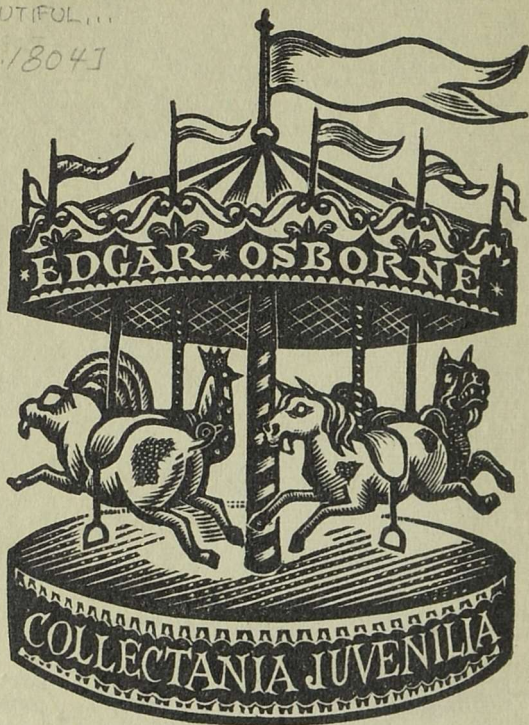


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BEAUTIFUL...

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Matilda's Interview with the Queen.

THE
BEAUTIFUL PAGE;

OR,
CHILD OF ROMANCE:

BEING THE
INTERESTING HISTORY

OF A
BARONET'S DAUGHTER.

Intended as an instructive Lesson for Youth.



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THE
BEAUTIFUL PAGE.

CHAP. I.

IT is well known, from woeful, and continued experience, that there are few children who are not more willing to indulge their own humours than the directions of their tutors; which, however, seldom fails to make them afterwards unhappy; and from this misery it is the duty of

parents to exempt their children by timely correction. Sometimes it is a difficult task to save young people from plunging into wretchedness, through their own folly and obstinate perseverance in their own pursuits.

This truth was deeply considered by Sir Lancelot Colvin, a rich and powerful baronet, who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He had an only child, whose name was Matilda. Both he and his lady were great favourites of the Queen, who did them the honour of standing godmother to Matilda. They

were, therefore, determined to make their daughter worthy of such distinction, by educating her so religiously, and at the same time with such accomplishments, that the Queen should not be ashamed of transferring to the child the regard she had shewn to her parents. And that she might make the more impression on the Queen's mind, they resolved to bring her up in the country, and that her Majesty should not see her till she was old enough to be presented at court.

Sir Lancelot's country man-

sion, then called Colvin Hall, was very large and ancient, in the middle of a Park covered with wood. The gardens, with fish-ponds, and statues, and waterworks, were beautiful. It was in Staffordshire, and not far from Tutbury castle, where the unhappy Mary, Queen of Scotland was confined, as you will read in the History of England. Sir Lancelot and Lady Colvin kept a great deal of company. The Baronet was kind to his tenants; and both of them were hospitable, and good to the poor. The birth of Matilda

gave them the greatest joy. The christening was the most splendid that had ever been seen in that part of the kingdom, as you may conceive, when the Queen, accompanied by many nobles and ladies, came to stand sponsor. Her Majesty staid a week, during which time there were all sorts of diversion, masques, grand balls, hunting parties, and other amusements, usual in those times, upon such occasions. When the Queen went away she kissed the infant very affectionately, and gave it her blessing, saying she hoped Matilda would live, and

prove an ornament to the English court. Her Majesty also left for her very fine presents of jewels and other things of great value.

Such was the birth of Matilda Colvin. Proper nurses were appointed for her, and she experienced little indisposition, till she was about a year old, when she took the small pox. Nothing could equal the alarm of her parents; for, in those days, inoculation was not known in this country, nor even till the reign of King George the Second, when the art was brought from

Turkey, by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who resided there a considerable time. Providentially, Matilda recovered from this terrible disorder, without at all injuring her face, which promised to be handsome. Mrs. Vernon, a respectable lady, who resided in the house, and was a distant relation of Sir Lancelot's, undertook to be Matilda's governess; and at a proper age, she was to have proper masters to instruct her in every necessary branch of education.

CHAP. II.

WHEN Miss was about four years old, she began to know her own consequence, and to give herself a great many airs. For her rank in life, and the blessings she enjoyed, instead of making her grateful, made her proud; and she treated the servants and all her inferiors with contempt and rudeness, which, at this age, her fond parents mistook for spirit, and instead of checking, rather encourag'd it; so that as she got older, she be-

came more tyrannical, and was really hated by every one of her attendants, except Mrs. Vernon, before whom she had cunning enough to behave with decency.

In another year or two, masters began to attend her, and she was taught to write, to dance, and to play on the Spanish guitar. But as her age encreased, so did her ill temper; and she took delight in nothing so much as ill-treating the servants, and dressing herself in all manner of finery. Mrs. Vernon now began to talk seriously to her.

“Indeed, Miss Colvin,” she

said, “ you are of an age to know good from evil, and propriety from rudeness ; and you must really alter your behaviour, especially to the servants. You are to recollect that they are fellow creatures, and as long as they do their duty, are to be treated kindly. You are as much obliged to them for their services, as they are to you, for employing them : and only consider, in what a wretched situation you would be placed, if, in consequence of your unkindness, not a servant would come near you ! What would you do ? how would you

help yourself? And what a fine thing it would be, for them to quit Colvin hall, to go and serve other young ladies, and telling every body, that though Sir Lancelot and Lady Colvin are the best people in the world, there is no living peaceably in the house because of Miss's ill humours and bad temper.

“Your father and mother” continued Mrs. Vernon, “have infinitely more power than you; and yet do you ever see them behave with insolence to their inferiors, or speak to them, but with kindness? Besides, it is just

as easy to be beloved as to be hated; nay, it is easier; for I think it must be the most troublesome and disagreeable thing imaginable, to be perpetually snapping and scolding, and finding fault with those who are doing their best to please us."

Miss listened to this with uneasiness, and instead of thanking her governess, was glad when she left the room. And the very next day, she behaved so ill to the writing master, because he was rather sharp in his instructions, and purposely spoiled her copy before him, that he sent

word to Sir Lancelot that he should attend no more. And the following morning, when her boiled milk was brought to her, she said there was not bread enough in it, and directly flung it in the maid's face, and scalded her so much, that she ran crying out of the room, and insisted on having her wages paid; for she would not stay, she said, another hour in the house with such an ill-tempered, good for nothing creature as that minx, Miss Colvin.

There was no concealing these things from Sir Lancelot and

Lady Colvin, though Mrs. Vernon had before told Matilda what would be the consequence of such behaviour, if she persisted in it. The writing master had sent a note to Sir Lancelot, which, of course, came to his hand; and the maid uttered her complaints so loudly, that Lady Colvin sent out to know what was the matter. The truth could not be hidden; and Miss Colvin was ordered instantly to attend her father and mother.

CHAP. III.



“ I AM very sorry, Miss Colvin,” said Sir Lancelot, “ that you so far forget yourself as to behave so improperly as I find you do. It is a melancholy reflection, that instead of being humble, and obedient, and thankful to your tutors and attendants, for their services, and every little kindness they do you, wishing to improve you, and please us ; you are proud, insolent, and ill-tempered. None but low-minded, ignorant peo-

ple indulge such dispositions. It is your business to make yourself beloved by every body, and not to discredit your parents. You are the god-daughter of the Queen: do you think the Queen will ever admit into her presence, a creature so perverse and obstinate? You do not consider that you are disgracing my house; and that if you are permitted to have your own humour, it will be deserted by all my old servants; and the report of your temper will keep away my friends. But to prevent this, you must prepare to leave Colvin hall."

“As you please,” answered Miss, with astonishing assurance.

“Very well,” replied Sir Lancelot: “but you must not be surprised to find yourself in a far different place, and under the care of far different people.”

All this time Lady Colvin was silently weeping for her child’s misconduct.

“Come Lady Colvin,” said Sir Lancelot, “kiss your daughter, and pray that she may return an altered child; it will be long before you see her again; for I will not have even the

meanest of my household made miserable by the peevishness of such a girl as this.”—He ordered the maid to be called in, who had been scalded, and giving her a piece of gold, told her to keep her place, for that Matilda was to be sent from Colvin hall till she knew how to treat servants better—and then, turning to a man that was waiting, said, “Away with her!”

Every thing had been previously prepared, and Miss was conveyed to a very old house, many miles from Colvin hall. It was a large dismal-looking

place; and she was received at the door by a middle-aged woman, who had a good deal of severity in her look and manner. Her husband did not appear much pleasanter. However, with these two, who had a maid and man-servant, she was left. She did not seem to fear much, but was sullen; never speaking but when spoken to, and then unwillingly but dared not to answer uncivilly.

Little passed that day, and at night she was put into a plain, but neat and clean bed: there was no bell to ring, and the

door was locked. Instead of the tender wishes, and evening kisses of Mrs. Vernon, the woman barely said "good night Miss," and left her. The next morning, she saw none of her own cloaths; they had been taken away, and replaced with others more homely. This was the first thing that made her cry. There was no servant to assist her in dressing: the maid came, and unlocked her door, telling her to rise to breakfast, which was no sooner over, than she was shewn into a large old fashioned parlour, but richly

furnished. Here she found sitting an aged lady, well dressed, who thus spoke to her :

“ You are sent here, Miss Colvin, to receive that instruction and those accomplishments which you seemed unwilling to acquire at home, whither you will not be permitted to return till you shall be thought an ornament, and not a disgrace, to your family : how long that will be, must depend chiefly on your own exertions. You will be attended by masters, who will not consider you as the daughter of Sir Lancelot Colvin, because they

do not know it, but will treat you with the utmost severity, if you either reject their instructions, or neglect their orders.”

Matters were arranged accordingly; and she was attended by masters, who set her tasks; and her new governess punished her severely when she did not perform them.

This was a sad life for a high-spirited miss, who wanted to drive every body about her, and to domineer over all the servants. She was now kept in the utmost subjection. Her attire and her living corresponded;

and she found something else to do with boiled milk than to throw it at those who gave it her. For two years, she lived this life, and had every day such tasks set her, that she had little leisure for herself. She continued for a long time sulky about her cloaths, though she dared not complain; and was much ashamed when she went to church every sabbath-day, to think how meanly she was dressed, compared with several young ladies whom she saw there; and whose praises she as constantly heard when she returned home;

the governess taking care to contrast their conduct and behaviour with her own.

She now understood reading, writing, arithmetick, and a little musick. She was to be instructed in French, because it was fashionable, and in Latin, because the Queen understood and often wrote in that language. She was taught dancing, and riding on horseback ; but she had no misses to play with ; and indeed never saw any but at church, and once a week, whilst she was learning to dance, a few were brought from a neighbour-

ing town, that she might be perfected in country dances. Her governess did not forget to remind her, that had she behaved properly, she might by this time, instead of learning dancing with a few country girls, have made one in the fine balls so frequently given at Colvin hall.

She had made a tolerable progress in the French tongue, when accident threw in her way, a little story or novel, written in that language; giving an account of a young lady being banished from her father's house, for her ill behaviour, and suffer-

ing many hardships, such as she never before heard or read of, and such as made her tremble to think of. This was so exactly her own case, that it made a deep impression on her mind. The latter part of the book was torn away, so that she could not know the conclusion. Her curiosity was so much excited, that she ventured to ask her governess, whether she could tell her what became of that young lady; and was answered, that she did not suffer in vain; for she soon saw the folly of perverseness; and, reforming, was permitted to re-

turn to her parents, so humble,
and so altered for the better, that
she was happy all the rest of her
life.

CHAP. IV.

GREAT effects often spring from small causes. The accidental reading of this little book produced a wonderful alteration in the sentiments of Matilda. The governess observing this, and that she was become more communicative, conversed with her frequently on these subjects which it was necessary for Matilda to understand, who at length began to see the propriety of

being meek, sweet-tempered, and gentle; and the masters who attended her, were soon astonished at the suavity of her manners, and the kindness with which she addressed and replied to them, insomuch that they all began to admire and esteem her: in consequence of which the progress she made in what she had yet to learn, was amazing.

It cannot be thought surprising, that Matilda, without other associate than her governess, should have recourse to reading for amusement, as well as for instruction. In a room up stairs,

there were the remains of a library, and among the books, were some Romances, both French and English, which treated of love, and the adventures of lovers, and which represented young ladies as being adored for their beauty, and though plunged in distresses, were relieved by gallant knights, and sometimes by the intervention of supernatural beings. But she observed, that these young ladies were always elegant and accomplished.

She was now twelve years old; her glass told her she was handsome; and her books informed

her, that her beauty would receive additional charms if her face was illumined by the sunshine of good nature, and her actions graced by affability. In short, the knowledge she now acquired made quite another creature of her; and she every day improved both in her person and manners so much that her governess gladly communicated the change to her parents.

Sir Lancelot and Lady Colvin had suffered great uneasiness from the former reports of the governess: the present intelligence, therefore, gave them the

greater pleasure. Lady Colvin, with all the feeling of a mother, was anxious to send for her daughter ; but Sir Lancelot said, that she was at too critical an age to be trusted with indulgence ; and that perhaps to bring her home might tend to undo all that had been done by that discipline which ought to be continued at least two years longer. Lady Colvin, however, could not resist going to see her ; but, wishing to see her unknown, she disguised herself in the habit of a poor woman, and, with a large cap covering great part of her

face, it was impossible for Matilda to know her. The governess had a message of Lady Colvin's intention, and prepared accordingly.

She arrived on the day that Matilda was engaged in dancing, and entered the room whilst her daughter and several other young girls were in the midst of a country dance. Lady Colvin was astonished to see how tall Matilda was, and with what grace she moved. She could hardly help flying to, and embracing her.

When this exercise was over,

and the other young ladies gone, they sat down to dinner, the governess telling Matilda, that this good woman, meaning Lady Colvin, had lately been at Colvin hall. "I blush, madam," said Matilda, "when I think on the occasion which prevented my remaining there. I hope my father and mother are well."

"They are in good health," answered the seemingly poor woman; "and they will rejoice when I inform them of the improvement you have evidently made."

"I cheerfully submit myself

to their pleasure," replied Matilda; "and I should think it the greatest of all blessings to be restored to their favour."

Lady Colvin could scarcely refrain from revealing herself, which the governess observing, said, "I am sure I could almost venture to answer for the dutiful behaviour of Miss Colvin, were she permitted to return home; but I should be afraid that she would not attend so regularly to her education."

"Perhaps not," rejoined the disguised Lady Colvin, recovering herself, "perhaps not."

“ Indeed, but I should,” cried Matilda ; “ for I know too well now the importance of education to neglect it ; and I assure you, I feel extremely grateful for the very compulsion that has been used, however unpleasant, to make me sensible of its advantages, and my own insignificance without it.”

Lady Colvin was still more delighted.

“ Obedience to parents,” said the governess, “ never fails of a blessing ; nor disobedience of a curse.”

Matilda turned pale,—then re-

suming herself, said, "I wish I was with my parents, to convince them of my obedience in all things to their will."

The stranger assured her, that Sir Lancelot and Lady Colvin should be informed of her wishes; and after dinner she prepared to depart, saying to Miss Colvin, that she was so charmed with her, that she must presume for the favour of a parting kiss, which Matilda gave with pleasure, whilst her mother could scarcely help clasping her child to her heart, and telling who she was. To prevent risk-

ing it any longer, she ran out of the room, and returned to Colvin hall.

Sir Lancelot could not but be rejoiced to hear of the progress of his daughter in her manners and accomplishments; but he turned a deaf ear to his lady's suggestion of having Matilda brought home, till the expiration of two more years.

In consequence of her good behaviour, however, he agreed with lady Colvin, that it would be right to send her such cloaths and ornamental apparel, as might be proper for her rank,

and principally with a view to make her familiar with wearing them, that she might not appear aukward, or fancy herself fine; as most young people are apt to do, when they are clad in their best garments.

This was accordingly done, with a kind message to her; the governess, at the same time, telling her, of the intention of her parents in sending those cloaths, which were accompanied by pieces of stuff of various kinds to make up, in doing which Matilda was to assist. This she thought a degradation, and in-

timated to the governess, that the daughter of Sir Lancelot Colvin was not intended for a mantua-maker.

“That is very true,” said the governess; “but Miss Colvin is to recollect that it will be right for her to understand when things are properly done; and there can be no harm in knowing how to do every thing ones’-self. Besides, you must always bear in remembrance the strange vicissitudes of this life; and that it is possible the time may come, which God forbid! when ever you, the daughter of Sir Lancelot

Colvin, may owe your subsistence to those very accomplishments which you now acquire as ornamental parts of your education: and therefore the more useful arts you learn, the better. I know very well," continued the governess, "that you think it utterly improbable, if not impossible, that you should ever want bread. When I was at your age, I thought as you think. I was as well born; had rich parents, and powerful friends; and yet at this moment, I subsist on the education I then received; for to that alone am I indebted

for the protection and friendship of Sir Lancelot and Lady Colvin; so wonderfully have events turned out in my journey through life."

"It is very good in you to tell me all this," answered Matilda; "and I will certainly acquaint myself with any useful improvement you shall recommend."

"When young ladies," said the governess, "can once be brought to listen to the voice of reason, and attend to the dictates of duty, they will seldom afterwards expose themselves to censure. And may you, my dear

Miss Colvin, always so conduct yourself as to deserve happiness, be your situation what it may!"

CHAP. V.

MATILDA was delighted with the change in her appearance, and henceforth studied the best and most various ways of disposing of her ornaments with taste; and now that mildness beamed in her countenance, she was an interesting figure.

She had made such advances in the several parts of her education, that she performed all her

tasks with facility, and had consequently much more time to herself, which she employed in reading, and altering her dresses.

The governess, well satisfied with her attention to her lessons, and her own desires for the completion of her studies, took little notice how she passed her leisure hours, conceiving that, excluded as she was from all society, she could imbibe no bad principles, nor contract any bad habits. But whilst she was thus satisfied of the safety of her ward, and of the purity of her mind, Matilda was reading with

the utmost avidity the several romances with which the ancient library was stored. It is well known how such books affect the minds of persons much older, and with much more judgment, than Matilda Colvin. She now began to fancy herself a damsel in distress; a baronet's beautiful daughter, confined in a castle, and against her will; and that some valiant knight was to come to her rescue. She read a great deal of masks, and tournaments, and the assemblies of knights and ladies, and all the pageantry which amused those times; and

she saw no reason why she should be debarred from joining in them. It is true, she had behaved improperly when a child, for which she felt that she had suffered enough; and she thought it high time that she should be released from what she considered to be a captivity.

Full of this idea, she asked her governess to intercede with her parents for her return to Colvin hall. The good old lady said, that after the positive directions she had received from Sir Lancelot as to Matilda's continuing with her two years longer,

and the arrangements that had take place in consequence, she could not think of offending the baronet by any such proposition, which, from her, would merely imply that she was tired of Miss Colvin's company, which she assured her, was very far from being the case; because she now loved her so much, that she should part with her very reluctantly. At the same time, she admitted that there would be no impropriety in Miss Colvin herself writing to her parents to that effect, if she chose, though the governess would venture to

say that it would be in vain, for the present.

Matilda, however, was determined to adopt this expedient, and to appeal, by letter, to the feelings of her parents; and in order to convince them that it was needless to keep her longer in her present state, she wrote to her father two letters, one in English and the other in Latin; and one she addressed to her mother, written in French. She shewed these letters to her governess, who was surprised at the ingenuity of them, and praised Matilda for the candour with which

she had in them acknowledged her former faults.

The epistles were dispatched, and Matilda anxiously waited the result. They were much admired at Colvin hall; but the only answer they produced was from lady Colvin, who wrote as follows:

“ The letter we have received from my dear Matilda, give us the pleasing satisfaction that she has properly and diligently employed her time; and we would have her exult in the advantages which such application and attention must hereafter naturally

produce. But these acquirements are of little worth, if they do not tend to rectify the heart, as well as to inform the judgment. Your skill in the languages will enable you to read the best books in each of them, and you will never be at a loss to express your sentiments with ease and propriety, either in writing or conversation. This is a circumstance too little adverted to by women in general; though her Majesty, the Queen, shews us that it may be acquired, and she not only now finds the great utility of such accomplish-

ments, but the obtaining them gave her employment during the time she was imprisoned by her cruel sister. You do well thus to imitate your royal godmother, by whom you will be the better received.

“ But the main intent of all learning, my dear Matilda, is to make us good and virtuous, and consequently happy. It is to teach us our duty with regard to God, our fellow creatures, and ourselves. I am sure I need not repeat to *you* what those duties are. You know, and will, I trust, always observe them. Among

those which more particularly demand your *present* observance, is an implicit submission to your father's directions, who desires me to say, that your coming home before the expiration of the allotted time, will entirely frustrate the plans he has in contemplation for your benefit, and of which I hope and entreat you to avail yourself by a patient acquiescence with his commands.

“ Now, that you are capable of correspondence, I shall occasionally address you, for the pleasure your replies will afford me. Consider, my dear daugh-

ter, that two years will soon elapse. Time flies swift with those who are busy; and you have enough to do yet to prepare you for that world to which you will then be introduced, and in which it will be our happiness to see you act as the daughter of one of the oldest and best families in the kingdom, and as the god-daughter of our illustrious Queen.—Farewell.”

This letter from her mother blunted the edge of her disappointment; for she expected nothing more than an immediate compliance with, or a flat denial,

of her request. She felt herself proud of being reasoned with, and wrote a reply of thankful acknowledgments.

Among the young ladies of the neighbouring village, who came to join in the dancing parties which were formed for Miss Colvin's instruction, was Harriet Montague, daughter of the rector of the parish; and to this girl, who was two years older than Matilda, was she so much attached, that her governess permitted Miss Montague, and her only, to visit Matilda, who was known to Harriet only as Miss

Colvin, and not as the daughter of a Baronet, but as one in her own sphere, or perhaps lower, which she naturally enough conjectured from the plain dress which Matilda had hitherto worn. But when our young lady began to put on the cloaths which had lately been sent her, and which were finer than any of her visitors; Harriet began to ask her who she was.

“ Pray Miss,” said she, “ are you a 'squire's daughter ?”

“ O dear, no miss !” replied the other; “ dont you know that I am a Baronet's daughter ?”

“A Baronet’s daughter!” exclaimed Miss Montague; “why you never told me so.”

“No, because I was ashamed,” said Matilda, blushing.

“Ashamed of being a Baronet’s daughter!” cried Harriet, still more amazed.

“Yes,” answered Matilda, “I was ashamed of my dress ever since I came here; and I was sent here, and obliged to wear that dress, because I had behaved improperly at home; so, if it had been known that I was a Baronet’s daughter, wearing such a dress, every body would

have guessed what it was for ; and therefore I had reason to be ashamed.”

“ Well, if ever I heard the like !” said Miss Montague ; “ why if I were a Baronet’s daughter, I would not stay in this old rambling house for any body.”

“ Ay, but I must stay here two years longer,” replied Matilda, bursting into tears.

“ Two years longer !” screamed Miss Montague ; why, “ who says so ?”

The answer was “ my father :

it is Sir Lancelot's express command, and must be obeyed."

"Why, I declare," resumed Miss Montague, "I declare it is a very hard case; and you are as badly off as a great many of the princesses which, you know, we read of in the charming books you lent me."

"It is very true," replied Matilda; "but then they were relieved by valiant knights and great warriors; and I don't think there are any in these parts."

"I don't know," answered Miss Montague, "but if I were a

Baronet's daughter, I would not be confined here, or any where else, for any body."

"No!" said Matilda; "why what would you do?"

"Do!" returned Miss Montague; why I would do as many of the princesses and great ladies, and distressed damsels have done, when they were shut up in castles: I would make my escape, and run away."

"What!" cried Matilda, "without a knight coming to deliver you?"

"To be sure," replied Miss Montague: "you know many

of those ladies were glad to get away by themselves; and if I were a Baronet's daughter I would do the same; for you never read of any harm coming to those great ladies."

"No," said Matilda, "unless they happened to get into a wood, and were pursued by wild beasts."

"Yes" resumed the other, "and then providence always sent a knight to kill the lion, or the lion took a liking to the lady because she was good, and would protect her against all the other lions and tigers in the world."

“That is very true,” answered Matilda; “so, after all, there is no great danger in running away.”

“None at all,” replied Miss Montague, O, if I were but a Baronet’s daughter, you should soon see what *I* would do !”

And thus ended this curious dialogue, which made such an impression on Matilda’s mind, that she passed the whole night in dreaming of running away.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN the morning came, it brought to Matilda what it usually brings to most people—reflection: and when she began seriously to think on what had passed, she could not help recollecting that any attempt to depart from her present residence must be directly opposing her father's command; and she had never forgotten the sentiments so

emphatically delivered by her governess in the presence of the poor woman who came from Colvin hall, (meaning lady Colvin in disguise), that "obedience to parents never fails of a blessing; nor disobedience of a curse." This truth, so fortunately impressed, determined her for the present to renounce all ideas of acting against it; and she continued for another year to attend to her duties, and at thirteen might be esteemed a wonder for her skill in every branch of education of which she had been required to make herself mistress.

Her person improved in proportion, and she was inclined to be tall. Her manners were not less graceful; for, fancying herself a heroine of romance, she got by rote many of the speeches supposed to be spoken by great personages described in her books, and used to recite them, with all the action and gesture which she fancied correspondent to the situations she thus assumed, which were always those of some distinguished character.

At the age of thirteen, then, with these accomplishments, and with their predilection, or rather

infatuation for romance, she looked upon herself as a damsel destined to some peculiar adventures, and that she should hereafter form a subject fit to be recorded among the annals of chivalry. And she had lately read the history of a lady not older than herself, commencing her adventures, by flying from a hard-hearted step-mother, and finding the protection of a gallant knight, who conducted her to a magnificent palace, where the prince fell in love with, and married her. In this book too, it was made very clear to her,

that a young lady is not bound to obey those commands of her parents which are cruel and unreasonable; a sentiment which instantly met with her concurrence; and she began to apply it to her own case. She presently concluded that she had been banished, as she called it, long enough; and that instead of staying another year, she ought to go into the world, and seek her fortune, as other ladies in romance have done, since her parents were so cruel and unjust as to keep her from it so long after she conceived she had a right to be in it.

In all this reasoning and the subsequent determination, she was greatly encouraged by Harriet Montague, who, indeed, during the last twelve months, had never ceased reproaching her for not doing as she would do, were she a Baronet's daughter. Matilda, therefore, at last resolved to make her escape, and had many private conferences with Miss Montague, as to the time, the manner, and the dress and character which she was to assume.—To go in the habit of a boy was the most romantic, and the least dangerous, and was

what many young ladies, under similar circumstances, had done before her.

But how to procure such a dress was the difficulty; and the project might have miscarried for want of this necessary disguise, had not Miss Montague recollected that her brother's cloathes would just fit Miss Colvin; and Harriet thought it would be a meritorious thing to steal her brother's Sunday apparel to equip a young lady in distress, who was a Baronet's daughter, and cruelly used by her parents.

The next thing that very much

puzzled them, was how to get the cloathes into the house, and then how to get Matilda out of it. This on due consideration, was found impracticable; and the scheme was dropped for two or three days, till Matilda could obtain leave, which was reluctantly granted, to visit Miss Montague, and pass the afternoon with her. It was then agreed that while the family were engaged, and they were supposed to be at play in the garden, Matilda should dress herself in the young gentleman's cloaths, and escape through the

back garden door into the field which led directly to the high road, which to prevent discovery, she was to cross, and make the best of her way into an adjoining wood.

The plan being thus completely settled, nothing remained but to put it in execution, and the next day Miss Colvin was to pay her visit. As soon as ever they had an opportunity, Miss Montague took Matilda up stairs, when they locked the door; and Harriet producing her brother's cloaths, Matilda was soon metamorphosed into the resemblance

of a very beautiful boy. She looked at herself in the glass, and was quite delighted with the appearance she made, it was so much like some of the princesses she had read of in romance. The habit was handsome: it was the old English dress, with a hat and feather.

The door was now unlocked, and, with fluttering hearts, they descended down stairs, and escaped unnoticed into the garden. They went into an arbour, and Matilda having promised to write an account of her adventures to Harriet, they kissed, and

took an affectionate farewell of each other. The garden door was opened very cautiously, and away flew Matilda across the fields, and soon found herself in a large wood. It was a fine summer's day, and she walked pleasantly along, not doubting but she should meet with some courteous knight on horseback, who would suspect she was a princess in disguise, and conduct her to his castle, where she would be entertained with all sorts of dainties, and have pages to attend her. But while she was engaged in these reveries, as

she passed quickly on, the evening approached; no knight appeared; the clouds began to gather, the thunder rolled at a distance, and the lightning flashed in her face. The coming storm had rendered the hemisphere almost dark; and she could just perceive that she was on the skirts of the wood, which she quitted as swiftly as she could, and found herself in an open field. While she was crossing this, the storm came on violently, and she would have been wet through, had she not taken shelter in the hollow of an old tree, which seemed to

be the only one in the field. However, she did not much fear; for she had read that princesses and distressed damsels had often suffered the very same, and much more at their outset; and therefore kept earnestly looking out of the hollow tree for some gallant knight in search of adventures, who would not fail to look in the hollow tree.

The storm subsided; no knight appeared; and she resumed her progress. She believed she had walked a great many miles, for it was now dark, and she was hungry. Her next business,

therefore, was to look for a light shining through some window at a distance: and if it were a castle, to throw herself at the feet of the baron, and crave his leave to pass the night there. And if it were a cottage, which was more likely, then with great courtesy to request a lodging for the night, for pure humanity; for she now recollected that she differed from most of the princesses of romance, in not having a farthing of money about her. But then it occurred to her, that she would make them some handsome presents when she became

came a great lady, which would no doubt soon be the case.

Another hour passed, and she kept walking on in the dark, though she began to be terrified, lest she should approach no habitation at all; and she did not remember to have read of ladies wandering all night without meeting with some protection.

At last, she espied a glimmering light, and making directly towards it, was led into a farm-yard, the only one near the common which she had passed. The poultry began to cackle, a great

dog to bark, and out came a man with a gun in his hand.

“Hey! by our lady, and who have we here! I thought as how the fox had been coming among the geese and pullets.”

“O sir,” said Matilda, “I am benighted, will you have the goodness to give me a lodging?”

“A lodging!” cried the man; “why we must speak to dame about that; but come thy way in: suppose thou’st had a douse in the storm.”

“I should have been poorly off,” answered Matilda, “had it not been for a hollow tree.”

“A hollow tree!” repeated the man: what the hollow tree on the common? By the mass, I would not have been there for a trifle in the storm: why, that tree is called the devil’s trunk, and I’ll uphold you he’s always busy about it—but come in, come in.”

“Here, dame,” continued the man, as they entered the house, “here’s a poor lad wants a lodging; he’s ’nighted, do you see, and can’t find his way.”

“A poor lad!” cried the wife, looking at Matilda, “why, he’s pretty youth, and dressed as fine

as a young 'squire. Pray, young gentleman, who are you?"

Now Miss Montague and Matilda, in all their wise consultations, had forgotten, who and what she was to call herself. At this question, therefore, she was a little confounded. But, recollecting the book she last read, contained the adventures of a disguised princess, who called herself Fitzallen, she instantly adopted that name.

"Aye, I told you so," said the dame, "why that's a great family in other parts, I'll warrant you—

you shall be welcome to a lodging, sure, if you can make a shift to sleep with our Jack here, who is a nice clean lad." Jack was a rosy-faced boy, about her own age, sitting by the fire. But Matilda could not recollect any distressed damsel of high degree, ever sleeping with a peasant boy; and, therefore blushing, she thanked the good woman, and said she preferred sitting up, if they would give her leave, which finding they could not persuade her to sleep with Jack, they agreed to, lamenting they had not a bed

good enough for such a fine young gentleman.

Matilda gladly partook of some refreshment; and while she was eating, the farmer and his wife talked of the strange work there was at Tutbury castle; how it was guarded; and how suspicious every body there was of letters being conveyed to the prisoner.

“What prisoner?” asked Matilda.

“Why, have not you heard?” said the farmer: “It is the Queen of Scotland, that is confined there by our Queen; though,

and that's enough dickens take it, we none of us know for what; howbeit, there she is, the more's the pity."

"What, then," said Matilda to herself, "is my god-mother Queen cruel, too, as well as my parents?"

"Aye," said the dame, "these be strange times; but, as to the Queen of Scotland, you know she's a papish."

"Mayhaps so," replied the farmer, "mayhaps so; but God send her safe out of Tutbury castle, say I!—for my part, I hate to ride by it now she's there."

Matilda could scarcely refrain from tears. After some more conversation, the family went to bed, having put some horse cloths and other things on two chairs, for the young gentleman to repose upon.

CHAP. VII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the poor substitute for a bed which Matilda lay on, she was too much fatigued, not to sleep soundly, and was awoke about five in the morning by Jack, who had business in the stable. She resisted the boy's invitation to stay breakfast, and pursued her journey, though she had no direct place to go to. She asked Jack, which

was the nearest way to the next forest; for she fancied a forest, according to all she had read, could not be destitute of knights, or, perhaps, she might meet with some princess, who, like herself, might be seeking refuge from the tyranny of parents.

Jack gave her the plainest direction he was able; but there was no forest nearer than seven miles, and thither she turned her steps, well pleased with the adventure at the farm, and having escaped particular enquiry.

The morning was charming, and the birds were warbling; at

a distance she heard the ploughman's whistle; she met several milk-maids singing as they went along; and every thing was cheerful. Of one of these maids she, in the most gallant manner she could, requested milk, which was given with a smile, the girl being proud of the preference shewn her by so handsome a young gentleman; and this morning's refreshment enabled Matilda to pursue her way to the forest with more alacrity. According to the route prescribed by Jack, she passed through various fields, and some lanes

which were scented by wild roses and honey suckles, which rendered the road truly delightful. Still she did not meet any body, and she much wondered she did not come within sight of any town or village, which, however, she was determined to avoid as much as possible, except the night compelled her to seek a retreat in some inhabited place.

At last, she saw the forest, in which she was soon, and very willingly lost, because she was certain that she could not long ramble in it without meeting with some adventure that should well

repay her weariness. Having walked a considerable time among the lawns, glades, and thickets, with which nature diversified the ground, without observing any thing, save the birds that flew over her, and the wild deer that ran from her; she sat down on a mossy bank, at the foot of which ran a clear rivulet of water, some of which she contrived to drink, and which refreshed her.

Whilst sitting here, she ruminated on what she should do; and seeing no prospect of meet-

ing with a knight in the forest, she thought of endeavouring to find a way out of it, and, having little doubt that some mansion must be near it, she intended, if there should be a lady in it, to offer herself as a page, and had no doubt of succeeding. There she would continue till some valiant knight, or some great baron should discover who she was, and solicit her in marriage; and him she would send to her father, who would then welcome her home, repent of his cruelty, give her to this dis-

tinguished personage, and there would be a happy end of all her adventures.

Having reposed herself on the bank some time, she was on the point of rising, when she recollected, that though she might not be seen, she might be heard; and she had read of extraordinary occurrences arising from a wandering and lone lady singing in a wood; therefore sat still, and sung a pretty air, with a sweet and melodious voice, which nature had given her, and from her music-master she had imbibed a considerable degree of taste.

THE SONG.

COME, valiant knight, and gentle squire,
Behold a damsel here distress'd;
Far from her home and angry sire,
On mossy bed she seeks her rest.

Wild in the woods she loves to rove,
To sing with birds, with fairies play;
To breathe the perfume of the grove,
And in the flow'ry meadows stray.

But still she hopes 'mong these to find
Some baron bold, or knight of fame,
To soothe her angry father's mind,
And from dishonour shield her name.

The warbling of this song
produced no other effect than
that of making some of the deer
stand at a distance to listen, and

look wildly upon her, which she much wondered at, not knowing that such is the natural effect of music upon those beautiful inhabitants of the forest. She fancied there was something extraordinary in herself, and that the deer had some instinctive feeling for her: so she walked towards two or three that were nearest, holding out her hand, and calling them by some endearing epithet. But from her address, gentle as it was, they flew with the utmost speed, and were soon out of sight.

Matilda now wandered in search of a way to lead her out

of the forest; and chance directed that through a break of trees, she discovered a broad common, and beyond that the spire of a village steeple; and though she did not mean to go to the village, she made towards it, in hope of either meeting with a knight, or discovering some grand house in the vicinity.

Passing the common, the road led her close by a hut, in which she heard a cry that filled her heart with pity. She knocked at the door, which was opened by a poor woman, whose eyes were streaming with tears, fol-

lowed by four small children, all crying as if their hearts would break.

“What is the matter, poor dear woman,” said Matilda, “what makes you weep, and all these pretty children?”

“O, sir!” cried the woman, “the greatest of all calamities; hard as it is to live, and to get food for my children, I cannot bear the loss of one of them!”

“Poor dear!” answered Matilda; “what, then, one of them is dead?”

“Worse! worse!” exclaimed

the woman; “far worse!—my eldest boy is lost!”

“Lost!” re-echoed Matilda.

“Lost!” repeated the woman; “I fear, he is beguiled, or run away—I know not what—his father is gone to seek him, and surely I shall die, if he be not found!”—and then her lamentations became louder than ever.

“I will go and seek him myself,” cried Matilda: “I have nothing else to do, and I will find him.”

“God send you may!” said the woman, in agony. “He is

about your age and size; his hair is flaxen; his cheeks are ruddy; his eyes are grey, and he is clad in a blue jacket."

"Enough," said Matilda; "I am going far and wide, and doubtless, I shall find him"—and away she flew across the common, leaving the poor woman to ponder, whether this was a reality, or the vision of an angel.

Matilda had walked with incredible swiftness upwards of a mile, when she suddenly stopped. Her countenance in a moment became pale; her knees

trembled; and she was near fainting away. She was then in a narrow lane, over which the meeting trees almost formed an arch. She threw herself on the grass. She was overpowered by a sentiment which never before occurred to her.—“O heaven!” said she, “if this poor woman, who has many children, grieves thus for the loss of one, what must my dear parents feel, who have only one, and she”—the reflection was too poignant, and she burst into a flood of tears. As these abated, her grief began to subside, and she to reason

with herself. “This little boy,” said she, “in the first place, is not a baronet’s son; and in the next place, he was not banished from home; and then again, being the son of a poor man, he has no business to seek adventures, but to stay at home to help to maintain his little brothers and sisters. So his case is evidently different from mine; and as I have really commenced an adventure, and don’t know my way home, it is right in me to pursue it till it is completed in the proper way, and till I am relieved, as

other distressed damsels are relieved."

Such was the sophistry Matilda used to deceive herself; and soon forgetting the grief of her parents, she hastened through this lane, where it was not likely she should either meet with a knight, or find the boy.

CHAP. VIII.

PROCEEDING leisurely along, for she was now full of thought, and with her eyes bent on the ground, she had scarcely passed half through the lane, when she saw a paper, which she took up; but observing it was only a short scrap of a letter, put it in her pocket, after slightly running it over, and began to mend her pace.

The termination of the lane presented a view, which awed and astonished her for a moment, and which the trees had before concealed from her notice. It was a castle with large and terrifick towers, that suddenly burst upon her sight. The back of it was shaded by high wood, and the front was at no great distance from the common road. Her first panic having given way to contemplation, she stood for some time looking with a sort of dread amazement on this ancient pile; and at last resolved to approach it, and inquire if there

was any lady in it; and if there was, to offer herself as a page.

Turning out of the road, therefore, she went up to the great gate, and rang at a bell: the sound of it startled her; for it was large, and made a solemn noise, which she fancied echoed through the castle. The wicket gate was opened, and an armed man stood before her. Recollecting the character she had assumed, she exerted her courage, and said, "Deign, great sir, to tell me, are you the lord of this castle?"

“No,” answered the man, gruffly.

Matilda was somewhat daunted, but resuming herself, asked, “Does a lady inhabit it, and may I be permitted to see her?”

“A lady does inhabit the castle, sir,” replied the man; “but whether you may see her, is not for me to answer;”—and rang another bell. Upon this appears a gentleman not clad in armour, and civilly demands of Matilda her pleasure.

“I understand,” said she, “that a lady inhabits this castle, and I

am come to do myself the honour of presenting my services as her page, if perchance she need, and may approve me.”

“It is well,” returned the gentleman, “I will conduct you where you may wait an answer.”

Matilda then entered the castle with him; and he led her through several suits of apartments, till they came to a door, at which the gentleman knocked, and a voice within, desired him to enter. Here sat three personages, who appeared to be noblemen; two of them in armour, and the other in a rich

dress of some order of knight-hood. Matilda was abashed.

“What a lovely youth!” cried one.

“Beautiful as an angel,” another.

“What is your name?” asked a third.

“Fitzallen,” answered Matilda, blushing deeply.

The gentleman, who had conducted her, now explained the purport of her visit.

The nobles looked at one another, and then at Matilda.

“Do you know the lady?” asked one of them.

“No, my lord,” replied Matilda.

“Take the youth to her,” said one of those in arms; “possibly she may know him—but bring him back to us.”

Matilda was now taken thro’ another suit of rooms, having passed which, the gentleman, who accompanied her, rang at a bell, and a door was opened into an antichamber, by another gentleman, who preceded them to the end of the antichamber, and then threw open another door, thro’ which they instantly passed into

a large room, hung with rich tapstry, where sat a lady more beautiful and majestic, than any Matilda had ever read of. It was Mary Queen of Scotland; and this was Tutbury castle. She was sitting at a table, covered with crimson velvet. Her head was reclining on one hand, a book in the other: The gentleman dropped one knee: Matilda had instinctively done the same.

“Please your Majesty, to look on this youth:” said the gentleman, “he is ambitious to be ranked in your service.”

The Queen, with a look of great sweetness, extended her hand, Matilda kissed it.

“Poor youth!” said the Queen, Matilda rising, and the gentleman, who kept his eye fixed on her Majesty—“Poor youth,” said she: “come you to seek for service in a prison?—or are you allied to some of my friends?—r what is your name?”

“Fitzallan,” answered Matilda, trembling and blushing.

“Fitzallan! I know it not. But you are a sweet youth; and if you love melancholy, and the sorrows of a prison, you may re-

main, should you obtain leave of those who command this place."

Saying this, she smiled, and they both withdrew, and Matilda was reconducted to the noblemen. It was the opinion of the gentleman, who had witnessed the interview, that the Queen had no knowledge of this youth; and, after some questions, which were asked Matilda as to her family, which she said were of no note, permission was given, that she might attend her majesty, since it was the Queen's pleasure.

They again withdrew, and Matilda was conducted into another

apartment, where she waited some minutes, when a gentleman in a military uniform, desired her to deliver up whatever papers she had in her possession; with which request, she instantly and readily complied, giving the paper which she had just before found in the lane, and which indeed, was the only paper she had about her. The gentleman ran his eye over it, and then giving her a look, expressive at once of pity and indignation, left her alone, and went to the lords. He produced the paper, which

they saw to be part of a letter addressed to the Queen, and the words were these :

“ Fear not : Heaven itself regards you with pity ; your friends are numerous, and their power encreases. Look to have speedy relief ; and angels have you in their holy keeping !”

They were no sooner read, than Matilda was brought before these Lords.

Fitzallan,” said one of them, sternly, “ how came you by this paper ?”

Matilda related the truth.

“It is strange!” said another; “and yet the appearance of this youth, bespeaks innocence; and I cannot think so divine a form conceals a traitor’s heart. Do you know,” added he, “the lady you have seen?”

Matilda answered in the negative; for she neither knew who she had seen, nor where she was.

“What!” cried the nobleman, “don’t you know that to be the Queen of Scotland?”

“The Queen of Scotland!” repeated Matilda: “is that her Majesty, the Queen of Scotland!”

—and may I be a page to the Queen of Scotland !

“ You shall,” replied one : conduct him back to the Queen, and tell her Majesty, she is at liberty to dispose of this young gentleman as she likes, save, that he must not be permitted to leave the castle.”

Matilda was accordingly reconducted to the Queen. Meanwhile the Lords, who were intent on business of importance, having letters before them of the ministers of Queen Elizabeth, considered the contents of the

part of the letter, which had been found by Matilda; nor were they perfectly satisfied that this youth, this Fitzallan, was not made an instrument to convey secret tidings to queen Mary. But, having ordered him to be detained a prisoner, they concluded no harm could result from his waiting on the queen; and they thought such a young and cheerful companion might lighten the sorrows of the queen, whom, even they, the agents of Elizabeth's cruelty, could not help pitying.

After every conjecture they

could form, they were not able to discover whence the paper came, nor whose hand-writing it was.—It promised speedy succour to Queen Mary; and it therefore behoved them to have the castle well guarded; and they gave orders to that purpose. And it was determined that the paper should be sent to Elizabeth's ministers, who might probably trace the writer.

Having resolved upon these matters, and adjusted their other concerns, the nobles left the castle, with a strict charge not to let the young Fitzallan pass

the walls. And they gave particular directions to Gawin, the gentleman, who conducted Matilda to the Queen, to observe the conduct and manners of both; and to learn, if possible, the purport of their private conversations.

CHAP. IX.

THE wishes of Matilda were now completely gratified.—She was in a situation extremely befitting a damsel of romance. She was disguised as a boy, and acting as a page to a captive Queen, who gave her some rich dresses suitable to her character. The next thing she concluded must happen, of course, was, that a thousand knights would come

and release the Queen; that in the rencontre, her own sex and name would be discovered; and that the boldest and the handsomest of all those knights, after releasing her from some imminent danger, would demand her in marriage of the Earl her father. She entertained no doubt on this subject, and was therefore as cheerful as her compassion for the Queen would permit her.

Her majesty, for the first week, treated her with coolness, but great civility, thinking that, under pretence of supplying her

with a beautiful page, the young Fitzallan was placed near her as a spy upon her actions. But she was soon undeceived by the propensity which Matilda had, and could not check, to talking of the castle being attacked by knights and barons, to relieve her royal mistress; and how charming it would be to have masks and tournaments, and balls, when they came to the Queen's palace in Scotland.

The Queen often let her run on thus, without noticing her further than by a smile at her simplicity, and many a heart-

felt wish that this were any other than the child of romance. Her incessant attentions and affection at length won much upon her Majesty, who began to listen with pleasure to the stories which, for her amusement, she would often repeat from the books she had read. The Queen plainly perceived that these romances had affected the child's imagination, and that there was nothing wrong about the heart. So that Fitzallan was almost constantly with her. But her Majesty was still more pleased, when she found her page could dis-

course, and tell her stories in the French language, to which the Queen was particularly attached, having been educated in, and being one of the greatest beauties of the French court. Added to this, her beautiful page could sing several French songs very sweetly, and amuse the Queen by playing on such musical instruments as were then most admired.

One day, after Matilda had indulged herself in talking of the Queen's release from the castle in the most romantic manner, she said, "If your Majesty

pleases, I will go upon the hill in the park, every morning to give you notice, when the knights are coming; for their arms and plumes will shine so bright and beautiful at a great distance, that I shall easily discern them; and I would not for the world, be the last to bring your Majesty good tidings."

"The Queen smiled, and told her, that it might be well for her health, to breathe the air of the park every morning.

"Well, but," answered Matilda, "perhaps they may be

coming this moment, and if you please, I will run and see."

The Queen nodded with a smile, and Matilda was soon at the castle gate, and rang the inner bell. The man in arms, whom she had first seen, appeared. She wanted to go into the park.

"The park!" said the guard; "why the Lords have ordered you to be detained; you are a prisoner in the castle—you must not quit the walls."

"A prisoner!" cried Matilda, turning pale; "why, what have

“I done? besides, I am the Queen’s page, and her Majesty desired me to walk in the park.”

“It’s no matter,” replied the guard: “you cannot pass this gate, without a special order from the keeper of the castle.”

Poor Matilda, returning sad and dejected through the castle, met Gawin. The tears stood in her eyes. He inquired what was the cause of them. “They will not let me walk in the park, though I am the Queen’s page, and she desires it.”

This excited some suspicion in Gawin, who ordered her to be

searched; imagining that the Queen had given the page letters to convey to some of her friends. Nothing was found, and Matilda was permitted to return to her Majesty, which she did with streaming eyes, and sobbing with grief.

“What, my sweet page, is the matter with thee?” asked the Queen.

“O, dear your Majesty, I am a prisoner, and they will not let me go to look for the knights.”

“A prisoner!” exclaimed the Queen, “and did they tell you for what?”

Matilda related all that had passed.

“ Poor, dear, lovely innocent !” cried the Queen : “ thou seest what it is to love and befriend the Queen of Scotland. But thou shalt not be prisoner long : I will send to the Queen of England, to order the restoration of thy liberty.”

“ O, no,” said Matilda, recovering herself : “ I will not go till the knights come to release your Majesty ; and then, how proudly I shall walk by that ugly man at the castle-gate !”

The Queen could not help

smiling, and the matter dropped for the present; but the next day, her pity for the child, induced her to renew it.

“ I cannot think,” she said, “ that the Queen of England, would refuse to release my sweet little page, on my application, though I should be sorry to lose his company.”

“ O, no, madam,” replied Matilda; “ I am sure the Queen of England would not refuse to release me, because she is my god-mother.

“ Your god-mother, child !” exclaimed the Queen, with the

utmost consternation: “ your god-mother, Fitzallan ! — what do you mean ? ”

The word had escaped her lips, and was not to be recalled. Matilda was confounded. She changed colour several times ; and the Queen now thought her first conjecture was right, that this youth was set as a spy upon her.

Matilda fell on her knees before the Queen. “ Indeed, Madam, said she, I ask a thousand pardons for calling myself Fitzallan, and dressing like a page ; but it is just what I read of other young ladies

doing ; and I thought I had a right to do so too ; being kept so long, and so far from my parents, with a governess in an almost desolate house.”

“ Rise,” said the Queen, “ and tell me then who you are. ”

She answered, I am Matilda Colvin, the daughter and only child of Sir Lancelot.”

“ Indeed !” cried the Queen, “ rash girl ! what have you done ? Tell me the whole of your conduct, and your motives. Your father being honoured with the friendship of the English Queen,

you know not what consequences may arise from your indiscretion.”

Matilda wept; but the Queen comforted her, assuring her, that she was not angry with her, seeing that what she had done was in pure ignorance. Matilda then related minutely the particulars of her little history, and having finished, the Queen spoke to her as follows:

“ This simple and candid account of yourself, gives us great satisfaction. I trust, that you will henceforth renounce the errors which you have imbibed from

reading those romances, which were never intended for instruction, but merely for amusement. So far from having any utility, they are dangerous; and you yourself an example of their baneful influence. You may always suspect the tendency of those books; and should beware of their principles, by which you are inclined to forego any of the duties you owe to God, your parents, your neighbours, and yourself. You have been induced in the most wild and extravagant manner, to violate the express order of your father, which you had no

sooner done, than you felt the maxim verified, which you tell me made such an impression on your mind; that obedience to parents never fails of a blessing; nor disobedience of a curse! Now the disobedience may extend further than you can possibly be aware. You are yourself a helpless captive, in the service of a captive and helpless being, exposed to the cruelty, and labouring under the hatred of your father's best and most powerful friend, and your own godmother. The disobedience of a single command, has plung-

ed you in this calamity, from which, I fear, I shall find it difficult to extricate you."

"Indeed, madam," said Matilda, the tears standing in her eyes, "I should love to have my father's forgiveness; but I had rather stay and be a prisoner with your Majesty, than go any where."

"Dear simple girl!" replied the Queen; "your attachment affects me; but you must prepare to depart; and I hope, laying aside your romantic notions and projects, you will always re-

member the captive Queen of Scotland in your prayer."

Her Majesty requested to be left alone, and Matilda retired in tears.

CHAP. X.

THE Queen of Scotland briefly wrote the particulars of Matilda's story, which she caused to be dispatched to one of Elizabeth's secretaries, and entreated that Matilda might be released from Tutbury castle. This letter was immediately laid before the Queen of England, as were all other papers that related to the Queen of Scot-

land. Elizabeth instantly ordered that Matilda should be brought to London, and examined before the privy council. For the paper which had been found upon her, and her being in the service of Mary, so aroused the suspicions of Elizabeth, that she began to suspect the loyalty of even Sir Lancelot himself. After a very affecting farewell between the captive Queen and Matilda, the latter was hurried up to London, and soon found herself standing before the privy council. She was still dressed as a page, in one of

the dresses given her by the Queen of Scotland. She was sharply interrogated as to the manner of her coming by the paper, which promised succours to Mary, and which was now shewn to her. She persisted in the same relation, nor could any cross examination make her falter from the truth. One of the Lords of the council said in French, thinking she did not hear, or understand him, that the Queen of Scotland had taught her the story, and how to stick to it.

That Lord, and the rest, however, were much amazed, when

Matilda, whose feelings were hurt at this insinuation, said aloud in French, "It is base, my Lord, to asperse my truth, or suppose me capable of uttering falsehood, even though it were to serve the captive Queen, who is herself as incapable of suggesting, as I of pronouncing that which is not true.—" My Lords!" added she, the blush of indignation covering her face, "it would better become you to send a thousand knights to conduct the suffering Queen to her own kingdom, and seat her on her own throne, than question

the truth or loyalty of Sir Lancelot Colvin's daughter!"

This spirited address astonished and displeased the council, and they ordered Matilda to be conveyed from their presence, and kept under a guard.

Immediate communication of what had passed, was made to the Queen of England, who began more than ever to suspect Sir Lancelot Colvin, and directed an order to be made, and have him arrested for high treason. The order was accordingly made, and speedily executed.

Messengers were dispatched to Colvin-hall, with a warrant to bring Sir Lancelot before the council. Ever since the loss of their daughter, Sir Lancelot and Lady Colvin had suffered so much, that their health was much impaired. They seldom went out, or saw any company; and Colvin hall appeared more like the retreat of misery than the residence of a baronet, hospitable and cheerful as Sir Lancelot had always heretofore been.

When the officers arrived, Sir Lancelot inquired of them the nature of his offence; and was

not alarmed, because he was conscious of his own integrity. To his inquiries no reply was made, but that he must, with all speed, go before the council, which was then sitting. Sir Lancelot acquiesced without murmur; and in two days he was in the council chamber. The paper which Matilda had found, was produced, of which Sir Lancelot denied having any knowledge; and requested to know, why he was supposed to have any knowledge of it, as the writer? His accuser they

said, should directly confront him.

The door was thrown open, and Matilda arrayed in female apparel, suddenly appeared before her father. She shrieked, and sunk into the arms of the young Lord Howard, who being an elegant and fascinating young nobleman, had been sent to talk with, and sound her, and who now accompanied her to the council chamber. Sir Lancelot, astonished and overjoyed, flew to embrace his daughter, who, recovering, threw herself

on her knees before him, entreating his forgiveness.

This created great confusion in the council, and excited the particular curiosity of all the Lords present. The tumult being subsided, and the Lords having resumed their seats, Sir Lancelot asked, if the daughter whose disappearance had occasioned him so much grief, was his accuser?

He was desired to explain how she became the page of Queen Mary?

Sir Lancelot, still more amaz-

ed, looked to Matilda for an explanation.

“I am grieved and ashamed,” she said, “that my inexperience and folly should have involved a doubt of my father’s loyalty; and, if I might be permitted, I would relate, with the utmost veracity, all I have done, and all I know.”

A chair was ordered; and Sir Lancelot, so well known to be particularly befriended by Queen Elizabeth, was desired to sit, while his daughter, in a plain and simple manner, related how she had been misled by books

of romance, to act as she had done, with all the particulars of her conduct; the behaviour of the Queen of Scotland to her; the excellent advice she had received from her; and her final resolution always to submit to her father's pleasure, and, in future to prove his obedient and affectionate child.

The council listened with attention and delight; and the young Lord Howard was enraptured. Sir Lancelot and Matilda were dismissed, mutually happy in this unexpected, tho' in some degree, painful meeting.

Lord Howard flew directly to the Queen, and recounted to her Majesty all that had passed, protesting, that Miss Colvin was something more than mortal.

“Why, my Lord,” said Elizabeth, “you are in love with the girl!”

“Your Majesty says true,” replied the young lord; and I shall be miserable till I have your Majesty’s and her father’s consent to call her Lady Howard.”

“For shame, my Lord!” cried the Queen: “you are but children, and must be sent to school.”

“Your Majesty’s court shall

be my school," answered Lord Howard, "and Miss Colvin my Goddess."

"Get along, madcap!" said the Queen, "and bring her and Sir Lancelot to me."

The young nobleman was not long in executing this command; and the Queen most graciously received Sir Lancelot and Miss Colvin. Her Majesty was charmed with the address and conversation of Matilda, and declared that she had almost a mind to make a page of her again.

"A maid of honour, if it

please your Majesty!" cried Lord Howard.

"Sir Lancelot," said the Queen, "beware of this young madcap; he declares he will make my god-daughter Lady Howard."

Matilda blushed, and thought she never saw so handsome a young man.

Sir Lancelot expressed his acknowledgements to Lord Howard for his politeness.

"Well," said the Queen, "I think a year's probation will try them; and if this marriage must take place, as they say marriages

are made in Heaven, I will again visit Colvin-hall, and witness my god-daughter's receiving the hand of a young man, who, I hope and believe will merit her heart."

Sir Lancelot and Matilda now retired, and returned to Colvin-hall, where Lady Colvin was overjoyed again to behold her daughter. The ensuing year, during which Lord Howard made them many visits, was soon elapsed. The Queen with the chief nobles and ladies of her court, again visited Colvin-hall, when the nuptials were solem-

nized between the gallant Lord Howard, and the beautiful Matilda. The joyous festivities and amusements which distinguished the christening, were repeated on the marriage of Miss Colvin; and the Queen and her train passed there many days in the enjoyment of all these pleasures, leaving the young Lord and Lady in the possession of every happiness, and patterns of every virtue.

FINIS.

