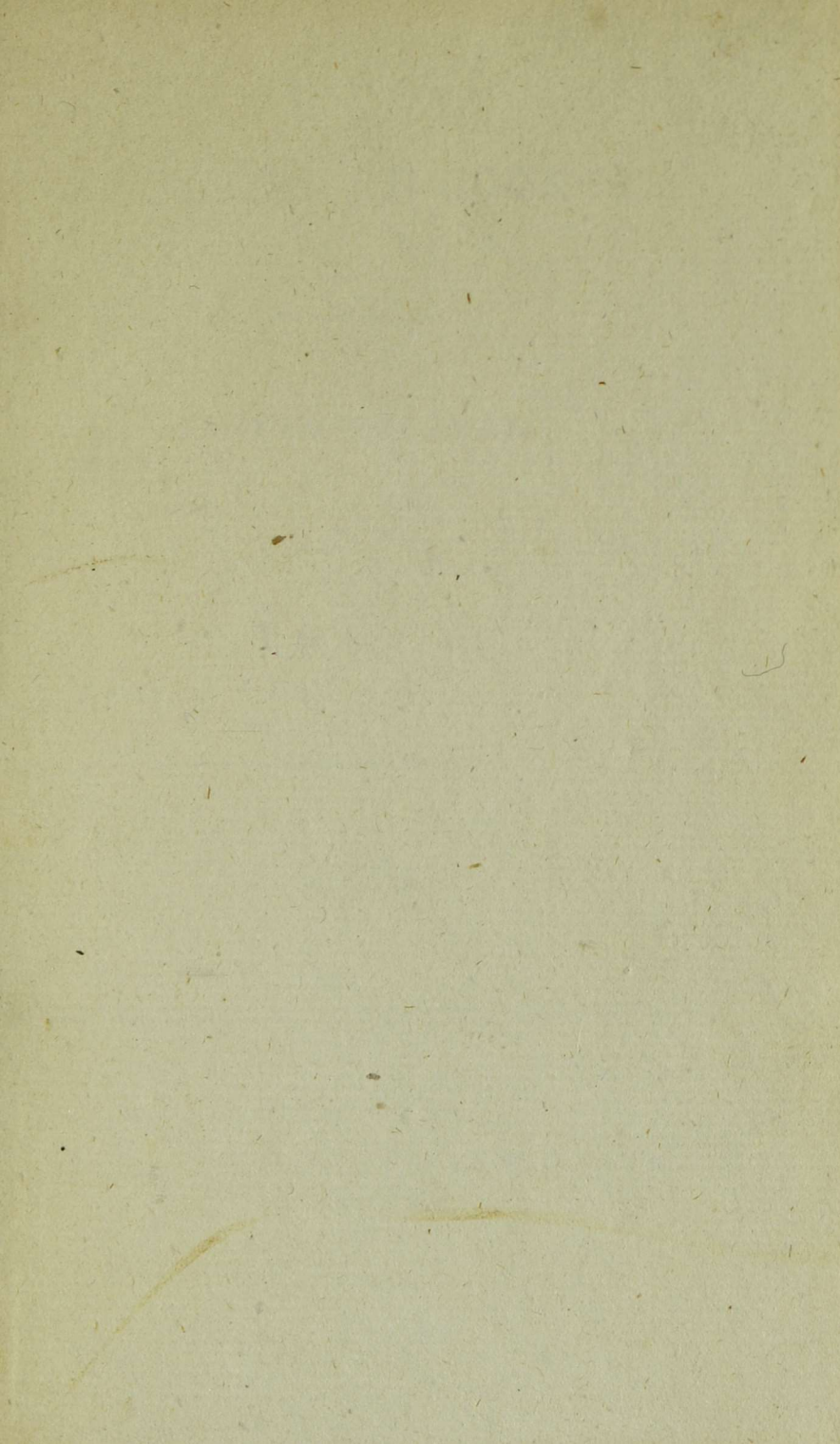
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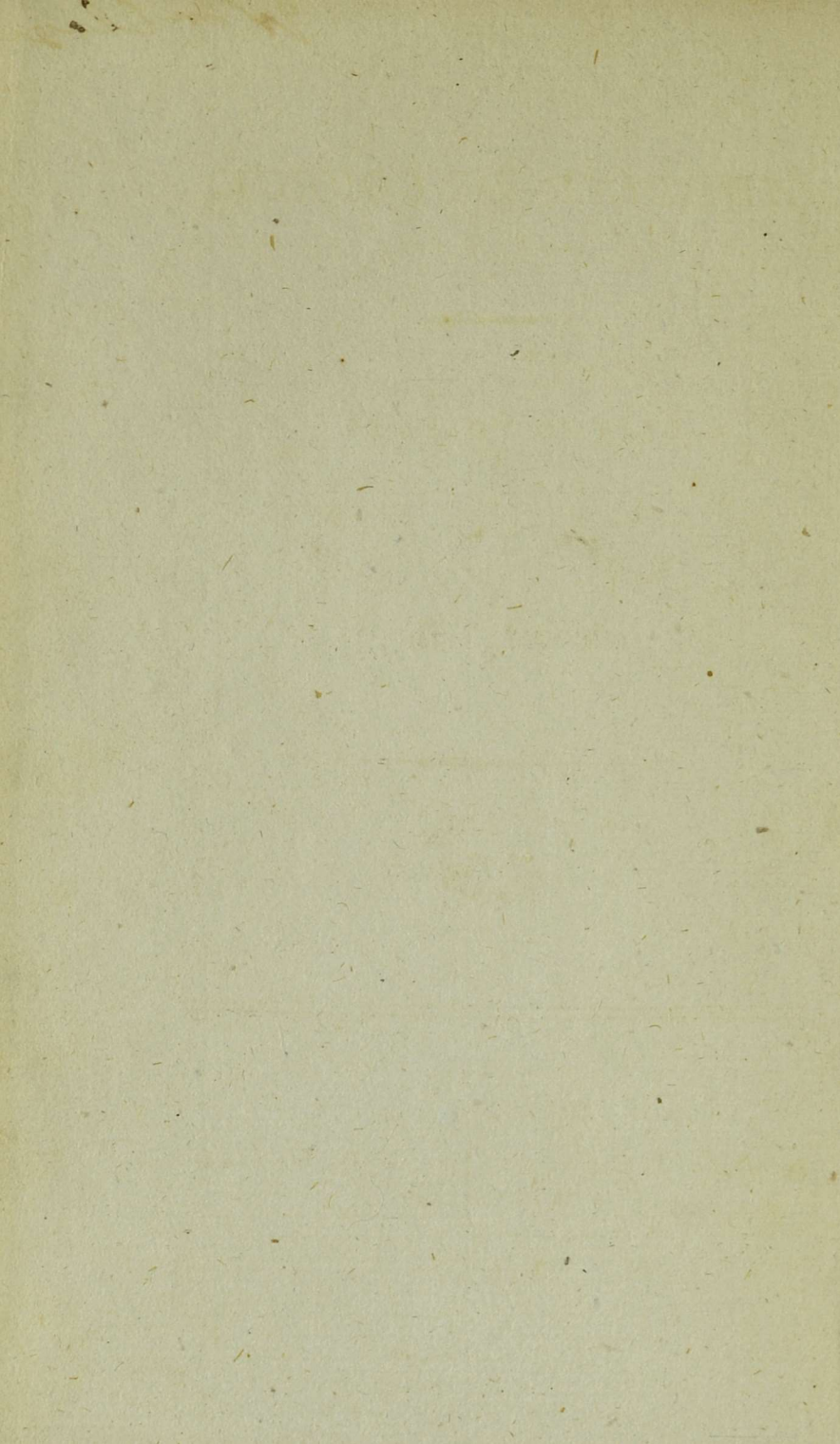


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Wm Clay

ADELINE DE COURCY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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1797.

ADELINE de COURCY.

THE HISTORY

CONTINUED.

SOON after the Baroness was gone, I received a letter from Solignac, with an account of his health, but no mention of his father's will. The Abbè at the same time wrote to my father, but he did not communicate to me the contents of the letter.

A few days after my friend was gone, I was destined to sustain a dreadful shock. Genevieve awakened me from a sound

sleep, by bursting into my chamber about two o'clock in the morning; her terror was so great it deprived her of utterance, nor could I understand the occasion of it, till, unbarring my window, she pointed to the hill, and I saw my father's farm in flames. I had presence of mind immediately to recollect, that for *his* sake I must command my feelings, therefore dispatching Bertrand, (who was the person that had first discovered the fire to Genevieve) for assistance; I went to my father's bed-side, and broke to him the cruel news. He started up, and with a wild look exclaimed, "Adeline! I am a ruined man."—I saw a tear tremble in his eye, and he sunk back inactive and desponding. "Sir!" said I, "rouse yourself—this is no time to be indolent and despairing—you must follow *me*." He grasped my hand and sighed.—This lethargic sadness alarmed me much more than violence

violence of grief. I dreaded effects so opposite to his nature, and therefore hurried him to the scene of ruin. There he had no time to pause, or meditate on sorrow—the occasion required activity and exertion.

The inhabitants of the village, who revered my father for his charity and goodness, were all busy in trying to stop the dreadful conflagration; but the wind was high, it drove the flakes of fire upon the thatched barn, which kindled instantly, and burst into a flame. Never can I forget the dreadful scene. The night was excessively dark, and the wind howled over the heath; the cries of the peasants, and the crackling of the timber, the consternation of the farmer, and the distress of our own family, were beyond description. The flames continued to burn with great rapidity, when the Marquis, to whose castle Bertrand had been for assistance, rode with speed up the hill, lighted by several of his

people, who carried lanthorns, and followed by others with engines, to assist in quenching the fire. The moment this aid, so much required, drew near, I felt my spirits, which were wearied by exertion, at once give way, and just as the Marquis came up to us I fainted in his arms. When I recovered my senses, I found myself sitting in a hovel, with Genevieve offering me drops, and the Marquis holding one of my hands, and kneeling at my feet.

Weak as I was I started up, and asked for my father. They led me from the hovel, and I perceived the flames were almost extinguished, but the barn and the hay-stacks were no more; they were burnt to the ground, and the farm-house was become a mere ruin. My father was coming towards the hovel. I observed an air of affected philosophy in his face; he tenderly embraced me, thanked the Marquis for his
kind

kind assistance, and then silently led me to the priory.

I had now time to contemplate my own appearance; nothing could look more wild. I had but just time to slip on my stockings and a pair of sandals; and with only one petticoat and a bedgown had left the priory. In the bustle of the scene my night-cap had fallen off, and my hair hung dishevelled all over my shoulders. The Marquis followed us in silence; we entered the little parlour, and the trembling Genevieve put a dim tallow-candle on the table. Here I burst into tears; my father looked at me some time, in a manner as if his heart would break, then leaning his elbows on the table he covered his face with his hands. At length, looking again earnestly at me, he said, "Adeline! my life draws near its conclusion; I have already existed too long under the pressure of misfortune; 'tis for you, my child, for you only I lament; would

to God that I had not survived your mother!" Struck to the heart with this mournful speech, I cried, "Dear Sir! why will you despond? Heaven has robbed you of fortune, but it has left you friends—yes! my father has friends who can and will assist him—be assured, while Solignac lives——" Here he interrupted me by saying, "I can receive no benefit from the hand of Solignac." At that instant he burst into tears, and left the room.

I was lost in thought, and could not comprehend the meaning of this speech, when the Marquis, flinging himself at my feet, said, "Can Adeline want a friend when *I* am present. Behold in me a creature devoted to your will: my services, my fortune, myself, are at your command. The confusion of this night's scene has surprized me into revealing a secret that our shortness of acquaintance does not authorize me to disclose; yet this recent misfortune

(and

(and at that instant my father returned into the room) which has befallen your respectable father, makes it impossible for you to doubt the disinterestedness of my love. Oh, Adeline! if you deign to accept my hand, it shall be the study of my life to make *his* situation affluent, and to promote *your* happiness—mine depends on you alone. I do not ask for your reply at this unseasonable time. I take an unwarrantable liberty in mentioning the subject now; but the melancholy scene I have been witness of has disengaged my heart from the restrictions I had imposed on it, and prompts me to say, while De Rozan-court exists, Adeline de Courcy can never want a lover, a friend, or a protector.”

I was confounded and enraged at this ill-timed declaration.—“ Sir!” said I, rising from my seat, “ is this a time to insult me with the voice of love? Is the scene we are returned from proper

to inspire us with any ideas but those of horror? You surely know my engagements to another; but if I *had* a heart to bestow, it would recoil from your proposals at such a time as this!"

I did not hear his answer, for I hastily left the room; but he continued near half an hour talking rather loud, and in a very peremptory tone of voice, to my father, who went to bed as soon as he was gone.

The agitation of my mind from so many distressing causes brought on a fever, by which I was confined to my bed a fortnight, during which the Marquis called every day to inquire after me.

As soon as I grew better, and was allowed to sit up, I asked Genevieve if she had heard any thing of the Abbè or Solignac. To my great surprize she informed me they had left Italy, as her master had told her, and she believed there were letters for me, which had been in the parlour some days. I sent her

her for them, and she brought me two ; but one of these was from Madame D'Orval, my aunt, and the other from the Baroness, who wrote me, she was going with her sister and Zodiski on a little journey, which was to end in a visit to his mother at her country seat, but she hoped to hear from me on her return to Paris in less than a month, till which time it would be uncertain how to direct to her. I remained in anxious suspense till the next post-day, when Bertrand brought a letter from the post-office, which I saw was directed by Solignac. I opened it in haste, and with astonishment read these words :

“ TO MADEMOISELLE DE COURCY.

“ I am so much hurried in making preparations for my journey, that I have scarcely time, dearest and best of women ! to take my final leave of you.—

The

The King has been pleased to let his resentment sleep in my father's tomb—he has repealed the act of banishment, which was extended to me, and, in return for his generous pardon, I have embraced a military life, in order to devote myself to his service. I have only one word more to add—it is an unnatural and cruel one, but in violent exigencies the less that is said the better, for every sentence probes the wounded heart instead of healing it. It would be dishonourable in me to deceive you with false hopes, therefore I will at once tell you, I am every day more convinced of the impropriety of our being united. This *last blow* has decided me how to act, for under such circumstances it would be the utmost imprudence in me not to resign the fond hopes I entertained of leading you to the altar.

“Farewell, then, delusive expectations! enchanting dreams of happiness! which
cannot,

cannot, must not be realized. Think of me as a man who never can be *your's*. Adeline! you will hear from me no more, until you receive that talisman, which, as it has been a token of your love, shall prove the signal of my death—till that period you will possess the esteem, regard, and good wishes of

“HENRI DE SOLIGNAC.”

This letter overwhelmed me with surprise. I read it over twenty times, and could draw no inference from it, but that Solignac, finding himself master of an affluent fortune, and courted by the gay and great, had despised so humble an alliance; and, on receiving the news of my father's loss, had considered me as a beggar, who would disgrace his family, and therefore made his going into the army a pretence for not returning to us, and also for preventing my troubling him with any more letters.

My

My indignation was equal to my grief; and, as misfortunes seldom come alone, in a week after my father was arrested for debt at the suit of a Monsieur de Fleuri, of whom, unknown to me, he had borrowed a sum of money, meaning to repay it with the produce of his farm, and, being now unable to discharge the debt, was hurried to prison.

This sight was more than I could bear.—To see an affectionate parent, whose age and infirmities pleaded for pity, and whose character ought to command respect, ignominiously dragged along like a criminal, seemed to be the completion of my miseries. In that hour my heart revolted against Solignac, to whom my unhappy parent had written an account of his distresses; and who, when the accident of the fire happened, though he was heir to an affluent fortune, instead of hastening to prevent, or to partake the difficulties in which we were
involved,

involved, cruelly and basely deserted us in the hour of calamity.

I passed the day and night in the bitterest lamentations, and in the morning sent an old servant, who had lived in the farm, to try if he could console or assist my imprisoned father, whom I should have attended in his disgrace, if the vile instruments of tyranny would have permitted me.

Soon after he was gone I received the following letter :

“ TO MADEMOISELLE DE COURCY.

“ The contempt and indignation, Madam, with which my former proposal was received, makes me fearful lest I should again offend you, by offering my services in the enlargement of your father ; yet, as I mean not to bargain for your good opinion, or to be ungenerous because you are unkind, I must beg
leave

leave to trespass a short time upon your patience. I am too much humbled by your past conduct to hope for any thing more than your esteem; nor do I claim a return beyond what common friendship may expect. I beg you will do me the honour immediately to appropriate the inclosed sum to the payment of Monsieur de Courcy's debt; and, lest my presence should wound your delicacy, or induce you to think I have any hopes that love may be the offspring of gratitude, I mean to leave this country to-morrow morning, and shall think myself amply repaid, if by this action I can afford the least degree of comfort to your afflicted father, from whom I have received a letter, which I inclose for your perusal.

“ I subscribe myself,

“ with respect and regard,

“ your devoted humble servant,

“ LOUIS XAVIER DE ROZANCOURT.”

Letter from MONSIEUR DE COURCY
To the MARQUIS DE ROZANCOURT.

“ SIR,

“ Allow me to entreat, in the most earnest and respectful manner, the honour of your attention for a few moments. It is with infinite pain to my feelings, both as a gentleman and a father, that I unfold my distresses to your compassionate bosom. Providence has been pleased to visit me with poverty and affliction. I am humbled to the dust, and now confined within a gloomy damp dungeon, where, already subdued by age, infirmities, and sorrow, I hope soon to end this miserable life. My embarrassments have long been drawing to a crisis, but I flattered myself with vain hopes of assistance from Monsieur de Solignac, which now are at an end.

You

You generously forgave me the arrears I owed your late father, and I fondly thought the man, on whom my daughter had bestowed her heart, would save my sinking fortune with his own. Heaven has punished my vanity and folly. Solignac has deceived me. I informed him of my misfortunes—he has resigned my daughter—and such a daughter—

Forgive, Sir, the weakness of a poor old man, and allow me to say, with a breaking heart, Adeline was the pride and comfort of her father. I perhaps saw her virtues and her charms through the magnifying glass of partial love, and therefore thought her worthy of exalted fortune. In the dreadful extremity to which I am reduced, I blush with shame to appeal to your humanity—to be dependant on the Marquis de Rozancourt, to whom I am already so deeply obliged, and whom my deluded child has scornfully refused.—But, alas! you are the only friend

friend who will pay attention to my sufferings and my woes. I wished to pass *silently* to my grave, but want obliges me to speak. The destiny of Adeline also hangs heavy on my mind.

Deign, Sir! to intercede with my severe creditor at least to accept bail for me, that I may once more behold my family, and try what can be done towards the discharge of my debt. I have written a confidential account of my circumstances to a friend at Paris, who will perhaps have the humanity to assist me.

“ I remain, Sir,

“ your obedient and obliged servant,

“ the unfortunate

“ PIERRE DE COURCY.”

My father's affecting letter, and the noble procedure of the Marquis, awakened in a heart, naturally warm, the most lively sensations of gratitude. The

contrast of his behaviour and that of Solignac's pained me to think of. I resolved to act with heroism. I was inspired with an enthusiastic violence, and snatching up a pen, wrote these words to the Marquis :

“ Your generosity, my Lord, is such, that I have only one way left to prove to you the sense I entertain of so much goodness. Would to God I had a heart at ease to offer you, but it is too sensible of obligation not to aim at making every possible return for your liberality. Your own approving conscience will reward you better than I can ; but if a *wish* to love you, and a *promise* to obey you, can serve as a requital for your services to my father, you may command the hand of

“ ADELINÉ DE COURCY.”

I dared not examine my own thoughts after writing this letter : I therefore sent it

it away hastily, and as soon as it was gone, determined to banish the unworthy Solignac from my mind, and to encourage, as much as possible, my regard for the Marquis.

He had released my father before my letter was sent, and they were coming together to the Priory, when he met the servant who was returning with it to the Castle. I will pass over his expressions of joy, and my poor father's satisfaction, and only say, that as the Marquis urged the necessity of a private marriage, on account of a rich uncle on whom he had great expectations, we were married in his own chapel a very short time after.

I had not been wife to the Marquis de Rozancourt many days, before my father received an anonymous letter, desiring him to make use of the inclosed notes, and to consider them as his own, being sent him by a person who had long been

in his debt, and till then unable to pay it. The sum amounted to more than that for which he had been flung into prison. The delicacy with which this act of friendship was conveyed gave double merit to the generous deed. The letter bore the post-mark of Blois, which was near the summer residence of Monsieur de Ronsal, to whom we for that reason supposed ourselves indebted.

I was in hopes, when I gave my hand to the Marquis, and bade adieu to every thought but that of obedience and regard for him, my mind would at least be happy; but alas! it was like a frightened bird, which, being driven from its nest, still pants and trembles for those it left behind, and makes an unavailing moan. I dared not examine my own heart; I avoided retrospective scenes; yet now and then a sudden thought of Solignac, who I had been accustomed (innocently accustomed) to think of

9

with

with delight and pride, darted like a flash of lightning through my mind—I shrunk from the fatal glance, and found myself involved again in gloom. I should perhaps have fallen into a lethargic sort of melancholy, (notwithstanding the Marquis’s attention and endeavours to amuse me) had I not been roused by the danger of my revered father. That dear parent, for whom I had sacrificed myself, my happiness, and every earthly hope, had received the arrow of death from the hand of tyranny; it was struck into his heart at the time when he was led (ignominiously led) to an unwholesome prison.—Oh, Heaven! thou art my witness, till that hard moment I had not murmured at my fate. A faithful monitor within applauded what I had done to preserve his life, and shield his declining head from shame. Alas! the mortal blow was given—I observed his altered looks

when he first was brought from prison, but attributed them to vexation only. Alas ! in a few days I was cruelly convinced his frame was more enfeebled than his mind—he changed very visibly for the worse every day ; and one morning, as we were sitting together, he was suddenly taken very ill, and expired in my arms before any assistance could be procured.

Oh Providence !, all wise and gracious Providence ! let me not now profane the air with a complaint—the blow fell with severity on *my head* alone, and what seemed cruelty to me, was mercy to my father ; his pure spirit was snatched from all the cares and evils of this life, that he might escape those horrors which were reserved for me.

The excessive grief into which I was plunged by this sudden loss affected my health, and alarmed the Marquis, who proposed removing me to a relation of his,

his,

his, Madame de Thiange, who now is the respectable Abbess of St. Croix, at Dijon. She lived at a house called the Hermitage, several leagues from the Castle, and he thought change of scene and society might contribute to the composure of my mind. He gave a particular charge to me and Genevieve not to mention a syllable of my marriage, promising that in my absence he would visit his uncle, and try to gain his consent.

I wrote a few lines to apprise my aunt of my father's death, and set out with Genevieve for the Hermitage, carrying a letter from the Marquis, in which he described me as Mademoiselle la Pierre, a near neighbour of his, who was an object of compassion from excessive grief for the death of her father, and desired her kind attention might be employed to comfort and amuse me.

We went with post-horses, and with-

out any servants, to prevent suspicion; the Marquis attended us within sight of the Hermitage. At that moment, penetrated with gratitude for his attentions, and wishing to love him as I thought he deserved, I grasped his hands in mine; I wept my own unworthiness to requite him for such a waste of affection, and, as I took my leave, prayed the Almighty would reward and bless him for all the tenderness and love I had experienced from him. He seemed deeply affected by my expressions of regard, and also by the solemn and pathetic manner in which I recommended him to the Rewarder of all good works. He attempted to speak; the words trembled on his tongue; I saw his cheek turn pale, and he withdrew.

I will now endeavour, as nearly as I can recollect, to describe our new place of abode. It was a small neat house, situated in the midst of a garden, and
concealed.

concealed from public view by an excessive high hedge that grew round it; consequently it was a pleasing surprize, when the gate was opened, to find ourselves in the most cheerful, yet the most retired spot imaginable; quantities of geraniums and other sweet flowers were placed about the house, and a honeysuckle twined its wanton tendrils round the door of the hospitable dwelling, which might be truly stiled the Mansion of Peace. From the upper windows of the hermitage a view of rocks, trees, and distant lands were seen; at the back was a beautiful piece of ground, on one side of which a long bird-cage walk of trees, whose outer boughs absolutely touched the ground, led to a romantic seat, from whence the most delicious prospect (that variety of rich meadows, a serpentine stream, a church, and distant hills could afford) was at once unfolded to the sight.

As

As soon as we had sent in the Marquis's letter, the lady of the house made her appearance. She at that moment gave me the idea of the exalted character which she is now destined to fill. She advanced from the door with an air of inexpressible benignity, and took me by the hand. Her person was large, but she was still young; her face florid, healthy, and cheerful; her eyes black and sparkling; her lips very red, and her teeth fine; a look of strong sense characterized her countenance, blended with an air of serene happiness, that conscious virtue could alone bestow. She was dressed in a vesture of brown stuff, with large old-fashioned cuffs, and a cap with full rose-coloured ribbands. It gave me comfort to look at her, for she was the picture of contentment. This amiable woman, whose life, like mine, had been chequered with misfortune, had found in religion a cure for all her

woes;

woes ; yet that religion was not of the gloomy sort, which sees every thing with an austere and melancholy eye ; on the contrary, she diffused cheerfulness to all around her. It was impossible she should ever find a want of occupation, for her hours were either employed in works of ingenuity, or acts of benevolence. Her charity was extensive, yet her gifts were made in silence ; she had no vain-glory, no ostentation ; what good works she did seemed more from her conviction of acting right, than from a thought of being better than the rest of the world. Her genius was equal to any pursuit, her judgment excellent, her conversation entertaining. Her exemplary life was not marked by sullen reserve, by sanctified manners, or acts of mortification and penance ; for she could blend all the pleasantry and affability of a woman of the world with the refined notions of true virtue and religion.

religion. Such was this excellent friend, whose sage counsels and unwearied care have assuaged many of my bitterest pangs.

With her I passed three weeks in the most rational manner, assisting her in her attentions to the sick and poor, establishing schools for children, and at other times being employed in those ingenious works, where her skill and excellent fancy were conspicuous. The manner in which we lived was more likely to compose my agitated mind than those gay and turbulent scenes which are often flown to, in order that they may give no leisure for recollection.

I found in Madame de Thiange a friend indulgent to my sorrows, and a mistress ready to correct my failings. Her tenderness, her sensibility, was very great; she was the very soul of pity, and the time soon approached in which all her compassion would be required for *me*.

She:

She had just received her appointment to the Abbaye de St. Croix, and I was preparing to return home, when a letter came for her, directed by the handwriting of the Baroness de Luzane, who (I now learnt) was an intimate friend of Madame de Thiange. She read it some emotion. My curiosity was excited, and I could not help hinting a wish to be made acquainted with the contents. She gave it me, and I read with perfect composure, till I came to this passage :

“ You have often heard me speak of Monsieur de Solignac, the faithful but unfortunate lover of Adeline de Courcy. A point of honour has induced him to resign all pretensions to her hand. His worthless father had mortgaged his estates, and lost so much money in gaming, that his son found himself, at his death, reduced to a slender pittance. He knew the generosity of Adeline’s soul
too

too well to suppose she would acquiesce in his motives; he knew her father's circumstances; and was assured she would insist on suffering poverty with him, and being involved in his ruin. He considered that an attachment might render her very miserable, and prevent her marrying to advantage; and therefore determined, from a principle of romance, which perhaps may be thought absurd, to sacrifice *his* hopes to *her* happiness; to leave her at liberty, and endeavour, if possible, to make her forget the unhappy Solignac. The Abbè St. Bertin approved his generosity. He wrote to her father (under an injunction of secrecy) a circumstantial detail of his situation, and sent a letter to Adeline, in a fit of despair, at the time he received the news of a law-suit being lost, in which his father had been long engaged; after which he immediately accepted a commission in the army, that was offered

him

him by a relation (Monsieur de Montigny, who is a Colonel in the army.) Count Zodiski, who once had been strongly attached to Adeline, is partial to the virtues of Solignac, with whom he has passed much of his time since the loss of his mother, who died while he was paying her a visit. The venerable Abbè St. Bertin has fixed his abode at Dijon, where you probably will see him and Solignac. That young man has already joined the regiment, which is now at Chalons; a situation that, I doubt, as it brings him nearer the object of his affections, will shake his resolution. From the look of despair that was imprinted on his face when I saw him last, and his personal courage, it is my opinion his secret wish is to signalize himself in the service of his country, (whenever he has an opportunity) and to buy renown at the price of a life he is not anxious to preserve. He had
scarcely

scarcely left Paris before my father received a very affecting letter from Monsieur de Courcy, dated from a cachôt, in which a merciless creditor had confined him. My father wished to lend him the money requisite for his release, but was prevented by my brother-in-law, Zodiski, who, after desiring my father would not divulge to Monsieur de Courcy the secret whereby he obtained assistance, with a liberality and delicacy worthy of his noble soul, inclosed more than the sum required in an anonymous letter, and sent it to the Priory. I was in hopes, on my return from a little journey I have been making, to find a letter from my friend, but have been disappointed, which makes me fear she is ill; and I have this day written to her without mentioning either the Count or her lover, wishing first to find how her heart is affected towards Solignac, and being careful to avoid those subjects that may bring

bring

bring unpleasant recollections to her mind.”

Thus far I had read, and had command enough over myself to restrain my tears and lamentations. I gave the letter to Madame de Thiange, and got myself, I know not how, out of the room.

That Solignac should have written letters to my father, which never had been received; that he should have resigned me from motives of generosity, and not from inconstancy, were dreadful truths for me to learn. I shuddered to think the Hermitage was so much nearer to Chalons than the Castle was, particularly as Solignac would naturally come with the Abbè to pay his compliments to Madame de Thiange, the friend both of the Baroness and the Count.

I resolved to return home, and, after weeping my own hard fate, and the loss of him whom I had loved even while I

thought he was unfaithful, I returned to Madame de Thiange, endeavouring only to remember the duties I had engaged myself to fulfil, and the obligations I owed to the generosity of the Marquis. My altered look when I left the room alarmed my penetrating friend. She questioned Genevieve, and extorted from her the fatal story. She was apprized both of my name and my unhappy marriage, before I made my appearance, and I perceived, by the tears that still glistened in her eyes, some discovery had been made. That affectionate indulgent friend tenderly embraced me; she reproved my want of confidence in letting her remain so long ignorant of my fate; she lamented the evil chance that tempted her to shew me the letter; and when I mentioned my reasons for a sudden return to the Chateau de Rozancourt, and excused my having acted with so much reserve and caution in obedience

dience to a husband's commands, she wept over the necessity of losing me, but commended my resolution.

I wrote to apprise the Marquis of my design to return home, without giving him my real reasons. I conjured Madame de Thiange, in as gentle a manner as possible, to inform the unfortunate Solignac of a marriage that must prevent his making any attempt to see me, (which he would naturally do, if, on going to the Priory, he was informed of my removal to the Castle.) I intreated her to describe my father's situation, and the strong claims the Marquis had to my gratitude; also to insist on his forgetting, and never desiring to see me more.

We parted with many tears, and I set out for the Castle with Genevieve. I confess I was not sorry, on my arrival, to hear the Marquis was not returned from a journey he had made to Paris;

the state of my heart was such, that quiet and solitude were the only things I desired ; but I recollected that the Baroness had written to me, and as she was ignorant of my change of situation, I concluded the letter was at the Priory. I felt a secret impulse once more to visit that scene of all my happiness, and I resolved to go for it myself the day after my arrival. Alas ! 'twas weakness in me to indulge the melancholy pleasure—every place around it, every tree, every walk reminded me of Solignac. My mind too eagerly caught the dear illusion. Here, thought I, did he first tell me of his love!—here he renewed his vows before our fatal separation !

I came to an aspen tree, whose silver leaves were quivering in the wind ; their rustling sound was pleasant to me, and I remembered on that very tree Solignac had inscribed his Adeline's name.

I looked

I looked for it, and saw the letters which had been formed by his hand, and on the other side of the tree I read these words : “ Sacred to Love and Hope.”

There was a seat near the tree ; I walked to it with my eyes full of tears ; a train of dismal thoughts rushed into my mind, and musing on the lines addressed to Love and Hope, I took some paper out of my pocket-book, and expressed with a pencil the feelings of my soul. This done, I sat stupid and absorbed in despair, till the clock struck, and made me start from my lethargic state. I got up to return to my carriage, which I had left at the top of the hill. I was to pass the tree ; my knees knocked together as I approached it : the power of attraction, like a magnet, drew me thither ; I knew not what I did ; in an agony of grief I surveyed the testimony of my lover’s passion, and, leaning my head against the bark, washed it with my

tears. "Oh my father!" I exclaimed, "if thy pure spirit feels for those that dwell on earth, forgive thy Adeline's weakness; and thou, my Solignac,"—here my voice was choaked with tears. The thought of my being the property of another, whom I ought to love, arrested the imperfect sounds, and bade me tremble at my guilty love.—I found the expected letter at the Priory, but had not courage to open it till I got into my carriage. I there read surprizing things. She informed me that Count Zodiski's mother was dead; that he had since been dangerously ill, and in his illness had intrusted her with a paper, implying that he had left a considerable sum to my father, in the stocks, desiring half the interest might be appropriated to my use, and the reversion of the said sum to be mine at my father's death; which intended act of friendship she could not refrain from imparting to me,

as it proved the sincerity of his regard, and the delicacy of his conduct in conveying it to me through the name of my father. Happy was I to read at the end of her letter, that this invaluable friend was still alive, the strength of his constitution having baffled the violence of his disorder. She mentioned the circumstance of Solignac having embraced a military life. She reproved me for keeping them so long ignorant of my father's embarrassments, and concluded her letter with a most mournful circumstance for me to learn, which was, that the delicate state of her health had induced the physicians to insist on her trying the climate of Nice, for which place she was to set out with her sister in a short time.

Within a week after I received this letter, the Marquis arrived from Paris; he seemed much surprized to find me at the Castle; I made the appointment of

Madame de Thiange to the Abbey of St. Croix my sole pretence, and he appeared satisfied with it. I wished to know the result of his application to his uncle; he told me he had, in some measure, prepared him to hear of his marriage, and was determined, in a second visit (which a law-suit of his uncle's would oblige him to make in a month or six weeks) to declare his situation with respect to me.

The Marquis de Rozancourt was entirely a man of pleasure; yet his character did not appear frivolous—He had a quick genius, strong memory, and agreeable talents, which made him an excellent companion; he studied to accommodate his taste to mine, and seemed to rejoice in every opportunity of amusing me. 'Twas impossible to forget my obligations to him—'twas impossible to be insensible of his accomplishments. I hourly regretted that I had
not

not known him at an earlier period of our lives, when his mind was artless and unspoiled by the world, and before my heart was appropriated to another. But, alas ! de Rozancourt was an artificial character ; his agrémens were not natural ; they were all acquired ; an early knowledge of the world had made him an adept in the skill of pleasing, more from practice than from nature ; but, under the mask of gentleness and virtue, he was a despot and a rake ; every thing he did was by design and study. Long commerce with the profligate of his own sex, and the most abandoned of ours, had made him immoral ; but he knew too well the necessity of imposing on the better part of mankind, not to assume the cloak of virtue when he was amongst her votaries. Had his heart been perfect like his manners, how engaging would de Rozancourt have been ! but he was like a courtier who carries the
shield

shield of mystery upon his breast, and while I admired his graces and accomplishments, I sought in vain to find the candour and frankness of the ingenuous Solignac. Yet, sighing to myself, I often said, “ ’Tis absurd to expect more than we deserve. The Marquis de Rozancourt has honoured me with his choice—was he destitute of any claims to merit or beauty, the title of *husband* should be sufficient to exclude any other from my heart. As he is endowed with every mental and exterior grace, ought I not to glory in being allied to him? and while I catch improvement from his enlightened genius and knowledge of mankind, while I admire his polished manners, and experience his regard, is it not ungrateful in me to repine at a situation which would be the envy of so many of my sex ?”

I continued to encourage every thought that might promote an attachment to the

Marquis,

Marquis, and to chace from my mind the image of Solignac, which too often would intrude itself there. By degrees I became composed, and had acquired a fixed resolution to forget whatever might divert my thoughts from the duty and regard I owed my husband.

Unfortunately, the book which contained my address to Hope one day dropped from my pocket—the eagerness with which I went to take it from the Marquis, who had picked it up, excited his curiosity, and he insisted on keeping it. My agitation increased his suspicions; from joking on the subject we grew serious. I was importunate, the Marquis was determined, and he withdrew without restoring me the book. I felt offended at this ungenerous procedure, and intimidated at the thoughts of what might ensue. I recollected the lines to Hope, and trembled; they were as follows:—

Celestial

Celestial Hope ! thou soother of the mind,
 Who oft has gladden'd this unhappy breast ;
 From thee I still may consolation find,
 Still see thy form in Angel brightness drest.

When mourning o'er remembrance of my woes,
 If SOLIGNAC impels the heavy sigh,
 If down my cheek the tear of sorrow flows,
 And *nature* owns what *reason* would deny :
 Hope whispers that the crime may be forgiven,
 Since mercy is the attribute of Heaven.

The Marquis returned the paper to me with anger flushing from his eyes.—
 “ I see, Madam,” said he, “ your anguish for a father’s death was but an excuse for afflictions of another nature.—
 My attentions, my ardent passion, my perfect confidence in you, is rewarded by scorn and aversion.—The happy Solignac is still cherished in your heart ; but let him beware how he presumes to speak of passion where I have fixed my choice. Take care, Madam, how you venture

to behold this favoured lover. An interview with Solignac may be accomplished, but must be paid for; and death shall be the price by which it is attained. I will no longer waste my time and my attentions on a woman who is ungrateful for the benefits she receives. To-morrow morning I shall set out for Paris, when I may return is an uncertainty, and my communicating our marriage to my uncle must now depend on an alteration in yourself. I cannot presume to present a relation to him, whose heart retracts the vows she made me at the altar. Adeline! I leave you to your chimerical ideas of Hope—enjoy the visions of your brain—feed on the dear delusion—the time will come when you may think it happiness to be Marchioness de Rozancourt.”—Saying these words, he rushed from my apartment, persisted in his resolution, and, without allowing

allowing me to see him again, left the house at break of day.

The week before this fracas, I had written the Baronefs a recital of my past sorrows, and of the better prospects that now invited me to be happy—this sad reverse opened all those wounds in my heart, which were so lately and so superficially healed. Solignac, Zodiski, all the anguish I had endured, the sacrifices I had made, returned with double force upon my mind. The Marquis knew of my love for Solignac before he took advantage of my misfortunes to obtain my hand; and it was barbarous in him to notice that effusion of my soul, when he must know my actions were free from reproach. I fell into a deep dejection, which lasted two days, and might have continued longer, had not a fever of the most malignant and contagious nature attacked several of my family;

family; among the number was my faithful Genevieve, hitherto the companion of all the wayward accidents of my life. Roused by her danger, and the distressing situation of the others, I employed myself in administering relief to them as far as I could. Indifferent to my own wretched existence, I by no means wished to escape the infection, and refused to remove from the Castle, though strongly advised to go.

I expected the physician to arrive every moment, and was waiting for him impatiently, when one of the servants informed me that a person was below, and wished to speak with me. I left Genevieve's room, and went hastily into the hall, where I saw a figure in a long large cloak, which he held close to his chin, and with a Spanish round hat flapped over his face. The strange appearance surprized me so much, that I was going to make my escape, when,

catching

catching me by the hand, the stranger, in a faint and trembling voice, entreated me to stay.

Had a death warrant been signed for my execution, and the bell began to toll which was to be the signal for it, I could not have felt more terror than I did at that mournful sound. A deadly tremor seized my frame. I withdrew my hand—I tottered towards a chair—and falling into it more dead than alive, I exclaimed, “My God! surely I know that voice!”—the only reply I received was suffocating sobs and groans. I found my heart beat violently, the room seemed to go round with me, and I expected every instant to faint; yet I dared not call for assistance. I had just power to make a feeble sign to have the window opened. My fellow-sufferer obeyed my command, and led me gently towards the air. I leaned on his arm; his whole frame trembled as he supported me, and

and we stood a few moments silent. I ventured to raise my eyes to his, the light shone full upon his face, and revealed to me the palid grief-worn features of the unhappy Solignac.

Looking full at me with an expression of the tenderest sorrow, he seemed to stab me to the heart in saying, "Have you forgot me, Adeline?" The plaintive accents had scarce reached my ear, when, regardless of every thing but the joy of seeing him again, I flung my arms round his neck, as if he had been my brother, and wept upon his bosom. At that moment, had Solignac been in rags, the most forlorn and abject of his kind, and I the mistress of my fate, I should have preferred poverty with him, to honours, fortune, dignity, and fame, without him. In sending Solignac to me, Heaven seemed to restore a treasure that was mine, though it had so long been lost; and I forgot it was become

criminal for me still to admire what I had formerly thought it was my greatest pride to love.

The idea of the fever first rushed upon my mind, and I, who had been indifferent to my own danger, was not insensible to that of Solignac. I started from him, shuddering with apprehensions for his safety; so much did every thing that concerned a person thus dear to me, outweigh any consideration I could have for myself. I intreated him to take a seat, and to be composed. We sat on each side the window, which was encircled with jasmine, and looked into the garden; never shall I forget that window.

After a considerable pause, he assured me the intention of his visit was by no means to alarm, or to molest me; that in the first agonies of his grief, when Madame de Thiange apprized him of my marriage, he had been frantic with
rage

rage and disappointment ; but that my excellent friend had so well described the motives of my conduct, and the propriety of my choice, as to calm the tumult of his soul, and, in some measure, reconciled him to a loss which was to promote my happiness. That he had once resolved to return to Chalons without seeing me, but a desire, for the last time, to vindicate his own conduct, and to assure me he sincerely pardoned mine, induced him to take this step.

While he was speaking, the tears ran down my cheeks upon my bosom, and relieved a heart that seemed almost ready to break. I had resolution, however, to interrupt him by saying, I wished not now to have those circumstances renewed, which could only recall unpleasant remembrances to my mind ; that, as the wife of Monsieur de Rozancourt, it did not become me to listen to any thing that might strengthen an attachment

which could be no longer innocent. I therefore desired to wave all conversation relative to the past occurrences of our lives. I assured him that he would always be remembered in my prayers; but at the same time, I was so well aware of the impropriety of his present visit, that I must entreat him to consider it as the last time we should ever meet on earth. Here his affected composure and resolution forsook him; he fell at my feet, he grasped my hands, he uttered the most extravagant expressions of despair. I found it necessary to exert myself; and looking at him with a determined air, "Is it thus," said I, "you endeavour to wound a heart which has already suffered too much for your sake? If the honour, the dignity, the safety of Adeline, is still worth your care, do not, by an unmanly indulgence of your grief, expose me to the observation of my servants, the censure of the world, and the
 resentment

resentment of my husband : Should the circumstances of this interview be ever known to the Marquis, (who is already prone to jealous suspicions) what must he think of me ? I should be degraded, lost in his esteem, and you would have the melancholy reflection of having ruined the character of her you love. Learn from me, Solignac, to bear your fate with resignation ; think not I suffer less than you, because I can controul the impulse of my heart ; and know, that if any thing can add to the misery of my situation, it will be the idea of your want of fortitude. Turn your attention to views of glory and renown ; promise to endure our separation with composure, and if you wish to prove to me the sincerity of your affection, comply with the request I now must make you."

He looked earnestly at me, and promised to obey me. I continued ; " It is necessary for me that we *this instant* part.

A longer interview might create suspicions—I owe to the Marquis and to myself the preservation of my fame, and I expect you to sacrifice your own wishes to my security. Attempt no more to see me—a second interview might be fatal to your Adeline. I entreat you to return instantly to the village, and to set out for Chalons to-morrow morning.”—As I was speaking these words, my heart seemed to die within me. I held out my hand to him, and as he bathed it with his tears, I turned from him to conceal my own.

The ringing of the great bell made me start from my lethargy. I saw the physician driving up the avenue, and I entreated Solignac to depart—he gave me a look—such a look!—it was no longer wild and disordered, but there was a sort of awful sorrow in it that seemed to say, “we part to meet no more!” I meant to bid him adieu, but

but the word trembled on my tongue.— I made him a sign to go; and he obeyed.

A dreadful stillness took possession of my soul—it seemed as if my spirit longed to take its flight, and struggled to shake off its mortal bondage. I followed Solignac with my eyes; I saw him mount his horse, and ride slowly through the park; I saw him stop at the last gate, as if to take a farewell look. I half rose from my seat, and was going to wave my hand to him at the window, but the idea of my own situation rushed into my mind, and I again sunk into my chair.

I should have staid in this melancholy state some time longer, if I had not been interrupted by the physician. The melancholy situation of my family afforded a pretence for the agitation he saw me in; he apprized me of the dangerous state of Genevieve, and the desire she

had just expressed to see me. I hurried to the apartment of this faithful creature, whose disorder I found was rapidly increasing. She committed to my charge a paper sealed up, which she desired might only be opened in case of her decease; and when I beheld her hastening from a world of cares, and observed the tranquillity with which she contemplated the approach of death, I fervently prayed the Almighty would not allow me to survive her; but I was ordained to live, in order to experience greater misfortunes.

The physician, finding me from the first obstinately bent on sharing the danger of my servant, ceased to importune me on the subject, and her death only induced me to quit an apartment where I had also hoped to breathe my last.

The paper Genevieve had given me, contained her will, wherein she had left me, as a mark of gratitude, a small
 sum

sum she had saved during her years of servitude, and which I at that time little thought could ever be of use to me.

I was sincerely afflicted at her death; and though I did not catch the same sort of fever, I altered visibly in my looks, and alarmed the physician so much by my symptoms of a decline, that he wrote to the Marquis, advising my removal to the baths of Plombieres, and pressing his immediate return.

The day after he sent the letter, Bertrand, who once lived with my father, and had been since a very favourite servant of the Marquis's, was given over by the physician; and seeming much troubled in his mind, I sent for the confessor from a neighbouring convent.

The next morning, about five o'clock, I was awakened by somebody rapping gently at my door. I rose in haste, put on my robe de chambre, and called out to know what was the matter. A voice, which

which I knew to be that of the confessor, replied, that the dying man had made his confession ; but said he could not die in peace till he obtained my pardon for various offences he had committed towards me, and conjured me, by every thing most sacred, to pronounce his forgiveness.

I took a wax taper in my hand, and followed the holy father. The wind whistled most dismally as we passed through a long gallery that led to the sick man's room. One of my maid servants (whom I called up) followed me to the door, which the friar opened softly, and I beheld the dying Bertrand supported by pillows, with his emaciated hands clasped together, and his eyes fixed on a crucifix at the end of the room. At sight of me his limbs began to tremble, and a faint sickness seized him. I saw something was labouring in his mind—a dreadful look of horror sat upon his brow.

I inter-

I interrupted the silence, by assuring him, whatever his transgressions were, I freely forgave him; and desired he would hope for mercy from an all-wise and good Creator. He bowed his head, and, with a deep groan, thus addressed me:—"I have deeds of villainy to disclose, nor can I die in peace if they are not divulged; yet I tremble to reveal them; and though you, Madam, like an angel of mercy, speak comfort to my soul, I cannot forgive myself for having wronged so good a lady. The Marquis, though, is most to blame, who bribed me to be base, and, by his great rewards, impaired the natural honesty of my mind. If my strength will permit, I will repeat to you what this reverend father has just now heard me say; if not, I must depend on him to reveal it to you. Oh Madam! I have much to answer for. The Marquis made me his spy while I lived in your good father's

ther's

ther's house ; but this was the prelude to much greater mischief. When he found you was averse to his proposals of marriage, and firmly attached to another, he determined to profit by my master's distressed situation. He persuaded me to set fire to the barn, (though he appeared so anxious to assist the sufferers on that occasion) and he himself instigated Monsieur Fleuri to throw my poor master into prison ; he made me intercept all the letters that came from Monsieur de Solignac previous to the last you received ; and his apparent generosity in assisting your father, was only a feint in order to induce you to marry him.— God Almighty forgive *me*, for being an assistant in all his diabolical—” —as he uttered these last words, he fell back and expired.

I started from my chair, lost in amazement—the clearness with which he gave his evidence, was not like that of a disordered

ordered mind, yet I could scarcely believe what I had heard.

I observed a small slip of paper on the bed—by an involuntary impulse I inspected it, but no words can describe the dreadful chill that struck to my heart when I read, in the Marquis's own hand writing, the directions to Bertrand for the wicked transaction of the fire. This proof left me no room to doubt the truth of all the rest. I let it fall to the ground, and exclaiming, "Oh horror! horror!" fainted away in the arms of my attendant. V

I was conveyed to my apartment in a state almost bordering on distraction; but, after a few hours, I grew more calm. The pang I had suffered in parting from Solignac, had prepared my mind to bear all other evils. I resolved to set out immediately for Plombieres, the waters of which had been recommended

to me before by my physician; but I concealed my intention from the family, resolving to get there in the most private manner I could. I took with me a steady servant, who had escaped the fever, and the legacy left me by poor Genevieve, in order that I might have it in my power to obtain a lodging without being indebted to the Marquis for it. The thoughts of the manner in which he had imposed on my too credulous father, and myself, awakened all my pride. I felt as if I was dishonoured by my connection with him; yet I painfully recollected he was still my husband, and consequently I was accountable to him for my actions, but I dreaded seeing him at Plombieres; and in order to prevent him from following me thither, I left this letter for him at the Castle.

“ To

“ TO the MARQUIS DE ROZANCOURT.

“ The still small voice of conscience, which is sometimes prevented from being heard by the bustling scenes that rob recollection of her power, will not be silenced during the last hours of an ill-spent life. This prelude (when I inform you of Bertrand's death) will explain to you the motive both of my letter, and my precipitate departure. My health and spirits are too much hurt to admit of my staying longer in a place, where every thing reminds me of the unwarrantable means by which I was made an inhabitant of it. I carry with me a mind deeply wounded by this cruel discovery; yet, though your treachery to my poor father shocks me to the soul, his unhappy daughter never can forget the character she is bound to fulfil.—

While

While I deplore the conduct of the Marquis de Rozancourt, I remember, (fatally remember) I am his wife; as such, I am to obey him; and whenever he thinks proper to *write* to me, by directing his letter to the baths of Plombieres, it will there find the unfortunate

ADELINE DE ROZANCOURT."

My journey to Plombieres was truly melancholy. The perfidious means by which I was induced to marry, and to desert the man my heart had ever acknowledged for its chosen Lord, hung heavy on my mind. Yet I wished, if possible, to palliate the Marquis's offence, and to throw over it the flimsy veil of violent and ungovernable passion, which had thus wrought on a heart already warped from its duty, by the evil examples of dissolute companions. Alas! it was impossible to deceive myself. Solignac, the amiable Solignac, was present to my imagination.

I thought

I thought on all his noble frankness, his love of truth ; I revolved every circumstance of tenderness and virtue that had marked his life, and my heart sickened at the contrast.

I hired part of a small house at Plombieres, near the baths, and took upon myself the name of Ruvigny. The night of my arrival I had dreadful dreams : I thought my father appeared before me, emaciated, pale, and fainting ; he wept over the victim of filial piety—he deplored the fate of Adeline, and expired at my feet.

The excessive rains that fell for some days after my arrival at Plombieres, confined me to the house, and when I went out it was merely to the baths, and at an hour when I did not think I should meet any body.

One day, as I was going thither, I met a young woman in mourning, who was leading by the hand a blooming

beautiful girl, who appeared to be about four years of age. The innocent and sprightly look of the child formed a striking contrast to that of the Lady, who wore an air of soft composure, and interesting sorrow, that was congenial to my soul; her face would have been very beautiful if the roses had not faded prematurely. She was a little brown woman, and lost something of her height by a stoop in her shoulders, and a disposition to bend her eyes upon the ground. Her mouth would have been thought too wide, if it had not discovered the most beautiful teeth in the world. Her hair grew very low on her forehead, which was remarkably handsome, as were her eye-brows, and her blue eyes were shaded with very long dark eye-lashes. Young as she was, this interesting figure appeared rather a shade of what once was beauty, than as a person who had now pretensions to it; and the
extreme

extreme simplicity of her dress, added to the timid look and humble air she wore, spoke a mind too much hurt by misfortune, to be capable of attending to external appearances.

As I passed she cast a look upon me, and I made her a slight curtsy which she returned, and passed on, but I perceived she looked after me. My curiosity was raised; I felt a sort of sympathy, a kind of attraction that made me wish to know this woman. I asked her name at the baths, and was told she was a Madame de Verdun, and lodged in a very indifferent house, half a mile from the town.

I contrived to go to the baths the next day at the same time. I found her there, and we entered into conversation. I was still more charmed with her manners, than I had been with her person. She spoke little, but what she said was sensible; her words well chosen, and

her opinions just. The sportive spirits of the child amused me more than I thought any thing could have done. I fancied, from the plainness of Madame de Verdun's dress, pecuniary circumstances obliged her to live retired, and to inhabit so poor an abode as the people of the baths described her house to be; and, after meeting her two or three times, I ventured to propose to her hiring the unoccupied part of my house, that we might board together, and be some company to each other. She accepted my offer with marks of satisfaction, and removed thither with her child the next day.

This lady, whom I shall henceforth call Marionette, had the most captivating manners I ever met with; her misfortunes had given her a pensive look, which might be mistaken for gravity, and a propensity to silence that looked like reserve, but was not so in reality;

for

for never did woman possess a more natural quick fancy, or more frankness and *naieté* than Marionette: her mind was cultivated more by reading than by commerce with the world.—When she was disposed to be most communicative, her thoughts, though wild and various, were embellished by every thing graceful and pleasant; her disposition was tinctured with romance, but never was a creature more sensible, more guileless, or more amiable. Experience had made her sage, but it had not made her cunning. Misfortune had robbed her of vivacity, but it had not rendered her austere or morose. In short, she was the picture of unaffected virtue, arrayed in every charm that soft simplicity could give.

Yet, as happy minds are apt to see every scene on the bright side, so did they appear gloomy in the shade of Marionette's imagination. Once de-

ceived, she had learned to be distrustful, and, even in the bosom of tranquillity, her timid soul would look forward with trembling anxiety, and anticipate horrors even in the sunshine. This weakness made her fondness for an only daughter a pain rather than a pleasure. She was always disquieting herself with vain fears, and picturing to her mind the agonies she should feel in the loss of what was so dear to her.

We passed our evenings always together, and Marionette devoted her mornings to the education of her daughter. The pleasure I found in her conversation, in some measure suspended my sense of affliction, and made me much more composed than I expected to have been.

My health gradually improved, and one morning as I was walking by the bookfeller's shop, I was surprized to find myself curious to look into the list of
company

company at Plombieres. To my very great astonishment, among them I read the name of my ever-respected friend the Count Zodiski. At that moment my sudden joy was such, as I imagine a man must feel who is cast on a desert island, and for the first time discovers a sail coming towards him.

That the unfortunate, perhaps the almost forgotten Adeline, should find one friend, where she only expected to be among strangers, was to me a matter of surprize; and in the first transport of my joy I wrote a note, which I desired the bookseller would convey to him, informing him where I lodged, and that I bore the name of Ruvigny.

In the evening, as Marionette and I were sitting together, I heard a quick and tremulous rapping at the door, and in a moment the Count rushed into the room. I ran forwards to meet him with a smile, but in an instant memory re-

sumed her rights. My feet seemed rivetted to the ground. I laid my hand on my aching heart, and burst into tears. Zodiski drew back; his brow contracted into a frown, his lips turned pale, and I observed he trembled. The alteration in his looks, and my agitated manner, induced Marionette to suppose *he* had something to learn, and *I* to impart, which could not be revealed in her presence—she therefore took up her work and left the room.

I continued weeping, but my tears were less painful than many I had shed, for they flowed from friendship mingled with affliction. I heard the Count in a faltering voice articulate, “ My God! is this the Marchioness de Rozancourt? is it thus we meet?—Tell me, Adeline! what I almost dread to know, tell me what is the cause of this violent affliction? Why are you here in this obscure lodging? Why under a feigned name?—

Tell me all, I will bear it (yes, I will strive to bear it) like a man. These tears cannot flow from guilt—they are the interpreters of misfortune.”

As soon as I could recover myself, I desired him to be composed; and, in order to prevent any unfavourable construction being put on my mysterious appearance at Plombieres, in the fullness of my heart I told him every thing that had passed.

He was so prepared by my looks and my behaviour for something dreadful, that he seemed less surprized than shocked at the recital. He sat leaning his elbows on a table, his head resting on his hands.—I perceived him start several times, and heard him mutter forth, “Infernal villain!”—but he seemed to speak without knowing he did so.

I endeavoured, in the course of my story, to soften the crimes of Rozan-court by the description of his love for
me;

me; attributed the secretion of Solignac's letters more to the officiousness of Bertrand, than to the machinations of the Marquis, and I concluded with avowing a resolution to devote my future days to the obedience and duty I owed to the name of husband.

Perhaps I was wrong in telling what I did to Zodiski, but I knew his honour. I was sensible of all my obligations to him — I could not bear to be lowered in his opinion, and by displaying the artifices, which were used to rob Solignac of me, I made my own conduct more excusable. From the strength of mind and clear judgment that characterized my excellent friend, I expected to meet with counsel and consolation; nor was I deceived. He staid at Plombieres a fortnight, and during that time his friendship and sensible advice, were of infinite use to the restoration of my fortitude and composure.

He

He went from us to Chalons, where he had promised to meet Solignac the end of the month.

Two days after he left us the little girl was taken ill—her dangerous situation terrified the timid mother to the most violent degree, and, in her agonies of despair, she frequently exclaimed, “Oh God! let not the innocent suffer for the guilty—let me not be robbed of Louison, as I am of ——” Here her voice was interrupted by sighs and tears.

One night I prevailed on her to lay down in the next room, and let me sit up with the child. I went softly to see if she was asleep, and found her laying across the bed with her cloaths on, and making a mourning noise as if in pain. I drew near—a lamp was burning on a table by the bed-side, and an open prayer book was laying on the chair.—She spoke in her sleep several indistinct words,

words, and after some deep sighs I heard her say, "Yes, child!—yes! he is your father; come, cruel one, and see my sufferings. Ah no! he will not stay—he turns from me. Oh inhuman barbarous husband!" After this she seemed to sleep more easy. I would not disturb her slumbers, but left her, convinced that she had woes with which I was unacquainted. In the morning Louison grew better, and the crisis of her illness being past, was very soon out of danger.

When Marionette had recovered her serenity of spirits, which had been so much discomposed by the child's illness, I ventured to hint my reasons for supposing some important secret hung upon her mind.

After a long pause, during which I observed her shed some tears, she addressed me nearly to this purpose:—
 "The kind attention and friendly offices I have experienced from you during the
 illness

illness of my child, has, if possible, added to those claims you have upon my gratitude. I can no longer resist the desire I have to repose confidence in you, and to intrust you with the history of a life, which is remarkable only for its misfortunes.

“ My father, Monsieur Du Ranci, was a provincial gentleman, but of no high birth. He was left a widower, with a son and two daughters early in life, and in such confined circumstances that he was greatly distressed to give us a proper education, nor could he have provided for his children in any degree, had it not been for the generosity of a friend, whose rank in life and great connexions, added to his princely fortune, enabled him to afford great assistance to my father. By his means we received a tolerable education, and as we grew up my sister, whose disposition inclined her to a religious life, went into a convent
to

to begin her noviciate; my brother became a mousquetaire, and I was placed with Madame de Valville, a relation, who lived near the convent which my sister had chosen for her asylum. This excellent lady had acquired great knowledge from books, had extraordinary talents, and spoke several languages; and to her I am much indebted for the little knowledge I possess.

“ My father died rather suddenly in a year after I was sent to Madame de Valville’s; and my sister, in a few weeks after his decease, made her irrevocable vow. I was determined to pay her my last offices of friendship, and was present at the awful ceremony, which impressed my mind with so much melancholy, that whilst the victim of a mistaken piety took those vows with perfect composure, that must exclude her from society for ever, I fainted in the arms of Madame de Valville, and was carried from the
convent

convent more dead than alive, little thinking it might one day be my destiny to applaud my sister's choice, and to wish I had followed her example.

“ As my father had left me a small sum, (the all he had to leave) I continued to reside with Madame de Valville, who subsisted on a trifling annuity; and though I did not lead a gay life, it was innocent and tranquil.

“ Whenever my brother was with us, I was perfectly contented; his vivacity and wit enlivened our retreat, and prevented my being sensible of the sameness of our life; but when he was absent I languished for society; and though I was perfectly grateful to my kind friend for all her attentions, I felt the want of some younger companions with whom I could be more cheerful and unreserved, (for such was the awe inspired by her age and serious character, that it is impossible for me to be quite free from constraint)

constraint) therefore, although I indulged myself in occasional mirth, I frequently curbed my lively imagination.

“ It unfortunately happened that the son of my father’s benefactor was sent to a university which was not far from Madame de Valville’s. I had not seen him since we were children ; but one day, as I was amusing myself in gathering blue-bells in a field before the house, I was surprized by a voice which asked me if I belonged to that cottage ? and whether Monsieur du Ranci was at home. I imagined by the question I was taken for a servant ; and, turning round hastily, prepared to reply, when I thought I beheld the features of my young acquaintance, greatly improved by a few years absence ; yet the voice and countenance were so little changed that I could not mistake him.

“ The flowers I had just gathered fell out of the basket, which, in my awkward

ward confusion I held awry, I felt my cheeks glow with a crimson blush, and making a very *gauche* sort of curtsy, I stammered out an answer, that my brother was at home; and pointed to the house, laying a particular emphasis on the word *brother*, for my little heart glowed with pride, and upbraided him for his forgetfulness, and his mistake—but it was in vain I spoke; he fixed his eyes on me with a look of soft confusion, and did not attempt to move. I set him the example by moving towards the house, whither he seemed, by involuntary steps, to follow me.

“ My brother received him with sincere satisfaction; and, during the time he staid with us, the visits of our new friend were frequently repeated. In those visits he displayed a brilliancy of genius, a sweetness of manners, that pleaded strongly in his favour, and which, added to a very beautiful person, and the

most insinuating tenderness in his behaviour to me, could not fail of making a very deep impression on my heart.

“ I knew the difference of our situations. I felt my obligations to his father, but the tears and vows of a being so adored, silenced all the remonstrances of prudence. My brother first perceived the danger of my situation, and admonished his friend of the impropriety of such a connexion; yet love counteracted all the sage counsels of discretion.

“ When my lover used to go home in the vacation times, we constantly corresponded, and his letters breathed forth the impassioned language of a heart devoted to me alone.

“ The time soon came when he was to quit the university, and to set out upon his travels. I saw with grief that all our pleasant walks and delightful interviews must be at an end. I loved him too much

not

not to dread the loss of his affections; and he knew the violence of Duranci's temper, and his strict sense of honour too well to think of me for a mistress; he therefore strongly persuaded me to a clandestine marriage; and I, alas! in evil hour, consented to it. We met at the church, and, in the presence of my maid, were lawfully united. It was a foolish step on both sides, but we were very young and very thoughtless. I had never considered wealth and grandeur in the light of things that could create happiness, and had not a spark of vain ambition in my nature; it was therefore no punishment to me, no mortification to be the undistinguished, unknown wife of the youth I loved. To consider myself as the chosen of his heart, the person to whom he had pledged his faith in the sight of Heaven, was sufficient without the approval of my friends, or the knowledge of the world.

“ The consequence and fortune my husband was born to, had no influence upon me. I loved him for *himself* alone, and had I been in the most exalted situation imaginable, he would have been the object of my choice. There was only one alloy to my happiness, which was, the thought of acting with duplicity towards my brother and the respectable friend who had been like a mother to me.

“ When my husband was going abroad, my distress was so violent, and my situation such, that it became absolutely necessary for me to reveal the cause, and also to obtain Madame de Valville’s sanction for the frequent letters we might have occasion to write. I prevailed on him to let me make a confidante of my friend; who gently reprov’d me for the unadvised step I had taken, yet could not be sorry at a match that was to all appearance so advantageous to me. I longed

to

to acquaint Duranci with it, but his extreme delicacy, and his ideas of honour, which were carried almost to romance, convinced me he would be shocked at the idea of ingratitude to our benefactor, who could not possibly approve of such a marriage; and the sudden death of that amiable brother, prevented his ever knowing my folly, or revenging the injuries I afterwards sustained.

“ My husband set out on his travels, and I was brought to bed of this daughter in his absence. When he returned after our long separation, I had the happiness to find him unaltered in his affection; and improved in his manners, by having resided at different courts, and with men distinguished for the brilliancy of their capacities, as well as by their rank in life. His attention to his father during a long illness was truly exemplary, and all the moments he could spare from him were devoted to me.

“ At the time of his father’s death I was again big with child, and as soon after that event as decency would permit, I gently expressed a wish that our marriage might be made public before my delivery; but my husband continually changed the subject, and I was brought to bed of a son at the house of Madame de Valville.

“ During my confinement my husband made business the plea for leaving me, and indeed it appeared necessary that he should look after the estates his father had left him; but alas! he was then at Paris, living among the most dissolute of both sexes. I received several letters from him under cover to my aunt, which were full of affection; but at length I observed he wrote less frequently, and that his style was more affected, his professions more studied, and his letters much shorter, for which
the

the constant excuse was business and haste.

“ I began to grow excessively uneasy, and to fear, that by associating with the gay and great, he had been taught to despise his connexion with an insignificant young creature like myself, whose attachment to him was her only recommendation, and that either his pride was so strong, or his love so feeble, that he blushed to avow me for his wife.

“ I at last wrote that I could no longer live without seeing him; and as my strength had been sometime restored, I intended setting out to assist him, as far as I could, in the transcripts he had to make; and to take care that his health might not suffer by intense application to business and study.

“ This letter alarmed him, and occasioned his immediate return. He met me with an appearance of such extravagant fondness, that I began to suspect

its sincerity; and with violent spirits, which were evidently feigned. Miserable as I was to observe this change, I strove to conceal what I endured. I endeavoured studying how to please him, to awaken that tenderness and regard which was the charm and happiness of my life, and forebore saying any thing that might give him a moment's vexation; but when he talked of going from me again, I ventured once more to express a wish that I might *publicly* bear the name with which he had honoured me. Here his passion got the better of his dissimulation; and, after saying the most cruel things respecting the impropriety of a marriage made in his minority, and with a person so much beneath him, he swore bitterly never to acknowledge me publicly as his wife.

“ The shock I felt at this dreadful sentence left me no power to express my resentment. I sat in my chair absolutely
stupified,

stupified, while the cruel author of my distress quitted the house without saying whither he was going. The agonies of my mind produced a fever, which was communicated, before I thought of the consequence, to the child I suckled; who expired in my arms a few days after. I could not write an account of this tragical event to my husband, as I knew not where he was gone; but in a fortnight after a person called on me with a letter from him, the purport of which was, that if I would be contented to live quietly, and without molesting him, at the house of my relation, he would allow me a certain annuity for my life, but that if I tormented him with letters, or gave myself the title of his wife, it should be withdrawn from me.

“ My indignation and pride at first tempted me to refuse this humiliating offer, and to starve rather than submit to such disgraceful terms; but the little
 sum

sum which was left by my father was not enough to maintain my hapless daughter and myself. I looked at the dear innocent, and for her sake was induced to sign the hard conditions; knowing also, that as the witness to our marriage was dead, I had no evidence to bring forward in order to establish that right which was denied me by my dishonourable husband.

“ It is now many months since I have heard any thing of him, and cruel as his treatment has been to me, I still have a faint hope that my patience and resignation may at last cause him to reform; and was he at this moment at my feet, such is the love I bear him, that I should forget and forgive all the wrongs I have received.

“ My relation died two months ago, after a very long illness; the indulgencies her age and infirm state required, and the expences of her funeral, not only
 6 employed

employed the whole of her little income, but greatly impoverished my finances.— My close attendance upon her, and the constant anguish of my mind, had affected my health; and as soon as the funeral rites were over, I left the melancholy house, and brought my daughter hither, taking the cheapest lodging I possibly could meet with.

“ Excuse my mentioning the name of a man who, notwithstanding his ill usage, I love sufficiently to wish that his want of principle may be concealed from the world. I cannot expose him to the censure of mankind, and therefore am determined his name shall never pass my lips; but that his exterior charms may plead an excuse for all my weakness, and for the remains of affection that still lurks about my heart, I will shew you a picture which does justice to the manly beauty of his face, and to a countenance that might impose on the most wary and experienced,

experienced, much more on my young and guileless heart, that knew not the stratagems and arts of men."——

Saying this, she took a picture from her pocket, in a small black case. I had been much affected by her story, and I trembled in opening it. Oh Heaven! how much horror did I experience when I beheld the exact features of the Marquis de Rozancourt. I could scarce believe my eyes—I felt as if a thunderbolt was falling on my head—I can just recollect that in my first surprise I gave a faint shriek, exclaiming, "Is it de Rozancourt?" and when I heard her reply, "Yes! it is that guilty man, whose name I did not imagine was known to you." I fell out of my chair upon my knees, and with hands uplifted, and eyes directed towards Heaven, whispered forth a prayer to the Almighty that he would be pleased to let me not survive the shock.

My

My affectionate friend alarmed at this alteration, raised me from the ground, and throwing her arms about my neck, entreated me to inform her the cause of my distress; but I reflected on the poignant grief it would occasion her, and after a few moments silence, informed her I had been attached to a person who was intimately acquainted with the Marquis, the sight of whose picture had awakened the most unpleasant recollections in my mind.

She seemed to believe my story; I affected to be more tranquil, and we retired to our chambers—the moment I was in my own apartment, I gave way to the tumult of my soul—'tis impossible to paint the horrors of that night. It happened to be a very tempestuous one: The wind blew high, the rain beat against my windows: Pale lightning glanced along the wall, and the awful thunder rolled among the mountains.

mountains. My wild and disordered thoughts were worked up to a state of frenzy by the storm, which so well suited desperation like my own. I raved, I walked about the room, unable to shed a tear.—I put open the sash, and exposed myself to the forked lightning.—At length, wearied nature obliged me to fling myself on the bed, where I fell asleep from absolute fatigue.

When I awoke (from the most frightful dreams imaginable) the storm was subsided, an awful silence reigned, and I saw by my watch it was four o'clock. I resolved to pray, and opening a box took my crucifix for that purpose; it was that which Solignac gave me, and which had belonged to the unfortunate Friar Antoine.—At that instant a thousand mournful thoughts, mingled with tenderness, took possession of my mind, and I found relief in tears for the fulness of my heart. When I reflected on all
the

the circumstances of Marionette's history, I had reason to suppose it was at the time when the Marquis returned from his travels he unfortunately saw me at Monsieur de Ronfac's, and that when he left her to take possession of his father's estate, he first made acquaintance with my deluded parent.

I thought of his crimes and my own shame with horror. Yet, pity for the innocent Marionette, to whom I perhaps had been the first cause of the estrangement of her husband's affections, induced me to conceal the agonies I suffered, and to meet her at breakfast with a look of composure.

As we did not pass our mornings together, I had less difficulty in concealing my emotions during the time I was with her, and soon after breakfast she went to her daughter's apartment.

I had not been alone an hour before a letter arrived by the post, which I
knew

knew to be directed by the Marquis. I felt an oppression on my breast—a want of breath, like a person who has run very fast up hill. My heart seemed ready to burst, and I had scarcely power to open the letter. Indignant at the wrongs I had received from a man whom I had never loved, (but whom I honoured and esteemed, till he rent asunder the only bonds which could attach me to him) I cast my eyes with horror on his writing, and detesting even the paper that was sullied by his hand, I hastily ran through the contents, which were as follows :

“ TO MADAME DE RUVIGNY,

(And within the cover)

“ TO the MARCHIONESS DE RO-

“ ZANCOURT.

“ If a stratagem, inspired by the most ardent passion, can be termed a crime,
I confess

I confess myself guilty—yet when my fair fugitive recollects the ground I have for complaint against her, for the preference she has decidedly manifested for *another*; I trust my future silence on that subject may atone for what is past. I shall set out for Plombieres to-morrow morning, and if respect, attention, and the most invariable regard, can atone for all the faults I have committed, my dearest Adeline will no longer refuse to pardon her faithful and affectionate

LOUIS XAVIER DE ROZANCOURT."

I was enraged at the artful manner in which he spoke of his fraudulent proceedings, and astonished at his assurance in thinking of seeing me so soon. I shuddered at the thought of meeting the author of my ruin and misfortunes—there was no time to be lost in forming my determination, and I resolved immediately

to leave the place. I dined with Marionette and her little girl, and pretending to have the head-ach in the evening, expressed a wish to be alone, and went to my chamber. I there packed up a few necessary articles of apparel in a bundle, with the little box that contained the remains of Genevieve's legacy, the crucifix, my prayer-book, the picture and letters of Solignac, which were the only treasures I had to boast of—I felt myself inspired with a degree of courage and romantic resolution, and sitting down by my bed-side, I wrote these letters, which I meant to leave in my chamber, with the money that was due for my lodging.

“ TO MADAME DE VERDUN.

“ Before this paper is perused by my affectionate friend, the unhappy

Adeline will not be near enough to hear the voice of pity. Prepare yourself for an addition to your sorrows, and know, unfortunate as you are, there exists a being still more so than yourself.—Marionette may hope for better days, while Adeline, with eager eyes, bends forwards in her course, wishing to sleep through those tedious days that separate her from the *tomb*.—*There* only can I rest!—there, insensible of my own shame, and forgotten by the author of it, I shall escape the cruel sarcasms of an unfeeling world, and cease to wound the breast of friendship by my bitter unavailing cries. The miserable Adeline thus writes to Marionette, to the wife of Rozan-court.—Think me not (when you know my misfortunes) an invader of your peace, a usurper of your rights.—Heaven knows, my heart recoiled at the connexion, and the fatal altar was witness to my tears.—Tremble, Marionette,

tremble for your guilty husband—weep for the betrayed, the miserable Adeline—I am the innocent victim of his arts—and when he deserted you, it was to deceive me. He has profaned the sacred name of marriage; and while he was legally *your* husband, he, by a combination of frauds and villanies, imposed on my credulous father, took advantage of my misfortunes, and gave me secretly a title which could only belong to *you*.

“ There wanted but this last blow to complete my misery.—Dreadful images possess my mind.—I see a heart-broken parent dying a martyr to his disgrace.—I see a lover driven to desperation—a husband—(ah! no more a husband!) tyrannizing over the creature he has wronged, and the amiable Marionette pining her life away in lamentations for that man who basely has forsaken her. The picture kills me—I fly to avoid it—I fly from Plombieres—but alas! where shall

shall I find repose?—Wherever I turn, these phantoms will pursue me.—I cannot leave my memory behind.—Yet, think not, my dear friend, that I am so far possessed by despair as to neglect the means of providing for myself—let not a tender apprehension, an anxious care for my life and safety, dwell in your gentle bosom. I go to a kind and benevolent aunt, who lives at Orleans; and if any letters are sent for me from the Castle of Rozancourt, or come by the post, I must intreat you to forward them to me by the name of Madame de Ruvigny, unless they are directed by the hand of the worst of men; from *him* I never more desire to hear;—give him the inclosed letter from me—tell him not where I am, I conjure you—let him suppose me dead—and if he can silence the voice of conscience, let him never more extend a thought to the wretch that he has betrayed. Marionette! you

still love him. My heart swells high—my pride is wounded deeply—but, for your sake, I will not *curse* him, though he has ruined me for ever, and pierced the heart of one I loved through mine.

“ May the Almighty bless and preserve you; and if the soul of de Rozancourt is capable of reformation, and you can stoop to forgive the author of your past afflictions, may he endeavour to expiate his wrongs to me by his future tenderness and constancy to you.

“ I leave on the table the sum due to my landlady, and the wages for my servant.

“ Farewell, amiable Marionette:—while this crazy frame retains a spark of life, you and your child will be affectionately remembered by the unfortunate

“ ADELINÉ.”

Letter inclosed to the MARQUIS DE
ROZANCOURT.

“ I should not humble myself to write to the Marquis de Rozancourt, if I did not wish to present a petition to him that can have no self-interested motive, as it relates to another person.

“ Betrayed, dishonoured, as I am, I have a spirit superior to my situation. The creature whom you have seduced is far more unfortunate than guilty; nor will she consider *herself* so much disgraced as *you* are, by the manner in which she has been imposed on: My mind, thank Heaven! is beyond your reach; and conscious of the purity of my own sentiments, I abhor and pity the depravity of your's. But it is not now the time of reproach—I leave my vengeance to a power above, who will one

day or other punish you with that remorse which sooner or later attends the guilty. My wrongs are too deep—my sufferings too severe for language to express—nor would you have sensibility enough to commiserate me, if I could describe them.

“ This is the last letter you will ever receive from me ; and I desire you will never more presume to write to a person who has nothing to remember you by, but the injuries you have done her. I am too proud to accept a bounty from the hand which has once wronged me ; I therefore decline any pecuniary assistance you may offer, and shall find an asylum and a support where I am now going ; but for the unhappy Marionette de Rozancourt I have prevailed on myself to address these few lines to you ; and that one act of justice, one sign of repentance, may cast a faint gleam of light over a character so dark as your’s, I
 conjure

conjure you by the love you once professed for me, to acknowledge that deserving woman for your wife, and that innocent child for your daughter, who have legal claims to your love and your protection.

“ Seek not to find me—I go from you for ever—you have no longer any authority to command my return, or to arraign the conduct of

“ ADELINÉ DE COURCY.”

After finishing these letters I laid down on the bed in my clothes, but was unable to sleep.

I resolved to go to my aunt at Orleans; and as I knew the diligence would set out at six o'clock, I arose at five, took my bundle under my arm, and stealing softly down stairs, unbolted the door, and went out of the house.

I walked

I walked a little way beyond the town, and sat on a bank till the coach appeared, when making a sign for it to stop, I was admitted among the passengers, and soon lost sight of Plombieres. My fellow-travellers were not of the talkative kind; I therefore had an opportunity of brooding over my sorrows undisturbed. I had been inclined to write an account of my additional misfortune to the Baroness, who was then at Nice, but I knew her delicate state of health, and the quick sensibility with which she felt for others; I therefore would not shock my generous friend by a recital of sorrows which she could not alleviate.

Nothing remarkable happened in the course of our journey till we arrived at Fontainebleau, where the passengers agreed to sleep. The chamber I was destined to occupy fronted an open part of the town, and as I was dressing myself in the morning, I was surprized by
the

the found of the fife and drum; and looking out at the window, I beheld a recruiting party entering the town; but what was my emotion, when in their Captain I discovered the well-known form of Solignac!—I was fixed like a statue; it was impossible for me to move.—My eyes were fixed upon that dear object of my love.—I longed, ardently longed; to fling up the window and call to him; but degraded as I was, how could I bear such an interview!—How account for my being there without giving him strange suspicions!

At that moment one of the passengers came to tell me the coach was ready. I took one last view of the only person on earth whom I ever had, or ever could love, and attempted to follow her, but a sudden giddiness seized me—dark shadows swam before my sight, and I fell into a fainting fit on the ground. When I recovered my senses, I found the people

ple of the inn and the passengers busy in assisting me.—I heaved a deep sigh at being brought back to a life of misery, and turned my eyes towards the window. The street was deserted, the troops were gone, and the coach waited only for me. I assured my charitable friends that I was perfectly recovered, tottered along to the coach, and pursued my long and melancholy journey.

When we were within sight of Orleans, one of the women in the coach employed herself in the praises of Madame Dubois, who, she said, lived there, and was an old school-fellow of her's. I paid little attention to the discourse of any of the travellers, and being set down at the entrance of the town, walked to the habitation of my aunt. I knocked some time at the door before I made myself heard; at last a woman appeared, and asked me who I wanted? In a trembling voice I inquired for Madame D'Orval; but

but no words can express the horror that seized me, on being informed she died three weeks before my arrival.

I turned from the door in silence, and wandered down a narrow path, unknowing where it led to. I walked along a hazel wood, the trees of which met over my head, and came to a clear lake that flowed at the bottom of a meadow. I sat down on the grass, and there recollecting all my misfortunes, I grew frantic with despair. I laid my bundle on the bank, and forgetting the impiety of the act, resolved to finish all my calamities by plunging into the stream. I drew near, and was just going to spring from the bank, when a sudden impulse forced me to take a last farewell of the picture which was given me by Solignac. I opened the box, and taking out the resemblance of that adored lover, pressed it to my lips. I felt the tears glide down my cheeks, and flinging myself on the earth,

earth, I gave way to the most violent affliction.

As my reason and my love resumed their power, I began to shudder at the guilt of my intention. Kneeling on the damp grass, I implored the Almighty to pardon my rashness, and to give me fortitude and patience to bear my distresses; this seemed to compose my thoughts in some degree; and remembering the character which my fellow-traveller had given of Madame Dubois, I resolved to take up my abode with her.

I went back to the house of my deceased aunt, and desired the old woman, who resided in it, to shew me the way to Madame Dubois's, which she accordingly did. I agreed with her for an apartment in her house, and took possession of it immediately.

I need not repeat the particulars of my illness, my frenzy, or my wandering to your hospitable house, which I did in
confe-

consequence of having nearly expended the little sum I brought with me, and therefore resolved to assist in making hay, or doing any other work by which I might gain an honest subsistence, rather than apply to the Marquis de Rozan-court.

The letter I received, which occasioned my abrupt departure from your house, was from Marionette. It was directed to me under the name of Ruvigny, at my aunt's, and was brought from thence by the old woman who had, on my first arrival, carried me to Madame Dubois's, and who imagined the letter must be meant for me. I found by the contents, that on the Marquis's arrival Marionette had presented herself and the child before him, and delivered the letter I had left; that his confusion and astonishment at seeing her, and his fury at finding I was gone, were beyond her power of description. He was unmoved by her

her tears, and the careffes of his child ; and conjecturing that I had chofen the convent where Madame de Thiange refided for my retreat had fet out immediately for Dijon, from whence ſhe ſince learnt he returned to the Chateau de Rozancourt in the greateſt rage imaginable, proteſting he would go from thence to every place where he thought it poſſible I ſhould have taken refuge ; and ſwearing not to reſt till he had me once more in his poſſeſſion.

This intelligence alarmed me exceſſively ; he knew I had an aunt at Orleans ; it was natural he ſhould come to that houſe, and trace me from thence. No time was to be loſt—he had been to the Abbey de St. Croix, and therefore could not ſuppoſe me to be with Madame de Thiange. This determined me to ſeek for a ſafe aſylum in thoſe ſacred walls, where I had a friend to protect
me,

me, and where religion might sooth my troubled breast.

I fled from your house during your absence, and having just money enough to defray my expences, disguised myself in the best manner I could, and set off in the first conveyance I met with for Dijon.

I was received in the kindest manner by my excellent friend the Abbess, who lamented bitterly the misfortunes of my life, and the villany of my husband, who, she said, in the vehemence of his rage and disappointment, had told her the whole story, and been the evidence of his own guilt; that thinking it possible I might be gone to Paris to meet the Baroness de Luzane on her return from Nice, he wrote to her, complaining of my elopement, and insisting on her giving me up, which induced Madame de Thiange to let my friend know

where I was; to which she added a concise account of what had happened, and expected an answer every day.

At Dijon I also met with the excellent Abbè St. Bertin, who, after he parted from Solignac, had settled in that town. Their kind and constant assiduity has, in some measure, quieted the agonies of my mind; but my health is rapidly declining, and a period to my miseries, I hope, is not far distant. 'Till which time Madame de St. Severin will be most gratefully remembered in my prayers.

I must sign myself, dear Madam, your affectionate and obliged

ADELINÉ DE COURCY."

For to the name of Rozan-
court I have no longer
any claim.

Convent de St. Croix, at Dijon.

LETTER VII.

Chateau de Murville.

From the COUNTESS DE MURVILLE,
TO MADAME ST. SEVERIN.

IN hopes that change of scene might prove beneficial to Adeline, I with difficulty persuaded her last week to pass a few days here ; but alas ! neither change of scene or of air has any effect upon her health, or tends to lessen the dejection of her mind. This lovely woman grows worse every day, is excessively weak, and now so short-breathed, that she can only sleep supported almost upright by pillows.

The Baroness de Luzane arrived here from Paris yesterday, in consequence of a letter from Madame de Thiange ; their meeting was truly affecting, and I was afraid the unhappy Adeline would

have sunk under it. They looked at each other in mournful silence during the time I was in the room ; what they said afterwards I know not, but the Baroness came from Adeline's apartment with her eyes excessively red with weeping ; and I understood, from what she afterwards said, that Solignac had obtained leave of absence from the regiment, on purpose to meet her at Paris, from whence he set out for Rouveray two days before she received Adeline's letter.

The amiable Baroness, whose health is now much better than it was, never quits the chamber of her friend ; and the Abbè St. Bertin is frequently here.—'Tis now late—the room is shut up—and all is silent.—I will seal this letter before I go home, and earnestly hope, when I come here to-morrow, I shall be able to send you better tidings.

Your's affectionately,

BLANCHE DE MURVILLE.

LETTER VIII.

FROM MADAME DE MURVILLE,

TO MADAME ST. SEVERIN.

I TAKE up my pen to write ; but my tears will scarcely suffer me to proceed. I am sorry, my dear friend, to communicate such news as will afflict your compassionate heart ; but I alone can undertake the painful office.

Dreadful events have crowded thick upon us since I wrote to you last. I have been in a perpetual hurry of spirits these three days, otherwise I should have sent you a few lines, though I could only have written that the suffering Adeline grew hourly worse. I knew your anxiety—I wished to make you acquainted with all that passed—but I had not time to collect my thoughts, nor opportunity to write. I have been constantly employed with the Baroness, attending on

her friend, at those hours when the duties of Madame de Thiange's profession prevented her from assisting.

The day after I wrote to you last, Adeline found herself much worse. She had not closed her eyes all night, and I perceived she had been weeping. She desired to see the Abbè St. Bertin, who came and prayed by her some time; after which she asked for a pen and ink, and, sitting up in her bed, began to write. I sat at some distance, and contemplated in silence the divine figure before me. She was grown very thin from her illness, and her eyes, which looked uncommonly large, had a sort of celestial brilliancy in them whenever she looked up, which she frequently did while she was writing her second letter (as if mingling her prayers with what she expressed on paper.) A faint glow, caused by her anxiety to finish what she had to say, spread itself over her cheek,

†

and

and I saw a tear now and then drop upon the paper.

She was in a dimity bed-gown, her hair tucked up under a close night-cap, with a white riband round it, and a muslin hood tied under her chin. Her weakness was such that she could scarcely hold her pen—her feeble fingers trembled excessively.—She turned pale before her second letter was half finished, and laying her head upon the pillow, fainted away. As soon as we had recovered her, I removed these dangerous implements of writing.

Her first letter was intended for the Marquis de Rozancourt, in which, with the most christian piety, she granted him her forgiveness, and in the most earnest terms implored him to expiate his offences to *her*, by making all the reparation he could to the unfortunate Marionette. The second was addressed to Solignac; there the ardour of her affec-

tion was manifested by the tenderest expressions that love could dictate. It was impossible for me to read it without tears ; but as I cannot do justice to her feelings on the occasion, I will transcribe it for you.

“ Chateau de Murville,
“ near Pont de Panis.

“ TO MONSIEUR DE SOLIGNAC.

“ BEFORE I take my flight from this world of woe, I must address a few lines to the only being for whose sake I could wish to live. Yes, Solignac, I wish to spare you the excessive pain you will feel at the death of her whom you have so sincerely loved, and whose loss you have already so much regretted. From Count Zodiski you must by this time have heard all the particulars of my tragical story. My soul seems hovering on the verge of life, and though weary of this mortal existence,

existence, and anxious to seek a better, yet there is a secret invisible chord which draws me back—attaches me to the world—and bids me look towards thee. Solignac! let me vindicate myself—I cannot bear that my conduct should wear a doubtful appearance—do not lament me as a guilty wretch—I am *unfortunate*—but it is Rozancourt only that is *criminal*.—I should not have fled from him if I had not found myself deceived; if I had not fatally learnt that I was not his wife. Oh Solignac! I could have wished to have seen you once again—it would have been soothing to my soul if I could have breathed my last sigh in your presence; have rested my dying head upon your bosom; and have heard you speak the words of love and peace to my departing spirit—But alas! that cannot be—I shall never more behold the dear possessor of my heart—perhaps 'tis best I should not—for the sad sight

might

might afflict him too severely, and his tendernefs would make me more averfe to leave him. He will be told that Adeline bleffed him and Zodifki with her lateft breath. But ah! who except myfelf can tell Solignac how ardently I loved him? Adieu, beft of men!—be comforted for my lofs—we part—but to meet again.—I charge you never to revenge my wrongs—this is my laft, my dying injunction. The author of my difgrace will be fufficiently punifhed by his own confcience for all his treachery to

“ ADELINE DE COUR.—”

Here her ftrength failed. We held a confultation on the fubject; and as the Abbè feemed to think it might be a fatisfaction to her if ſhe was to fee her lover, I ſent an exprefs with it immediately to

Rou-

Rouveray, where the Baroness said he was now quartered.

We heard nothing of him till yesterday morning; meantime we had prepared Adeline to expect him. She had prayed very frequently in the day, and seemed to have acquired a heavenly serenity, as if there was nothing now could discompose her soul. I had not seen her look so well, nor appear so tranquil, during her illness, and she seemed, in many respects, considerably better.

The Baroness was in ecstasies of joy at this alteration, and was sitting by the bed-side, holding the emaciated hand of her sick friend, when an express arrived with a letter. Fortunately the servant had judgment enough to beckon me out of the room, and to give the letter into my hands. I opened it hastily, and could scarce prevent the shock I felt from betraying me by a sudden exclamation, when I saw a kind of locket drop

drop from the paper, which I immediately guessed to be the talisman I had heard Adeline speak of, which Solignac had sworn to keep till his death. I had scarce power to read the short contents of the letter, which were these.

“ When my beloved Adeline beholds this talisman she will learn my fate—she will know that the man who adored and esteemed her as much as it was possible for one person to love another exists no more. I go this instant to seek the author of your misfortunes—Adeline must not die unrevenged—or at least without a friend to resent her wrongs—But as victory does not always sit on the sword of justice, my sense of the injuries an angel has received may avail little towards avenging them—in that case believe, most excellent of beings! that my latest prayer was for thee—my only wish was to meet my Adeline in a future state,

state, and that I died as I have lived, her faithful and devoted lover,

“ HENRI DE SOLIGNAC.”

This letter would have killed the feeble Adeline at once. Madame de Luzane, alarmed at my stay, followed me just as I had read it, and her affliction on perusing it was more than I can express. We went together to interrogate the messenger, who came from the inn at Auxene, and brought the fatal intelligence of the unfortunate Solignac having fallen in a duel with the Marquis. — I cannot proceed — tears dim my eyes, and my hand trembles.

“ Madame de Luzane has just informed me that Adeline seems much inclined to sleep — Alas ! she will soon sleep for ever ; and it is best that her last moments should not be embittered by the news of that tragical event
which

which has deprived the world of her amiable lover.

Adieu, dear Madam; believe me your faithful and affectionate Friend,

BLANCHE DE MURVILLE.

LETTER IX.

FROM MADAME DE MURVILLE

TO MADAME ST. SEVERIN.

OH my friend! I have a scene to relate, which it is impossible my pen can do justice to.—Yesterday was a day of events.

In the evening (after I dispatched my letter to you) we were alarmed as we sat by the bed-side of Adeline (who still slept) by a ringing at the gate; we looked through the window, and I saw on horseback a middle-aged man, whose wild and pale countenance spoke him to be the messenger of horror, and whose impatient

impatience gestures signified that he wanted *immediate* access to the house; I observed the Baroness turn pale, and with quivering lips she breathed forth the name of Zodiski.

Terrified lest he should rush up stairs and alarm Adeline, who was in a sweet sleep, we told the servant to remain in the room, and hastened down stairs, at the foot of which we met the Count. With eager, agitated looks, he said, "Oh tell me does that angel live? Has she heard?—The tears of Madame de Luzane, which seemed to terrify him, prevented her from answering. I therefore exerted myself to reply, that Adeline was not dead, and that she remained ignorant of Solignac's fate.

He immediately assumed a look which is difficult to describe: it expressed dignity, gratitude, and satisfaction. He raised his eyes to Heaven, and I confess, highly as I had been taught to reverence

rence the character of Count Zodiski, a suspicion arose in my mind that self-interest induced him to lose the regret for his friend's death, in the hope of preserving for himself a prize like Adeline; but I dismissed the ungenerous idea, when, seizing the hand of the Baroness, he exclaimed in a voice of transport, "Rejoice with me, and praise the goodness of Providence—Solognac lives—Adeline still breathes—and," added he (while the glow of friendship and generosity animated his countenance) "it may be the will of Heaven that they should still live, and be happy."

I leave you to judge, dearest Madam! what were our sensations. As soon as the first surprize was over, and the Count appeared composed, we intreated him to satisfy our curiosity; and, as nearly as I can recollect, these were his words:

"Now

“ Now that you are informed of So-
lignac’s existence, and I am assured that
Adeline also lives, I can with some de-
gree of calmness look back, and give
you a detail of all that has happened ;
and as it may be satisfactory to you,
sister ! (turning to the Baroness) to know
the events that preceded the late ren-
contre, I must tell you all that has passed
since I saw you.

“ After my illness, you know I was
ordered by my physician to drink the
waters of Plombieres. At that place I
met, to my great surprize, a fair, but
faded form, which I knew to be Ade-
line, the supposed Marquise de Rozan-
court ; she has probably given you a
circumstantial account of that meeting ;
I will therefore only say, that when her
full heart unburthened itself to me, I
shuddered at the cruel artifices by which
she had been imposed on. I felt as a
brother would do, at seeing a beloved

sister sacrificed to the worst of men, and by the most diabolical means. Had the monster who betrayed her been then within my reach, I think nothing could have restrained me from endeavouring to be the champion of insulted innocence; nay, I could then, (if I had followed the bent of my inclination only) have pursued him to the utmost verge of the kingdom, and demanded satisfaction for her wrongs. But I saw that her delicate and susceptible heart was already breaking, and that what at present hung most heavy on her mind was the sense of being dishonoured, and the dread of being scorned. Was I to seek the Marquis, Adeline's story must be made public, and perhaps told by his friends very differently from what was the real fact. People would naturally ask, "Why Zodiski was to be thus interested for Adeline?" and few would, I fear, have delicacy or generosity enough to understand, that friendship

could induce a man to risk his life in the service of another. Besides, what advantage would it procure to the unhappy woman, to whom misfortune had already done its worst? It might provoke Rozancourt to get the victim of his vile machinations again into his power, and to wreak his cruelty upon her, for having confided to me the story of her wrongs.

“ These considerations made me check the first emotions of my rage; and in our subsequent conversations I endeavoured to represent to Adeline, that in Solignac’s state of finances, marriage would have involved them both in great difficulties. This, I thought, would silence her regret; and I likewise endeavoured to lessen the strong sense of shame that was ever present to her mind, by proving to her, as well as I could, that it was impossible any person whose soul was free from guilt should be classed

among those who had been consenting to their own dishonour ; and that if De Rozancourt presumed to breathe a word against her virtue, or to make her story public, the law should do her justice.

“ I received a letter before I left Plombieres from my unfortunate friend Solignac, informing me he was to be with his troop at Rouvray for the present. He did not absolutely express a desire to see me, but I thought I perceived, by the melancholy strain of his letter, that my society would be useful to him ; and I found he had received private intelligence of Adeline’s marriage. I therefore, on leaving Plombieres, resolved to visit him.

“ I found that unhappy young man, ever constant to the memory of his Adeline, more grieved at her marriage, than at his own want of fortune, and much hurt by a story he had heard of his letters to her being suppressed previous to
the

the last he wrote before her marriage, which made him suspect much treachery on the part of the Marquis.

“ It was on the evening after my arrival that we saw, by the light of the moon, a coach and six with several attendants enter the court-yard of the inn, and curiosity led us to inquire who they were. The landlord informed us they were a party of gay young noblemen, going from Paris with the Marquis de Rozancourt to a hunting box of his, on a scheme of amusement.

“ When the man mentioned the name of Rozancourt, I observed my friend change countenance; and he afterwards walked up and down the room as if something was labouring in his mind. I endeavoured to divert his attention, and determined not to leave him, being in hopes the party would quit the inn before there could be any chance of a rencontre.

“ I was as much shocked at the extent of De Rozancourt’s villainy as my friend could be. I learnt from Adeline at Plombieres, that she had been cruelly imposed on—that her hand had been fraudulently obtained, and Solignac’s conduct basely misrepresented—her father’s heart broken by losses that the Marquis himself had inflicted—herself ill-treated—and though her beauty and merit rendered her an object for any man (however exalted his rank) to be proud of, she was not allowed to bear the name of him to whom she was married.

“ That circumstance I own perplexed me at the time, and raised some suspicions in my mind concerning the validity of her marriage ; for why should the Marquis be ashamed or afraid to avow Adeline de Courcy for his wife ? but I little thought, till I read her letter, that another had a prior right to that name.

“ I knew

“ I knew De Rozancourt once at Paris, and observed that he associated with men of gallantry, *Bon-Vivants*, and gamesters, which made me suppose him a libertine ; but in mixed society he appeared the man of fashion, and the man of sense. He had an artful way of supporting an hypothesis that made his opinion respected by strangers ; and a sort of inherent pride, that might impose on those who knew him not, to call it honour. He was born with great talents, had a refined taste in classical learning, was an encourager of the polite arts, and if his passions had been controuled by reason, or the means of gratifying them had not been so much in his own power, he might have proved a brilliant character ; but if he had any good qualities, they were perverted early by the vicious companions of his youth.

“ I knew not this ; but I perceived he was a man of pleasure, and had a

fortune that enabled him to indulge himself in every luxury the gay can desire, or the rich can command. I also was sensible that such a sort of man is surrounded by parasites ready to flatter his weaknesses, and encourage his vices; till, by not aiming at the controul of his passions, they get the dominion over the small degree of principle or conscience that may hang about his heart; and he becomes hardened in sin, lost to justice, cold to pity, an old practitioner in wickedness, while he is a young man.

“ Such a character as this does not scruple to undertake any scheme, however base or profligate, for the accomplishment of his wishes—but I had not supposed the Marquis de Rozancourt to be so bad a man; I merely thought him tinctured with the follies of the times; and lamented that the slave of fashion should be the husband of Adeline. I now became acquainted with the villainy
of

of his conduct, and I feared the consequences, for I foresaw the probability of something being talked of by the Marquis's servants relative to Adeline and her elopement; which, if it reached the ears of Solignac, would produce an inquiry on his part, that must inevitably terminate in a quarrel.

“ We had given orders for our horses to be ready before eight o'clock the next morning, in order to breakfast with a friend of mine near Rouvray; and the road that led to the Marquis's hunting seat was a contrary way. I found that the Marquis had chosen his apartments at a distance from those we occupied, and would of course go out at another door, which was a lucky circumstance, for I dreaded an interview that might not only affect the life of Solignac, but also that of Adeline; who, I was persuaded, in her weak state could not long survive the shock of *his* death.

“ Unfor-

“ Unfortunately about six o'clock in the morning the messenger arrived with Adeline's letter. I slept in a room which intercepted the passage to a suite of apartments occupied by the Marquis and his wild companions, who had passed their evening, I heard, in drinking and riot. I therefore was confident that no mischief could ensue, at least before the hour when all the people of the house would be up; but one of the servants carried the packet into Solignac's room while I was asleep; and he there learnt enough from what was mentioned in Adeline's letter, to let him understand the diabolical conduct of the Marquis.

“ Shuddering with horror at the complicated villainy which robbed him of the woman he adored, and had impelled her steps to an early grave, he became absolutely frantic; and instead of setting out immediately for the Countess de Murville's, he threw himself on his bed, uttering

uttering the most dreadful imprecations on the Marquis, and vowing vengeance.

“ I heard his voice soon after the servant who brought the letter had shut his door, and hastened into his room as soon as I could. The moment he perceived me he sprang towards the door as if to rush by. I immediately set my back against it to prevent his passage, and locked the door. I then took him by the arm, and endeavoured to recall his senses, which were evidently disordered by the horror that had seized his mind.

“ After some time he grew more composed, and pointing to the letter, bade me read the cause of his distraction. When I had done so, I thought the best turn I could give to his bewildered senses, was to urge him immediately to fly to Adeline. He paused a moment, put his hand to his head like a person
who

who deliberates; and then, with an air of firmness, and more composure than he had yet discovered, spoke to this effect. “Zodiski! you are *my* friend, but you are also the friend of *honour*. I should not deserve to live a moment if I could tamely submit to receive an injury, or to bear that one whom I love more than life, should be wronged, and unrevenged. Your regard for me induces you to propose my removal to the chateau that contains my Adeline; but can you respect and esteem a man who avoids the opportunity of revenging an insult, and therefore lives dishonoured. I appeal to you not as a *friend*, but as a *soldier*, and a *man of honour*. 'Tis not an impious impatience at the decrees of Providence, nor a temper that cannot with manly firmness endure misfortune, which makes me draw the sword of retribution. It is abhorrence of a villain—it is the wrongs of a woman I adored that agitates

tates me thus. Yet God forbid the friend of Zodiski should meanly assassinate the man he hates; or, with profane fury, plunge the dagger of despair into his own bosom. Weary as I am of life, honour has ever been my guide—it shall be the leading star that conducts me to victory or death.—Either De Rozancourt or I must die.—Oppose not my design—I will meet him on fair and equal terms; and whoever tries to counteract this purpose (which I now form deliberately, and under the strong influence of reason) by Heaven he is my enemy. I detest a systematic duellist. I have ever reprobated the practice of deciding trivial offences by the sword; but this is no common cause: forbearance here could only suit a coward; nor could I tamely bear to see the best of women, when I should blush at having deferred to revenge her wrongs upon the worst of men.”

“ As

“ As he spoke, a more than mortal heroism flashed from his eyes—a more than mortal ardour animated his whole frame. I saw it was in vain to oppose, or argue with him; indeed how could I, when his sentiments and mine were the same?

“ He snatched up his sword, but seeing a brace of pistols at the head of his bed, he exchanged the sword for them, and was going hastily to the apartment of the Marquis, when suddenly stopping, he exclaimed, “ He shall not think I take unfair advantages—I will not trust myself—the villain shall be prepared.” He took a sheet of paper, and writing a formal challenge, desired me to be the bearer of it. I went immediately, but could not find the Marquis. I returned from those deserted apartments to the other stair-case, and made inquiries of the inn-keeper, who informed

formed me the Marquis had been gone about ten minutes.

“ It was then near eight o’clock, and our horses were entering the court-yard. I did not return in haste, but heard a bell ring violently in Solignac’s room as I was crossing the court-yard; and before I could reach his apartment, he learnt that the Marquis was gone, from the man who run up stairs on hearing his bell. To that person, who was a favourite servant of his own, it seems he had given the little billet which he had hastily written in my absence, containing the talisman for Adeline; with a command, that if he heard of his death, he should set off with it express for Dijon that instant.

“ I met Solignac on the stairs—he flew to the court yard, vaulted on his horse, and rode off full speed. I gave some orders to the inn-keeper, and followed him immediately. We overtook the
the

the Marquis and two of his friends, in a valley about a mile and half from Auxerre. Solignac rode up to him, and had command enough over himself to give him this challenge :—“ If the Marquis de Rozancourt is not as destitute of courage, as he is of honour, he will give instant satisfaction to Solignac ; who only breathes to revenge the injuries of the lost Adeline de Courcy.”

“ The wildness of my friend’s looks, made it impossible for De Rozancourt to doubt that he was the bearer of his own challenge.

“ This man, who had been deficient in every moral virtue, did not want courage. He immediately dismounted— one of his friends was nominated with me to observe that the combat was regulated by the rules of honour. The Marquis took a brace of pistols from the servant who held his horse, and we measured the ground from whence they were

were to fire. There was a fury in the eyes of Solignac ; but I did not discover any emotion in the countenance of Rozancourt.

“ He called to Solignac with a haughty tone of voice, and bid him fire first. My friend did so ; the Marquis staggered back a few paces, but had strength enough to fire his pistol, which entered the right side of Solignac.— They both fell at the same instant, and I heard the servant who was near them cry aloud to some person at a distance, “ Solignac is killed ;” and in truth I thought he was so, for he had fainted, and appeared totally devoid of life, in which situation he was conveyed in the carriage that I had ordered the inn-keeper to send after us with a surgeon, to the first farm house we met with, for I dared not risk carrying him so far as to the inn.

“ The Marquis insisted on returning

to Rouveray. I offered him the surgeon's assistance, which he proudly refused, and appeared desirous of concealing from us how much he was wounded. However, humanity induced me to insist on his returning in the chaise, the moment my friend was carried into the farm house, where he was bled, and soon discovered not only signs of life, but gave the surgeon (who extracted the ball from his side) reason to think the wound was not mortal.

“ After he was put to bed, and I had this comfortable news, I thought it best to inquire into the Marquis's situation, that in case he was in danger, my friend might be removed to a place of more concealment, till the circumstances of the duel could be fairly stated to the king. I therefore rode to the inn, where I learnt, with great surprize, that the Marquis de Rozancourt was dead. Finding himself mortally wounded, he desired one of his friends

friends to be a witness to a writing, and calling for a pen and ink, had sufficient strength to pen a few lines, and to desire a confessor.

“ The surgeon who examined his wound found it impossible to extract the ball, and after appearing to pray with much agony of mind and body, he expired just before my arrival.

“ I instantly thought of sending off the Marquis’s most confidential servant (who he had, I thought, left in charge of his money, watch, and other valuable things) to apprise my friends here of an event which would account for Solignac’s omitting to visit Adeline ; but on asking for him, I was told, that the moment the report reached the inn of Solignac being killed, he said he was entrusted by his master with a paper of great consequence, which he imagined was his will, and must set off that instant for the Chateau de Murville.

“ This intelligence was dreadful to me. I saw nothing but horror in the perspective. I made no doubt the letter was for Adeline, and that it would destroy her at a time when life was worth preserving. Instantly I mounted my horse—forgot my friend—the Marquis—the writing—in short, every thing but Adeline; and almost despairing to arrive in time, I rather flew than rode to Dijon. Thank Heaven my fears were groundless—my zeal was unnecessary. Let us now only try, if possible, to save our Adeline.”

Here this extraordinary man and faithful friend finished his recital. Just then the physician arrived, and the Baroness and I attended him up stairs. He found his patient awaking from a long and refreshing sleep, which had very much abated the fever. He declared her pulse to be considerably better, and
the

the symptoms more favourable than they had yet been. I now venture to indulge some hope, because her illness being the effect of a distressed mind, present circumstances admit a ray of hope.

The Count has this moment set off with the venerable Abbè St. Bertin for Solignac's retreat, after writing Monsieur de Montigny a statement of the duel, to be laid before his Majesty, which is executed with the warmth of friendship, and in the language of a soldier and a man of honour.

Count Zodiski's character is too well known for any thing he vouches to be doubted; and the esteem in which he and Solignac are held, will, I think, render the pardon of the latter no difficult thing to be obtained, particularly through the application of a man so high in the army as Monsieur de Montigny.

I will now lay aside my pen, and have the honour to be, dear Madam, &c. &c. &c.

BLANCHE DE MURVILLE.

L E T T E R X.

FROM THE SAME.

MORE joy, my dear Madam!—I will inclose you a letter I have just received from the Abbè St. Bertin; and I can now add, with infinite satisfaction, that Adeline is hourly growing better. This morning, however, she expressed great uneasiness at not hearing from Solignac. The Baroness, therefore, ventured by degrees to prepare her for a history of events,

events, and she now is acquainted with the death of the Marquis, and the hopes that are entertained of Solignac's speedy recovery. I leave the rest for the Abbè's letter to explain, and am, dear Madam, most faithfully your's,

BLANCHE DE MURVILLE.

“ From the ABBE ST. BERTIN.

“ I have the comfort, most excellent lady, to acquaint you that the man whom I love as my own son is likely to gild my declining days with happiness; in one word, he is recovering, and soon hopes to settle the object of all his earthly wishes.

“ The Marquis de Rozancourt had time to implore the Almighty to forgive his sins, and to write a paper, in which he

has acknowledged Marionette du Ranci for his lawful wife, by which she and his daughter will become the possessors of all the fortune that does not pass with the title. He there laments his treachery to Adeline de Courcy in very pathetic terms, who, from the words of Solignac, he imagined was no more, which, probably, prevented him from offering to her any compensation for his villany. She indeed wants none, for happiness is now within her reach, though fortune is not. Adeline, by sad experience, has bought this knowledge, that grandeur does not constitute felicity.

“ All we now have to do is to join with Solignac in his thanksgivings to that Almighty Providence which has preserved the life of Adeline, and will reward the sufferings and constancy of two such lovers; and, in the midst of our gratitude, let us remember that mercy is the attribute of Heaven, and it is the

duty of Christians to forgive. This must incline us to forget the villany of a man whose death has paid the forfeit of his crimes; and to pray, if there remains any other hearts so base and hardened, that Heaven would be pleased to reform and to forgive them, since pardon and punishment are equally in the hands of the Almighty.

“ I have the honour to be, Madam, with great respect, your most faithful servant,

“ JEROME ST. BERTIN.”

Note.—Here several letters between Madame St. Severin and Madame de Murville are omitted.

LETTER XI.

FROM MADAME DE MURVILLE

TO MADAME ST. SEVERIN.

SEVERAL days are elapsed, my dear Madam, since I had the honour to receive

ceive your last letter; but I waited till I had something material to relate respecting our convalescent friend. I now come to the sequel of her story; for Monsieur de Solignac is here. His wound healed so fast, and his impatience to see Adeline was so great, that Count Zodiski could hardly prevail on him to wait for his Majesty's pardon, before he came hither.

As soon as it arrived, a chaise conveyed Solignac and the Abbè, attended by Zodiski on horseback, to this place. He has just seen Adeline, (who, though still very weak, is daily growing better) but as I cannot do justice to the joy or the affection of these two happy lovers, I will leave it to your own imagination, and only say, that I think their mutual recovery will be accelerated by the society of each other, and that we may now look forward with hope to the time when we shall solicit the honour of Madame
St.

St. Severin's company to complete this happy groupe, and to be a witness of the marriage of two people whose hearts have so long been united.

In a conversation between the Baroness and her friend, I learn that Adeline hinted what her wishes would be, if ever that event took place, which was, to have the ceremony performed by the Abbè St. Bertin in the presence of Madame de Thiange, at the Convent of St. Croix; that her respectable friend who had soothed her in sorrow and calamity might partake in the felicity of a scene which we had some time ago so little reason to expect.

Adeline would have addressed a few lines to you herself, but as I told her I should write, she desired me to say a thousand things that might be expressive of her regard and gratitude to you.

Every face here wears a smile of joy. That good man the Abbè St. Bertin, seems

seems to be grown young again, so gay does he appear in seeing the happiness of two people, whom he calls his children. The Baroness looks the picture of delight; and as for the amiable and disinterested Count Zodiski, I think he is the model for all young men to copy; so truly great, without the smallest degree of pomp or arrogance; so truly good, without arrogating to himself any merit for being so.

Such a man's character is surely very perfect. He is no servile imitator of others, no slave to custom; he acts according to the free agency of his own mind, in despite of fashion or the opinion of others. His love for Radzina and Adeline prove that he has the passions of other men; he may have their weaknesses also, but he knows how to combat them by the force of principle, and to sacrifice them at the call of honour. With a mind that kindles at the
sense

sense of injury, and melts at a tale of woe, he never makes *professions* of sensibility. When friendship requires his aid, he is unwearied in its cause, and proves his sincerity by acts rather than by words. Brave as he is, yet he talks not of his deeds in arms. Learned as he is, yet he aims not at shewing his superiority to others. In short, he is far above my capacity of praise.

It is seldom that the magnanimous hero and man of gentle manners are united in the same person. His patriotic love for the King of Poland and his country, (which he only quitted when he could no longer fulfil the duties of a foldier) bursts forth sometimes in his conversation; and on those occasions fire flashes from his eyes, and the honest warmth of a loyal heart glows upon his cheek; but in his general conversation he is the mild, unassuming, ingenuous character,

character, which is best suited to love and peace.

The admiration, I may say the reverence, I have for this excellent man, has betrayed me into a long panegyric; but such a character is so rare, that my prolixity may be excused. It is not his least praise, that instead of sporting a fine equipage, living in a princely house, squandering his money at a gaming table or on the turf, and flirting with a courtesan at the opera, (as most of our young Parisians do) he contributes, I understand, to the comforts of his relations in Poland, encourages the arts and sciences, patronizes men of modest merit, and, without the *parade* of generosity, privately allots a sum to the relief of the aged, sick, and indigent. These are virtues that may, in the opinion of the vain and ostentatious, be less brilliant than the dazzling charms of that valour which Poland has attached to the name of Zoski;

diski; yet, in the opinion of good men, they are truly valuable.

It is time that I should check the enthusiasm with which my pen is inspired when I contemplate such a character, therefore,

Adieu, dearest Madam. In the hope of seeing you here soon, I have the honour to subscribe myself, your faithful humble servant,

BLANCHE DE MURVILLE.

LETTER XII.

FROM ADELINÉ DE COURCY

TO MADAME DE ST. SEVERIN.

Chateau de Murville.

PROVIDENCE has decreed, my dear and ever honoured Madam, that your
Adeline,

Adeline, who was once preserved by your benevolent care, should be again snatched from the grave, and restored to the first and only possessor of her heart. My excellent friend the Abbess of St. Croix has consented that our marriage should be solemnized in her presence; we therefore shall remove from this hospitable house to Dijon on Monday next, before which time we hope you will by your presence add to the number of friends by whom I am surrounded.

If my disposition had ever been tainted with that false pride which is often to be met with in the world, I should not only have been cured of it by my adversity and misfortunes, but also by being so much under obligations to my friends; on the contrary I feel proud to be so obliged.

Solignac seems as happy and as impatient to lead me to the altar as if I possessed a fortune equal to his deserts.—

For

For his sake only I wish that was the case; and perhaps, were I to consider our marriage in a *worldly* point of view, I should say it was against his interest to make choice of a poor wife, and therefore refuse his solicitations; but, after all our distresses, I cannot resolve again to be separated from him. I hope, as there is a chance of his being soon promoted in the army, we shall be able to live in a state of comfort; and I have found by sad experience, that a cottage may, under some circumstances, be preferable to a palace.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Madam,

Your's most gratefully,

ADELINÉ DE COURCY.

LETTER XIII.

From JULIETTE DE RONSAL,

To the BARONESS DE LUZANE.

I ALWAYS like to be the herald of good news, my dear sister, and therefore I have snatched away the pen from my father, who was meditating a letter to you. He calls me a strange wild girl, in his good-humoured way, and leaves the implements of writing at my mercy.

Well! I will try for once to be serious—the volatile Juliette shall methodize her thoughts, and explain the occasion of this letter as clearly as she can. Know then, my dear grave sister, that since you quitted Paris my father and Monsieur de Montigny have left no string untried to serve a person in whose success you take a lively interest. In
 few

few words, they have got at the ear of *Monsieur*; and what they infused into his royal ear has set his tongue at work with the king.—“ Well !” you will say, “ what is all this ? Why do you not come to the point.” Patience, Eleonore ! patience—I am a whimsical girl, and must have my own way.

To proceed then ; the report of *Monsieur* concerning the merits and ill-fortune of Solignac has wrought wonders in his favour ; for the deserts of the son atone so fully for the faults of his deceased father, that the King has been prevailed upon to restore to him his title, with the government of the charming castle of Bellegarde, near the Mediterranean, which is, to make use of an English news-paper expression, not an hundred miles from your own villa.—It was formerly held by the ancestors of *Monsieur de Solignac* ; and this grant was ready to receive the royal seal

when the account reached Paris of the Marquis de Rozancourt having fallen in a duel by the hand of Solignac, who I may now call the Count. This suspended the business, and my father and Monsieur de Montigny were commanded to keep the King's intention secret till that event should become less the topic of public discourse, lest his Majesty should appear to be an encourager of duellists; therefore observe, Eleonore, it is to be a profound secret. I ought to have prefaced the news with this injunction, but I forgot it. Now, if you have betrayed it in part by a joyful exclamation, and are asked for the cause of your surprize, you must account for it some other way; either that the old Duchess de Ventadour is brought to bed, or the young actress La Fleur is grown virtuous; in short, you must invent a reason, and save my credit, otherwise I shall never be trusted again, and that will

mar

mar my fortune ; for who will marry a person that cannot keep a secret ? and I have just now two strings to my bow. The Marechal La Tour, of a certain age, high bred, punctilious, and superb, immensely rich, and noble minded, prodigiously generous, and profoundly in love. On the other hand, the young Monsieur St. Severin, son of Adeline's friend, full of graces and vivacity, with a good fortune, sparkling eyes, and fluency of speech. I hear you say, " Ah Juliette, the Marechal has no chance." Be it so, my sister ; I cannot say yes, when my heart tells me no—therefore, I must dismiss my old lover, I believe, in proper time ; and since my father leaves the choice to myself, I shall take pity on the agreeable St. Severin. I say take pity, because it is the common expression ; but, I must confess, I never saw any lover that wanted it less ; for either my frankness or his assurance

gives him so little to fear, that he is all day long as gay as a lark; and, you know, the words sighing and languishing are not in my vocabulary; therefore we escape those scenes of sentiment which are usually to be found in the drama, where the characters are more larmoyante.

Poor Adeline has had a dismal lot hitherto—the account we received from you (for we were gone from Paris to Montreuil at the time when Zodiski came there to solicit for Solignac's pardon) made me, contrary to custom, serious and sad; but your subsequent tidings have set us all at ease. And now, I hope there is a truce to piping and whining; you are all preparing for the wedding, and I can imagine the group assembled at the Convent for the grand occasion.—I cannot, however, with certainty, make out the figures of Madame St. Severin and the Countess de Murville—all the rest are

are known to me. Fancy, however, represents the former thin, tall, and rather formal, the latter fair and jolly; am I right?—Zodiski, Abbè St. Bertin, Madame de Thiange, Adeline Solignac, and dear Eleonore, I see plainly. Joy go with you to the altar, sweet Adeline; and may your future days be marked with happiness.

I will detain you no longer, my dear sister—therefore adieu. My father and mother join with me in best love to you, and congratulatory compliments to fair Adeline and her *Sposo*.

Your ever affectionate,

JULIETTE DE RONSAL.

LETTER XIV.

From the BARONESS DE LUZANE,
To MADEMOISELLE DE RONSAL.

YES, my dear Juliette! the happiness of our Adeline is complete—she now

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bears

bears the name of her beloved Solignac, and we are just returned from the Convent.

Even *your* mirth and pleasantry would have been converted into gravity had you been present; for though every heart was full of joy, the recollection of Adeline's story, and the solemnity with which the venerable Abbè read the marriage ceremony, made every countenance serious. When people have been great sufferers, the mind does not easily take the colouring of cheerfulness; and a sense of past sorrow was so blended with present joy, that Adeline seemed dubious whether smiles or tears would speak her feelings best; it was a mixture of both. Solignac received her hand with that expression of a happy heart, which his intelligent countenance could so well express. The holy Abbess looked like a Saint bestowing her benediction; and the place conspired to make

make

make the scene more impressive. So-
lignac had only one thing to regret,
which was the absence of Zodiski, who
suddenly quitted the Chateau de Mur-
ville in the morning, leaving a ver-
bal message, that business obliged him to
set out for Paris. This has cast a gloom
over his friend—there is a mystery in
the Count's departure which time will,
I hope, soon unravel.

You seem to desire a description of
the two ladies who are unknown to you.
Madame de St. Severin arrived yesterday
at the Chateau, in an old-fashioned stately
equipage ; her manners are those of the
veille cour. She is well-bred and good-
humoured, but at first sight wears an
appearance of *hauteur* and precision,
which is soon lost when the extreme be-
nevolence of her character begins to de-
veloppe itself. She came, like bounty
itself, loaded with presents to her fair
protégé—her ideas seem magnificent,
and

and her manner of conferring favours the most gracious in the world — so much for the lady who, I foresee, will be your mother-in-law. From what she said this morning, I find she has been apprized of Monsieur St. Severin's inclinations, and approves of his alliance with the house of Ronfal; therefore leave off your wild tricks, and if her son is the amiable man I have heard him represented to be, and you prefer him to every other, think yourself lucky to have such a respectable mother-in-law—do not let my account of her alarm you—she is a friend to youth and sprightliness, but not to levity; and of the latter, my Juliette, you stand acquitted. Your mirth is only the lively fallies of a young and guileless heart, that is naturally gay, knows not what sorrow is, and has never dreamt of care.

You was wrong in your idea of Madame St. Severin's person: she is fat
and

and portly, with great remains of dignified beauty.

Madame de Murville, on the contrary, is tall, thin, and pale; but has a remarkably interesting countenance, and great ease and elegance of manner. She lived much at court in the younger part of her life, and is calculated to shine in the first circles—her taste is acknowledged to be very great, and her house is adorned with as fine pictures and statues as those at Monsieur d'Alembert's, at Paris. Since the death of a husband, who did not deserve her, she has retired to that beautiful chateau, and, having no children, devotes her time to the cultivation of the fine arts, the embellishment of her place, the entertainment of her friends, and the assistance of the poor. These two exemplary women have promised to visit me at my villa very soon. The bride and bridegroom will go there with me, and in our rides

I mean to surprize them with a view of the Chateau de Bellegarde, and in due time to let them know how happy I shall be in such neighbours; therefore cease, my Juliette, to tremble for your secret; it shall not be divulged till a proper season.

If Zodikski has turned his course towards Paris, I conclude he will apprize my father of his reasons for such an abrupt departure, and will expedite the business relative to Solignac's appointment. The Marquis De Rozancourt's conduct has been so base, his character was so impeachable, and his crimes towards Adeline were so flagrant, that his chastisement wears only the form of justice.

I hear that the now acknowledged Marchioness De Rozancourt, far from being elated by the possession of a title and estate, retires modestly from observation, laments his death with sincere affection

affection devoid of parade, and is determined to devote herself to the education of her daughter, and the enjoyment of a few friends, at the Chateau de Rozancourt, having suffered too much by her past trials to be intoxicated by prosperity. She has offered to make restitution to Adeline for that part of her father's property which was consumed by fire; but this my friend begged to decline, preferring an honourable poverty to the acquisition of any thing that should remind her of a man who she wishes, if possible, never to remember.

We are now returned to the Chateau de Murville, and Solignac hopes the evening post will bring him an explanatory letter from Zodiski, whose absence he thinks the only alloy to his happiness. Tell him (if he is with my father) that there have been a thousand surmises about his elopement; it is generally imagined
there.

there was no companion of his flight; yet all his former proceedings have been so much more the work of reason than of whim that I know not what to think.

The affection we know he once had for her whom I may now call the Countess de Solignac, has so long been converted into a brotherly regard, and his anxiety for her union with the man she loved was so evident, that it is impossible to think envy, jealousy, or regret, had any influence over a mind so noble. Among all the reasons that present themselves to my imagination, none seem so probable as that a project to accelerate his friend's promotion engrossed his thoughts, and induced him to leave us so hastily. I have heard him several times regret the limited income which these two lovers would have to subsist upon; and I know how zealous, how ardent he is, when a friend can be assisted.

And

And now adieu, my dear Juliette— I hope my father and mother will join us at my villa this day fortnight, when, I trust, Zodiski will not refuse to accompany them. If you can live without your young lover; or if you have influence enough to bring him with you, it will be an additional pleasure.—I intend for once to be very gay.—My villa shall again be the scene of festivity, and mirth shall be revived by the power of friendship.

Come then, my merry Juliette!—you shall be the Euphrosyne of the day; and I hope, when you follow the example of those whom Hymen has now united, you will find the happiness I, alas! have lost, and be blest with the confidence, love, and esteem of an amiable husband. This is the sincere wish of

Your truly affectionate Sister,

ELEONORE DE LUZANE.

LETTER XV.

FROM COUNT ZODISKI,

TO MONSIEUR DE SOLIGNAC.

WHEN you receive this, my dear Solignac, I shall be on my way to Paris, whither I am going upon business in which *you* are concerned. This must apologize for my not remaining to be a witness of your union with the most deserving of her sex. You have chosen an orphan, but she is not fatherless.—Adelaine de Courcy is without a fortune, but Adeline de Solignac shall not be poor. This is an enigma, and requires explanation. I must therefore come to the point.

In

In my opinion, the pleasanter thing that attends riches, is the power of dispensing benefits to others; I am confident, that he who gives to his friend, or to a worthy object, feels a higher gratification than the person who receives; and I had rather bestow in my life time than bequeath at my death; deny me not, therefore, the satisfaction of contributing to your comfort, (I will not say to your happiness) by supplying the place of a father to your lovely bride.

A sum of money left me by my mother, (who did not expend half the jointure yearly which was settled on her by the generous Baron,) added to the magnificent donation of General Lubienki, puts it in my power to appropriate a considerable sum for Adeline's fortune; but as such a gift might hurt her delicacy, and create censorious remarks, (not less ill-natured than ill-founded)

I am now going to Paris, to transfer half my property that is in the funds into your name. The remainder is more than sufficient for me—therefore, do not let your mind be possessed by imaginary scruples.—I prefer a quiet life to one of bustle—I like privacy better than shew—I hate the incumbrance of a great establishment, and can be more at my ease in a small habitation than in a large one.—I shall never marry—and my relations in Poland are provided for. My sister the Baroness has a great income left by her husband; consequently I have no relations whose claims can supercede those of friendship. I shall probably travel a good deal, and I have more than enough to indulge myself in whims and peregrinations.—By sharing my fortune you take a load of care from me, and confer the greatest satisfaction I can feel, that of making

two people whom I love perfectly happy. Solignac !—Adeline !—when we meet again I shall see you blest with each other—and, I think, nothing short of the felicity you must feel at going to the altar, can be compared with the satisfaction I experience in surprizing you with this letter.

Farewel,

ZODISKE.

F I N I S.

