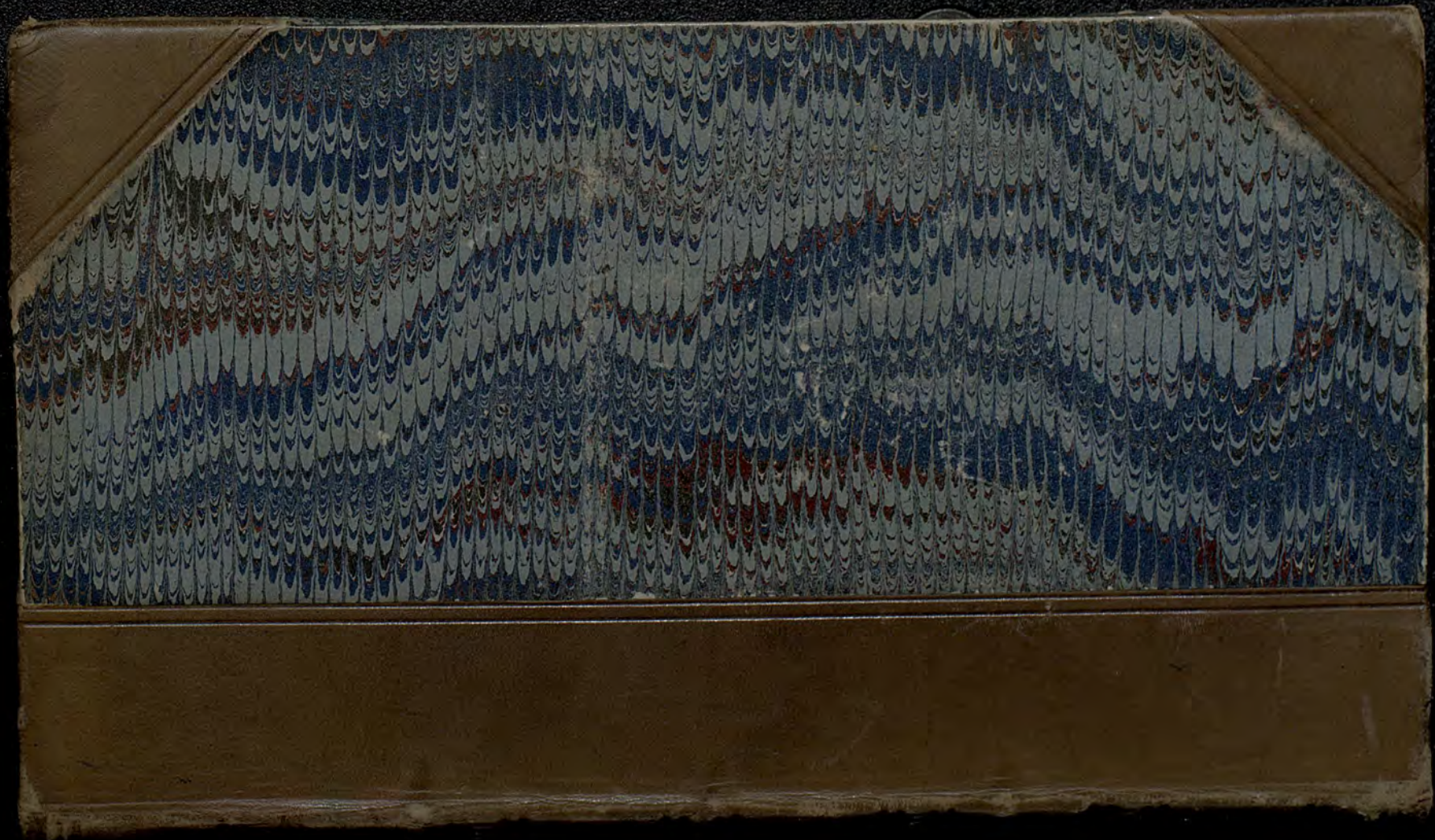

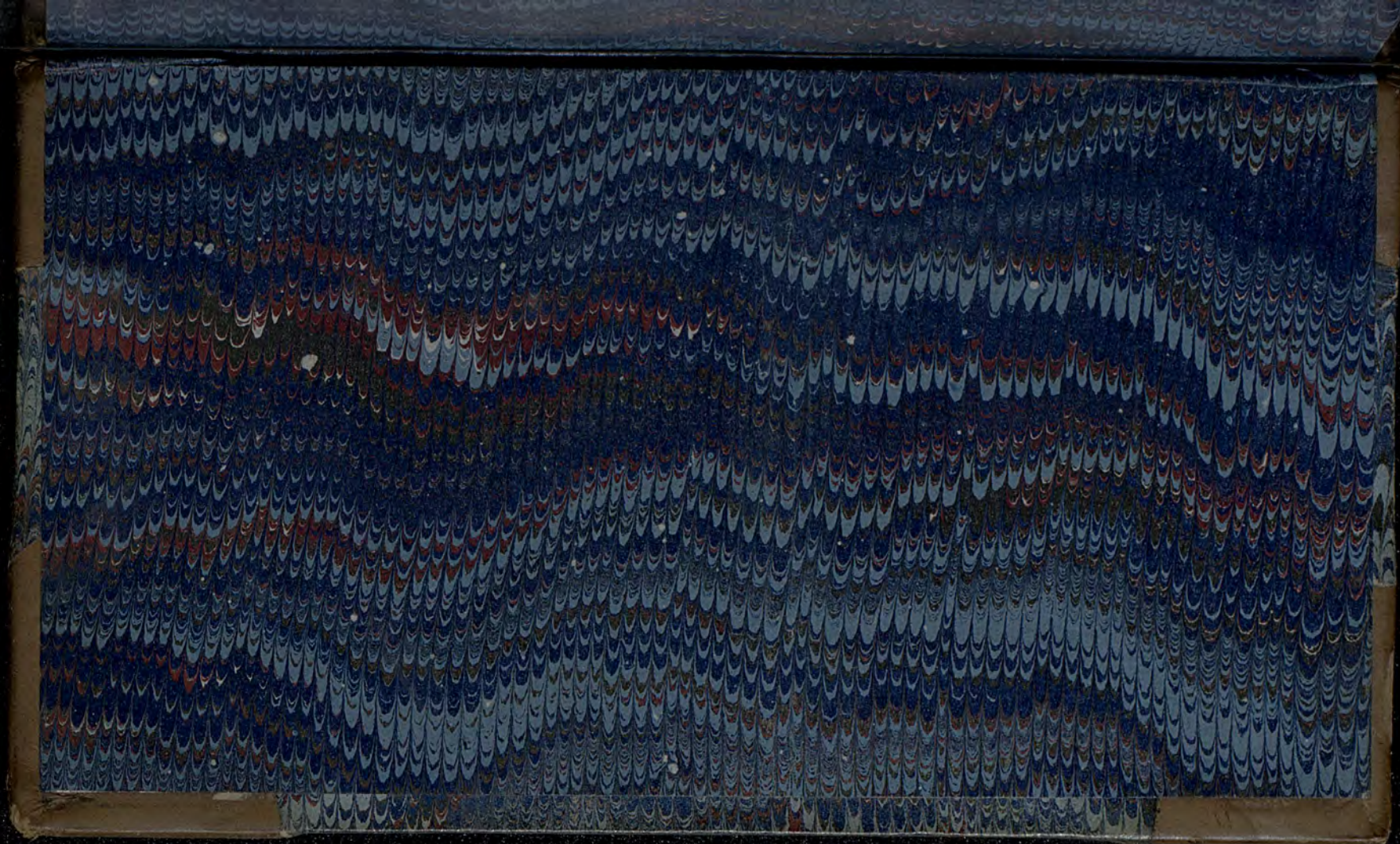

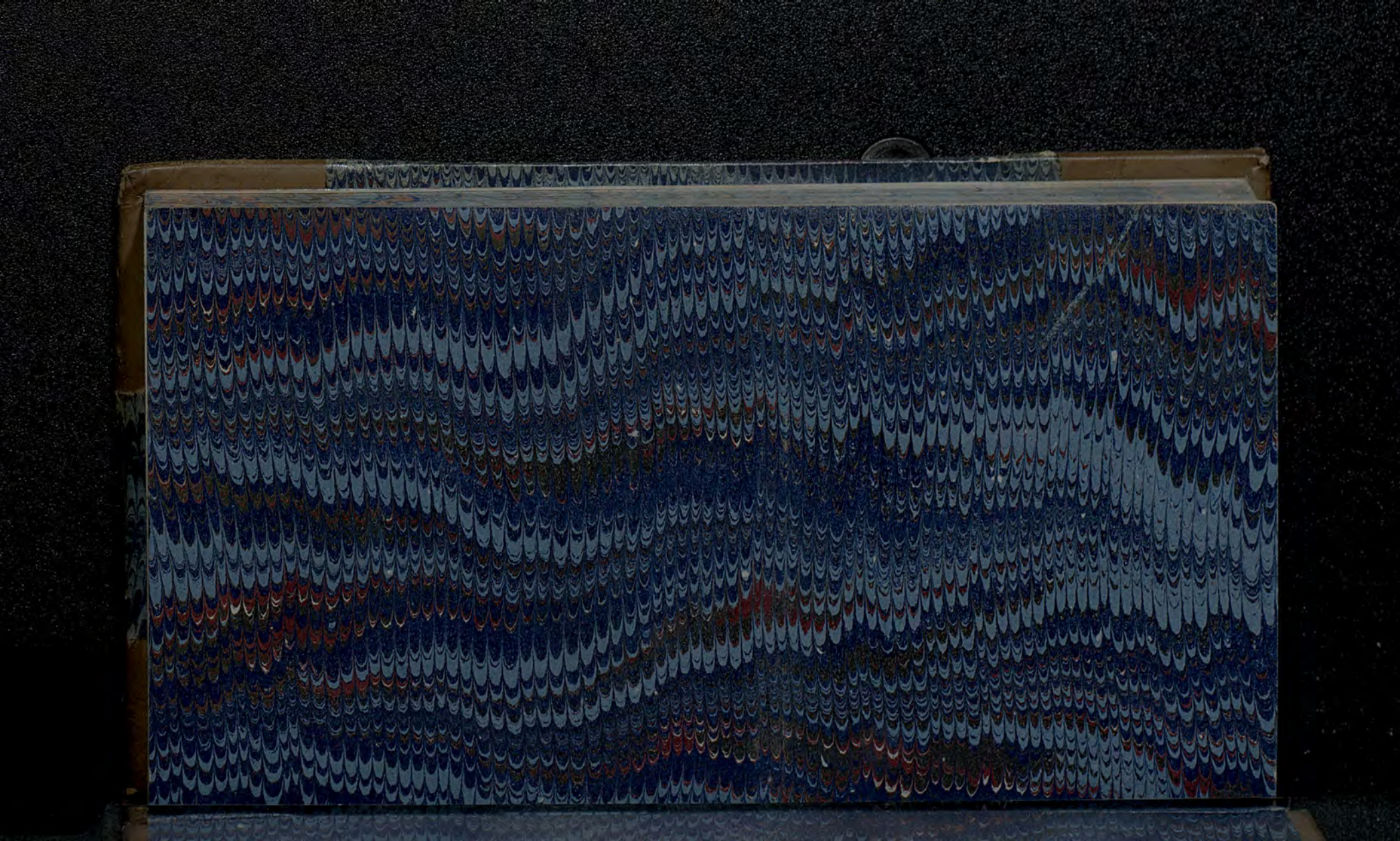

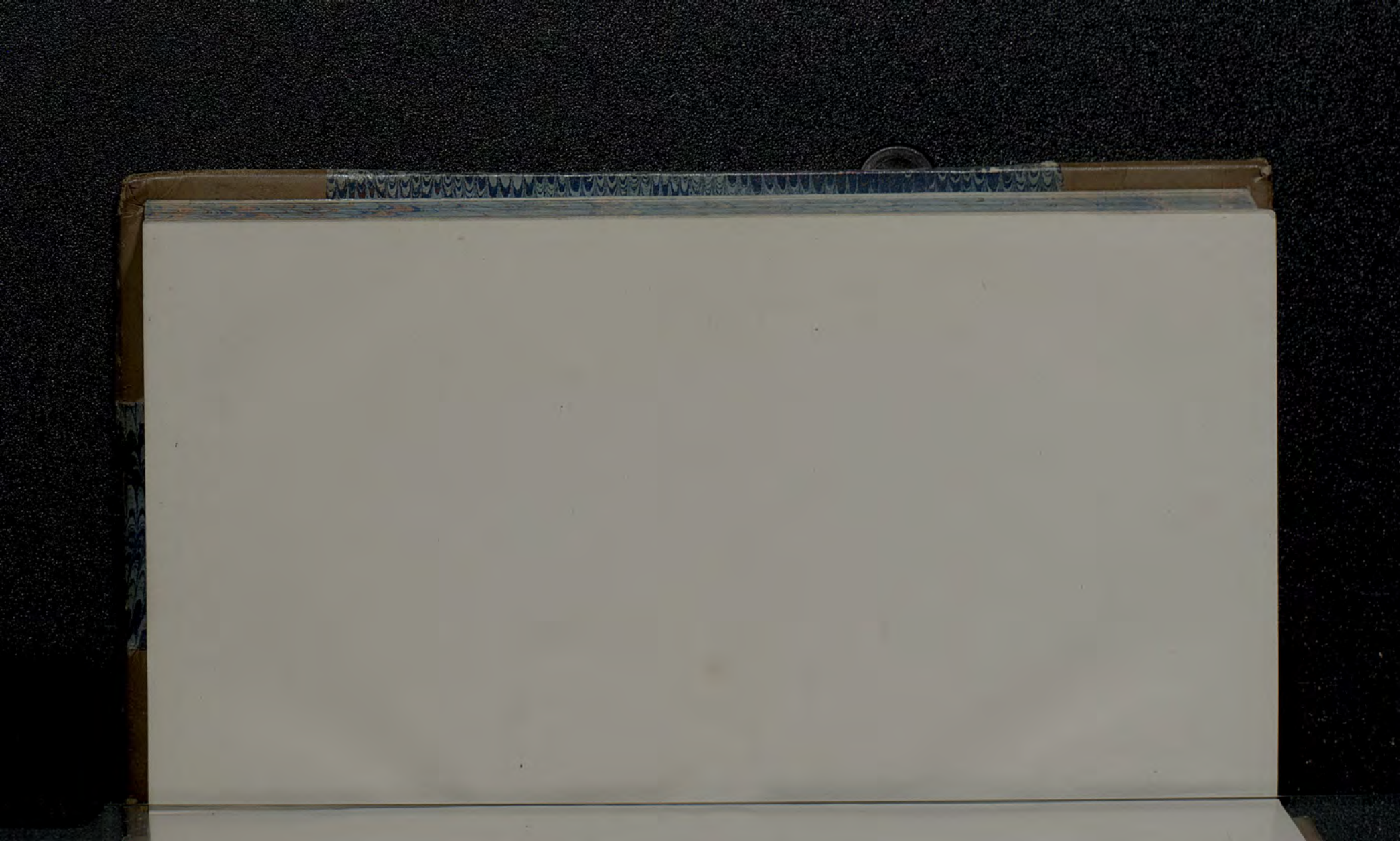

DECISION.

H. Corbould delt.

E. Finden sc.

"Go away, girl—"

Page 228.

Pubd. by Longman, Hurst & Co. Paternoster Row, Novr. 8 1824.

DECISION.

A Tale.

By Mrs. HOFLAND,

AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY A TALE, PATIENCE A TALE,
THE SON OF A GENIUS; TALES OF THE PRIORY;
TALES OF THE MANOR, &c. &c.

"First know that thy principles are just, and then be thou inflexible in the path of them."

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1824.

DECISION.

CHAPTER I.

More than half a century has now elapsed, since a party assembled round the tea-table of Mrs. Falconer, were busy in commenting on the conduct, and lamenting the ruin of one of their acquaintance, once a wealthy manufacturer in the neighbouring town of B——.

The topic was discussed, (as such things usually are) with different views of the case, according to the original characters, or the relative situations of the speakers, nearly all of whom had in their own persons, or their connections, some sympathies with the party, except the lady of the house, whose attention was at this moment given rather to the hospitable attentions due to her guests, than the subject of their discussion; but her little daughter, a child of about eleven years old, who was generally too much of a romp to

confine herself in the drawing room, yet too intelligent to suffer any thing interesting to escape her when there, was observed to glance her bright eye from one speaker to another, and shake back the profusion of long ringlets which covered her neck, with an eagerness to catch every sound, that indicated how much her mind was employed on the subject.

"Mr. Williams was imprudent, he trusted the house of Burns and Son too far, lost a great deal, and could never recover it," said one.

"How should he?" said another, "since the expenses of his family were not lessened, and they were just at that period, when young people are inevitably expensive.

"Yes, indeed—they kept much company, dressed well, and were seen every where," observed a third—"Had Mrs. Williams been prudent, I think something might have been done to save them from this total overthrow."

"Poor woman!" exclaimed a Mrs. Brice, who was herself the mother of a large family, "what could *she* do I wonder? whilst we live in the world, we must mix with the world; and the petty savings she could have made

by any system of more rigid economy, at a time when her young people were forming connections, and getting out in the world, could not overbalance the remarks to which she would have subjected them—indeed such conduct would have injured her husband's credit, and brought on his ruin sooner."

"So much the better," said several gentlemen; but the lady continued her assertions.

"Say what you please, but there are a thousand little things one must do, and must have, which strictly speaking, are not necessary—every wife must seek to sustain her husband's credit; every mother must set off her children, and see them maintain their due rank in society; to my own knowledge, Mrs. Williams was a good manager, and never spent a guinea, or ventured on any extra expenditure, but where it was *imperatively* called for."

The warmth and feeling with which this was uttered, by a woman who was a model of propriety in her own conduct, silenced, even where it did not convince, and murmuring sounds of pity were succeeding those of blame, when a cynical bachelor who had not

yet spoken, cried out in a tone yet more decisive than the lady's,

"Fiddle faddle!—there is no thing *imperative* but *duty*."

In another moment, the lately ebbing flow of words returned, and amounted almost to clamourous opposition of Mr. Elderton's assertion, "it is fine talking!" "what can a bachelor know about a family?" "harsh judgments ill become the fortunate," were heard on all sides, and so many condemnatory sentences, and more condemnatory glances, were thrown on the gentleman, that he became an object of pity to the child, who repeated his words over to herself to examine whether they were in themselves offensive, or rendered so by the sharp, and somewhat contemptuous tone in which they were uttered—the result of this examination induced her to believe that the sentiment was right, for it accorded with all her mamma had taught her—she drew near to his chair, and after a short hesitation, said—"then what ought Mr. and Mrs. Williams to have done?"

Mr. Elderton was not aware from whom the soft female voice proceeded, but he an-

swered with that quickness, and promptitude, which rendered his manners too frequently unpleasant. "Since they had lost money and become poor, they should have resolved at once to *seem* poor, have reduced their establishment, directed the views of their children to situations more humble, but of course more easily attained, by which means, they would have secured assistance from their industry, instead of increased expense from their unwarranted accomplishments. They should have stepped down a little lower in life, until they were able to regain their place honourably, instead of holding it in misery by ruinous expedients, until they were thrown far, *far* below it."

When Mr. Elderton ceased speaking, he became aware who had been his questioner, and that the smile of derision had banished the frown of anger from several countenances. Sensible that he had spoken in too grave a tone, when replying to so young and playful a querist, his countenance changed, he drew her kindly towards him, and said, half whisperingly, "well Maria, how much of my long speech do you remember?"

"I remember it all, tho' I can't repeat it."

"And how much of it do you understand?"

"A great deal, sir; and I hope—I intend"——

"To listen to my advice—hey?"

"Indeed I do—I will say to myself every morning, 'duty is *imperative*.'"

"Very good—but Maria, pray what are the *imperative* duties, which you are, I take it, at this very moment prescribing to that little curious heart of yours?"

Maria's countenance answered in the first instance by a deep blush, but on casting her eyes around, and perceiving that every person was engaged with talking, or tea-drinking, her tongue also found the power of reply, and she answered,

"I think it is my duty not to lament dear Sharon-Lacey, in Ireland, and the pretty gardens, and the hounds, and the people—and not to run about so wildly—nor play by ear instead of notes, and to take more pains in reading French."

"And how will you manage to fulfil this very good catalogue of your present duties?"

"How? why by setting a good *resolution*, by doing every thing in the world that can make my mamma happy. Is that the meaning of all you said?"

"Precisely—you have given even a better comment, than Trim's on the fifth commandment, upon my opinion—ha, ha, ha! you are a good girl, a very good girl, I will teach you German next year, you shall read Goëthe and Gesner some time, that you shall, Maria."

Mr. Elderton's mother was a German; as a merchant, his connections lay principally in that country, to which he had long made annual visits, and for which he was thought to have an over-weening partiality. Maria had learnt sufficient of these circumstances, to make her aware, that, in his opinion, the praise given was high, and the offer made valuable, and she was at that happy age when all such offers are literally construed; she thanked him eagerly and warmly—placing, as she spoke, both her hands in his, by way of sealing the contract, as well as claiming the promise; for she conceived, though she could not define it, an idea that she was to fulfil her own duties according to her own sense of them, and to be rewarded by the friendship, and the instruction of Mr. Elderton.

The party around, and indeed the whole circle of their acquaintance, would have said

poor Elderton, a confirmed bachelor, with harsh features, repelling voice, stiff curled queu wig, full suit of buckram-lined brown, and a whole train of foreign peculiarities, and unbending brusquerie about him, was the last man on earth to attach a child—especially a child of Maria's description; a gay, spoilt, laughter-loving little Hebe, with all the naivetè and untamed drollery of a wild Irish girl, tempered alone by that ardent sensibility of nature, and enthusiastic love of her parents, which might be supposed to render the cold lessons and severe countenance of her grave friend peculiarly appalling.

Yet it is certain that from this time Maria did hold Mr. Elderton's memory in most affectionate respect—she was insensibly flattered, by thinking that he thought her worthy a rational answer, and feeling the force of his assertions. She was a child of strong mind and vivid conceptions. Till within a few months, she might have been said to exist only on her heart, which had expanded its young and glowing affections on every living thing in its circle, which were loved and nourished by her with an intensity of regard, that made her soon acquainted not less with

sorrow, than joy. But at this period, her mind was claiming to be heard also, the change of situation, the increase of company, and the distinctness of character that company bore; above all, the diminished stile of her father's household, and the frequent solicitude on her mother's mild countenance, alike led her to *think*. It is, however, certain that no previous circumstance or conversation, had ever induced so many reflections in Maria's mind, as those of the present evening, and there were times when she was on the point of saying to her mother—"Why have we only two men instead of five? and two horses instead of four?—is it the custom in England for gentlemen to have counting houses, instead of hunting parties, or are we beginning to be poor like Mr. Williams?" but unbounded tenderness, and intuitive delicacy forbade her to speak, and she happily turned her meditations to those objects in her own education, which a prudent and elegant mother was constantly pointing out to her attention.

CHAP. II.

Mr. Falconer was, or rather had been, a country gentleman in the north of Ireland, where his ancestors had long flourished in the midst of an attached tenantry, thankful for their residence, and proud of their merit. His father, it is true, had early in life made a trip to Bath, which occasioned a mortgage on his estate, but he brought thence a wife whose future fortunes repaired it, and he determined in consequence of this error, to bring up this his only son at home, and so imbue his mind with the love of his country, so satisfy his desire of pleasure by the indulgences he would procure him, that the mania of spending his estate in England, which was even then a very prevalent one, should never affect the head of his beloved Carlos.

Year after year passed on, and the cares of parental solicitude appeared to attain their object. The youth became unrivalled as a sportsman, seldom sighed even for a winter in

Dublin, and had the further merit of entering with the utmost ardour into the various schemes for bettering his estates, which now employed the riper years of his father—so that what with following hounds, or birds; raising fences, or destroying them, draining bogs, irrigating commons, clearing rough land, cultivating meadows, feeding cattle, netting fish, dancing at balls of all kinds, riding to meetings of all descriptions,—aiding his father to entertain the gentleman, and his mother to amuse the ladies; Carlos was fully employed, and although he always "kept moving," in a more extended sense,

"He ne'er had changed, or wished to change his place."

A terrible accident deprived Mr. Falconer of his excellent father, a few months after his minority had passed, and might be said to give his mother a death-blow at the same time; since she never afterwards recovered her spirits, or enjoyed her health. To assist her efforts, they now made a trip to England, crossing to Chester, and thence proceeding to Blackpool where they remained some time. Here the sorrows of the truly mourning son were consoled by the passion which a beautiful

orphan inspired, who was then lamenting the death of her mother, and had been brought by her guardian to this place for that change of scene, and relief of mind, which they also sought.

Carlos was handsome, frank, ingenuous, attentive, and at this period interesting in no common degree—he was also of ancient family, unsullied character, large, independent property; of course the young creature to whom he paid his devoirs, and who was scarcely more than a child, and her prudent guardian were alike pleased with him, and *his* mother was not less pleased with *them*. The only deficiency of good in this case, was the want of some difficulty to conquer, some trouble to go through, by which the busy, bustling, active Carlos could be employed. A journey with the guardian over great part of North Wales, followed by another to Sharon-Lacey, supplied this deficiency, after which the truly impatient bridegroom had the felicity of conducting his bride thither also, who, even then, had not attained her sixteenth year.

Mrs. Falconer was exquisitely beautiful, but so delicate that she resembled an exotic plant

unfit to bear change to a less genial atmosphere; and it soon became evident to her idolizing husband and his tender mother, that the wide hospitalities so long established at Sharon-Lacey, could not be sustained by her. In consequence, to a certain degree they were diminished; but as Mr. Falconer was not a reading man, in proportion as he was withdrawn from company, he engaged the more in field sports, which pursuit gave way by degrees to a passion for *improvement*, which he pushed without the knowledge attained by experience, or even connected with the theories offered by others, to an extent which soon became alarming, and combined with previous circumstances to bring his mother to the grave, at the period when her jointure became necessary for his relief.

By this time he had become immersed in schemes which took such entire possession of his mind, that he might be said to grow rich in imagination, in proportion as he was poor in purse; and his young wife listened with artless, unquestioning simplicity, to his golden dreams for a considerable time, happy in his happiness, and more than contented with the personal comforts, and unsparing indulgen-

cies, with which his love and his thoughtlessness alike supplied her. The sorrows and death of his mother, and his eager appropriation of that mother's property, notwithstanding his sincere regret, opened her eyes, and she endeavoured to win him from pursuing phantoms which might end in ruin; and, as it was necessary for them both to visit England on account of her coming of age, she appeared to have every prospect of succeeding in her wishes.

A large sum of money in the funds, and an extensive, ancient, but not very productive estate, were now put into the hands of this young couple, and unhappily the wedding settlement of the lady was also entrusted to her own keeping. Mr. Falconer entered on his new possessions with apparent wisdom, for he stopped suddenly all his former projects whether good or bad, made a considerable reform in his establishment, observing (perhaps justly) "that a rich man may do, what a poor one dare not," and then bade his wife farewel, and returned again to her property in Wales.

He had taken it into his head that a mountain on this estate, whose only merit had

hitherto been that of a sheep walk, would prove to him a mine rich as Peruvia's in the product of iron ore, and so much was he bent on this pursuit, that he resolved to sacrifice every other scheme for its attainment.

To this end, he now resigned the company of a lovely and beloved wife, who was to him, and found in him, all the relations of life, and the endearing prattle of a sweet infant, in whose very appearance he would have found a useful monitor, reminding him of her claims as the heir of two ancient inheritances, and as a female unallied and unprotected save by himself.

But alas! every schemer is a gambler, not originally moved by the same avarice, but certainly acted upon by the same impetus. Falconer in domestic life was a warm friend, a generous master, a noble landlord, an affectionate husband; but when he escaped that sacred circle, his prevailing passion exerted over him the influence ascribed to demoniac possession, and carried him "whithersoever it would." There was no fatigue too great for him to encounter, no scheme too wild for him to adopt, if it forwarded his end, and by the same rule no expense too exorbitant for him

to adventure. So much "had appetite increased e'en by the meat it fed on," that in changing the subject, he only confirmed the propensity, which by this time had nearly swallowed up every other predilection, and become not less his amusement than his business.

Iron ore was indeed found, but it produced no golden harvest, and required a larger capital than our unfortunate projector could now command, and as the working of his mine naturally led him to an acquaintance with those who were likely to purchase iron, he became necessarily much connected with that town in which the most was consumed, and after the lapse of a few years formed a partnership with two persons whom he justly conceived better acquainted with the commercial part of his undertaking than himself. These years had been spent by Mrs. Falconer in great anxiety, and comparative solitude, for she had been without the company of him whom she held as dear to her heart, as attractive to her sight, as he had ever been. It will be naturally concluded, that in such a situation her child had enjoyed a paramount place in the consideration of the young mother,

and, that although in some respects blameably indulged, yet as being the constant companion and pupil of her mother, the partaker of her cares and charities—her gentle controul over numerous dependants, her hospitable receptions of noble and enlightened visitants, she had imbided an exercise of heart and understanding, an attachment to her mother which went beyond the common ties of nature, as they are felt by affectionate children in general.

The hurrying visits of Mr. Falconer to his own house, the deep solicitude too generally impressed at this period upon his countenance, and the consternation in which all around appeared left, after his departure, would undoubtedly have tended to render his presence productive of pain, rather than pleasure to Maria, if she had not witnessed the more than happiness with which her mamma beheld him, and the overwhelming sorrow which followed his departures, and which she attributed simply to the fact of his going to England, which she therefore considered a very naughty place, and reprobated with all the warmth of her country and the simplicity of her age.

At length the time arrived when it became

necessary for them all to remove thither—Sharon-Lacey, long mortgaged to its utmost value, became the property of one who had freely supplied the speculating improver to this very end, and consoled himself at those moments when his conscience reproved him for the removal of an old and highly estimated family, by observing "that as there was no son, the name of Falconer would in the course of a few years inevitably perish, and antedating that event was of no great moment."

When the time came the heart of Falconer was indeed wounded, but he felt called upon as a husband to support his wife, who, although willing to return to her native country under circumstances of diminished importance, and desirous of embracing any situation which secured his society, could not witness the bitter sorrow of her Irish peasantry and hear the lamentations of her servants, without acute suffering. Rich and poor, old and young, poured in upon them with that genuine fulness of sympathy, that mixed language of grief, reproach and intreaty, which spoke an interest in their future welfare, a remembrance of past favours, and indignation towards their supposed enemies,

indicating all the intense feelings that agitate the genuine Irishman, and which the present circle felt they had the more right to express, because Mr. Falconer had been destined from his birth to live and die amongst them by his still lamented father.

Yet a sense of what was due to "his honour," in what they deemed "his day of sorrow," and still more their deep respect for his gentle lady, somewhat restrained their intrusion, but whilst the aged people hung round their horses' necks, and the young ones sought, by rendering themselves useful, to show the last fond services of hearts which could only endure their feelings by expressing them through some medium; many gathered round the child, on whom they gazed with an admiration that was almost idolatry, and deplored, as if she were a victim appointed to sacrifice.

"Ah! it's little your honoured grandfather looked to such a day as this my swate crature!—but its like ye'll come back to your place lady in due time, an then you'll remember the childer if my head be laid—becase they're all your own to the thing in my arms—look up Sheely dare and make your obadience to miss."

"Hold your tongue, wife, what for would ye brake the heart o' the angel? is'nt the eyes of her running over all day wi laving the birds, and the hounds, and the childer, and the foals, that she fed wi her own beautiful hands—oh! blessing on the hour she'll reign over us."

If those who help us in the day of distress are dear to us, still more dear are those we have assisted, and as poor little Maria heard the blessings called on her head, from lips that had hailed her approach on the bed of sickness, or in the hour of want, she felt as if they were so dear to her, so entwined with her earliest recollections, and her happiest moments, that her very heart was breaking under the pain of separation.

Indeed she was so terribly affected at the last, that Mr. Falconer was obliged to carry her in his arms to the carriage, and nothing less powerful than the sight of her mother's tears, could have induced her to make the efforts to overcome her sorrow, necessary for her own health and the comfort of her alarmed parents. Novelty of scene at length roused that curiosity so natural to her age, and succeeded in effecting the cure of her

grief, yet it was by slow degrees, and with many relapses, that she returned to that composure of spirits which enabled her to enjoy the new, and, of course, attractive scenes which were offered in their journey from Scotland (where they landed) to the distant town of B——.

Mr. Falconer had with due attention to the health, habits, and taste of his lady, procured her a house about two miles out of town, which had been very handsomely furnished by the cares of Mrs. Ingalton, his partner's wife; was surrounded by the necessary appendages of a gentleman's house on a small scale, and certainly possessed in its narrow bounds many comforts, and even elegances, which would have been looked for in vain either in the old rambling manor house where she was born in Wales, or the turretted, but of late neglected walls of Sharon-Lacey. The wife was still young enough to conform her taste to circumstances, and in possessing the husband from whom she had been so much divided, and assuring herself of his undiminished affection, she felt thankful for the change in her situation, and ventured to look forward with hope to brighter prospects, as

offered by her still sanguine husband. Maria was now not less willing to be pleased, but the novelties around were by no means agreeable. She said, "the pretty rooms were only like large closets, the garden itself was only a great carpet—there was no orchard, no dairy, no long room for dances, above all, no aviary nor green-house, and when you looked out of the windows there was only one green meadow on the other side of a broad dusty road—no river—no mountains, nor even a common with huts upon it, there were neither children nor pigs as far as she could see, nor any thing to be kind to whatever."

All these wants were forgotten the following Christmas, when her father brought home a little Welsh girl, the daughter of a respectable man whom he had employed there, and who had bequeathed her and the few hundreds he had saved, to the care of a master whom he justly deemed honourable and liberal. She was about a year older than Maria, pretty, artless, gentle, and affectionate, but little informed and wholly devoid of accomplishment. It was the great joy of Maria's heart to *give* and to *love*, and she seized on Ellen Powis in a twofold sense, for the pur-

pose of expending upon her all the good in her power. The aid bestowed on the lovely little orphan was returned sevenfold in her own improvement—the little mad cap Irish, and the untaught Welch girl, became every day more attached to each other, and so forward in their education as to attract the admiration of all who knew them.

This was at present, perhaps, rather a sensible, than a polished, circle—few old families resided in the immediate neighbourhood of a manufacturing town, but the only two who came under this description, and who had always held themselves aloof from all connection with the inhabitants of B——(whatever their wealth or local influence) visited Mrs. Falconer immediately on her arrival, and treated her not less with marked respect as one of *themselves*, than with that affectionate interest her person, manners, and situation were calculated to excite. These were General and Mrs. Birchett, an elderly couple, whose children were dispersed by marriage and profession abroad in the world, and Sir James and Lady Trevannion, a young couple, married within a year or two, of amiable manners and good disposition, although con-

tinuing to hold a strong line of demarcation with their plebeian neighbourhood, which returned with interest every indication of pride or contempt.

The first name in the house with which Mr. Falconer had joined himself was Mayton, a gay bachelor, the third as we already have observed, was Ingalton, a man of mild, unassuming deportment, married to an amiable, lady-like woman, who had made him the happy father of a promising family. The first partner travelled much as they had an extensive iron foundery in Sweden ; the last in the firm managed their affairs at home, for which he was well calculated in every respect, save the delicacy of his general health. Mr. Falconer held a middle station, as having too little knowledge for a leader, yet being too important to be placed last, and reduced as his fortune really was, he yet brought with him a reinforcement of money, which was of great consequence to the house, and was magnified so much by report, that he now entered on his new station under circumstances not less flattering to his self-love, than to those hopes, it was his error and misfortune to indulge.

CHAP. III.

It will be evident that our little heroine, for some time at least, would exchange one set of flatterers for another, and would move the queen of a new empire, perhaps more seductive than the last, since she was frequently made the medium of paying court to her mother by those ladies of B——, who were desirous of classing themselves in the highest circle of society their country boasted. Mothers wished to see their daughters possess the same graceful agility, the same unaffected dignity, and artless witchery, which made her beauty but a second charm in Maria, and which even a London education at a great expense did not impart to their darlings, but these advances rarely led to any thing that could be termed intimacy with mother or daughter. Mrs. Falconer really loved Mrs. Ingalton, and she was amused by the society of Lady Trevannion, and with them and the busy, lively companions who were always

with her, she was content. The circumstances of her married life, added to her early loss of friends, had impressed a pensive character, a meek, but constant solicitude on her spirits, which made the glare and bustle of life rather painful than pleasurable to her, she loved society, but she disliked parade, and the beauty and elegance which rendered her an object of unbounded admiration, never affected her in any way incompatible with this love of retirement; and her continued devotion to a husband whose fine person, and frank and graceful manners, she now saw to more advantage than ever, in a circle where they were unrivalled.

From the period in which we introduced Maria, until she completed her fifteenth year, nothing occurred worthy of notice, except the fact that she really claimed the promise of Elderton, and notwithstanding a decided predilection for music and a passion for reading, which often encroached upon the hours devoted to rest, she yet engaged in learning the German language with such avidity and perseverance as to render her a delightful pupil —at a time when her mind was fully occupied with this pursuit, and she was enabled to

enter with a high relish into the beauties of the German Poets, Mrs. Falconer mentioned an intention of sending Ellen Powis for a couple of years to a superior school :

" School ! dear mother—you forget that she is older than me, because she happens to be less."

" No my love I do not, she is precisely at the age when a sensible, reflecting girl, will really derive benefit from the lessons she will receive. Ellen has a very small fortune, and it is desirable that she should improve it, which she might do in the most respectable manner if her education were more complete."

" She will want no fortune, she will live with us, you know—I always thought she came here to be my friend and sister as long as we lived."

" But when your mother assures you, Maria, that it will be better, and happier for Ellen to render herself independent, and adds the information, that Lady Trevannion will take her as governess to her little girls, and treat her (you are certain) most kindly, you will see Maria, that———

" I see only that———that *you* wish it mamma," said Maria, rushing out of the room

to hide her tears, every trace of which were however banished when she next saw Ellen, lest that which she considered bad news should add to her affliction. For this, however, Ellen had been prepared, for whispers had met her ear, never offered to that of the daughter, and she was aware that the plan was every way eligible, and embraced it as a part of those unbounded kindnesses which had been showered upon her ever since she entered the family. She departed, and Maria felt as if half her world was taken from her.

It will be evident, that Ellen had in a great measure supplied to Maria that portion of her mother's society, which was now necessarily given to her father, and on her absence, the mother and daughter insensibly resumed their former situation with each other. Mr. Falconer was much engaged, for Mr. Mayton now resided wholly abroad, and his management there had been of late extremely unproductive. Mr. Ingalton's health had become so bad as to render him unequal to all exertion, and as his eldest son was gone to the East Indies, he had to the great grief of his wife recalled Frank (his second son, who had

been intended for the church) from the university, to assist him in the counting house.

Mr. Falconer was really sorry for this youth, and opposed the change in his destination as long as he was able; he was just nineteen, and devoted to literary pursuit with all the ardour generally experienced at that period of life, combined with high intellect, fine imagination, a soul attuned by piety to every pure and lofty association, and that happy mixture of playful fancy and pensive reflection, which rendered him well calculated for giving charms to a gay hour, and interest to a sad one.

To a young man with such habits and desires, as Frank had been permitted from his cradle to indulge, this unexpected mandate appeared a sentence cruel as death, and so much was he overwhelmed by it, that the weak constitution and parental affection of his father, rendered him incapable of insisting on the sacrifice, and Frank would have carried his point but for the irresistible pleadings of his mother. "Your brother," said she, "has left his country, probably for life, your father may linger long, but he will never be restored, and what will become of your mother and three sisters, if you persist in pursuing a profes-

sion, where, even if you are successful, it is utterly unlikely that you can assist us."

When Mr. Falconer retailed this conversation at home, and added that poor Frank had yielded to his mother's intreaties, Mrs. Falconer praised him highly, and said, "she was impatient to know him," Maria observed only "he had done his duty," but she soon afterwards said, "yet surely there can be no occasion to distress him thus? for when his father dies he must be rich enough to provide for his widow and daughters."

No answer was returned, but her mother sighed deeply, and her father appeared restless and alarmed; she recollected lately seeing the former in tears one morning on entering her dressing room, and that in reply to her enquiries, she had uttered some very extraordinary words, indicating a sense of unworthy conduct on her own mind. Maria thought something must be wrong, but hoped she should soon see it relieved, she was at least certain that "weak nerves," a disorder then as much in every one's mouth as "bilious complaints" are now, must be the sole cause of her mother's self accusation.

From this time, however, Mrs. Falconer's

spirits and health were much affected, and were so much worse apparently when Maria more particularly attended to her, that she was earnestly requested to forbear every mark of peculiar tenderness, and endeavour by every possible means to divert her from all subjects of thought. As however nothing could induce the patient either to seek the common relief offered by a watering place, or to plunge into promiscuous society, Mr. Falconer invited young Ingalton to spend every moment he could spare from his new, and to him, disgusting duties, with *them;* as he found that quiet society afforded more regular relief to his wife's spirits, than any more violent stimulus, and next to Mrs. Ingalton she prized the society of her son Francis.

In fact, the very dejection of this young man was beneficial to those who conversed with him, since it induced them to soothe and enliven a mind which well merited their kindness, and would richly repay their endeavours to unfold its stores. In a short time Maria forgot her loss in Ellen's society, saw with gratitude the relief her mother experienced, and that the more deep though less constant oppression which had of late been visible in

her father's manners, again gave way to that sanguine temperament which was natural to him. It was difficult to say whether this disposition in Mr. Falconer was more to be lamented, or rejoiced over, unquestionably it had induced him to engage in perilous enterprizes, and pursue unwise objects, but it also preserved him, generally speaking, in such a flow of spirits, that his exertions continued unparalysed amidst losses and vexations of the most enervating nature, and his temper remained pleasant and cheerful to his own household. Unlike many domestic despots who embitter the prosperity they bestow by the tyranny of their tempers, poor Falconer went step by step to ruin with the bustling gaiety of one who was accumulating possessions, and the affectionate indulgence of a heart that thought it could never bestow too much on the objects of its affection.

Consistent with this disposition, he was in the habit of concealing all painful circumstances as much as possible from his wife, and when from time to time she discovered them, he still insisted that she would keep them from her daughter, but as all parties were by nature little calculated for disguise, many

things inevitably crept out which, without exciting any great alarm, yet drew the mind of Maria from subjects of elegant occupation to reflection of a painful nature, but which tended greatly to strengthen her mind, expand her views of existence, and above all, to lead her to religious exercise of thought and that faith which is the only certain support of the soul. Endued with acute feeling, a vivid imagination, ardent affections, a fine taste for all that is beautiful in nature and excellent in art, a contempt for all meanness, an utter abhorrence of vice, and freed by the peculiar circumstances in which her life had been spent, alike from the vulgar pride of wealth, and the less repulsive but equally strong prejudices which she imbibed from her birth, as the sole representative of two ancient families. There was in her character something romantic, independent, and almost eccentric so far as it was developed in conversation; but in her complete devotedness to her mother, her more than sisterly attachment to Ellen, her enthusiastic love of music, which amounted perhaps to a passion, those who associated with her saw only a most amiable and accomplished, as well as beautiful girl.

Mr. Elderton had been a long time abroad in consequence of having much extended his business on the continent, about the period of which we speak. On his return, finding that poor Ingalton was on the point of death, and that many unpleasant reports were stirring respecting the house, which his own knowledge of Mayton's conduct were calculated to confirm, he bent his steps towards Mr. Falconer's house the first evening he could spare. On his way he was overtaken by Maria, on horseback, who greeted him with all the joyful warmth so prominent in her character. On looking up, he saw with surprise, how much time had improved her during his absence, for she had grown considerably, and her slight but graceful and finished form was seen to advantage in her close habit, nor did her plumed hat less become her animated and beautiful face. Mr. Elderton's gaze brought blushes into her cheeks—or was it not the enquiry as to who was the young gentleman her companion?

"It is Frank Ingalton," said Maria, in a low voice—"poor fellow, he was obliged much against his inclination to leave Oxford, and take his father's place in the counting

house—it was very hard upon him, but he is really good, and has consented to give himself up to trade."

"Which he pursues by riding about with you," said the old gentleman, in his usual dry, satirical vein.

"He pursues it," returned Maria, haughtily, "as every man ought to do. I was taking my usual airing, met him, and induced him to take my groom's horse."

The account would have been perfectly satisfactory to her old friend, but for the torrent of blushes, and the angry, yet somewhat timid tone, in which it was uttered. Mr. Elderton pursued his way, spent the evening with the family, and walked home with the young man, who, he confessed to himself, was indeed (for that neighbourhood) quite a paragon, but he yet internally maintained "ought never to think of Maria."

Again, and again, he met them, and closely observed the conduct of Frank, whose evenings were usually enlivened by running over, if but for a single hour, to Mr. Falconer's—when by chance he did not come, it was evident that Maria's mind was estranged, her instrument was out of tune, her voice affected

by the air—the books she had lately read were all of his recommending, the letter she had been writing to Ellen was filled with anecdotes which he had related, or traits of virtue and sensibility, which he had exhibited. It appeared evident to the awakened mind of her old friend, that Maria had decidedly imbibed that passion which would give colour to her future existence, but he knew not whether the total indifference evinced on the subject by her parents, arose from a concurrence with the wishes of the young people, caused by their evidently deep regard for young Ingalton, or from the pressure of more affecting, though suppressed objects of anxiety, acting upon their spirits and preventing due attention to one of so much moment.

The pale, interesting countenance of Frank, and his pensive modesty of manners still continuing, were an assurance at length to Mr. Elderton "that he had never told his love," for there would have been moments when even the most anxious son, the most prudent tradesman must have betrayed that triumphant sense of happiness, the possession of such a heart as Maria's would inevitably bestow, especially on one whose sensibility was

evidently acute,—"perhaps," he would say, "after all, there is nothing in this intercourse beyond that of an attached sisterly regard on Maria's part, felt for one who acts as a brother to her, and a son to her parents; and the young man's mind may have been so wedded to his books, that even the charms and accomplishments of Maria failed to affect him when he was a stranger, and she is now become familiar to him as a friend, if so, they will be saved from a foolish match, and I have nothing to tremble for in the future fate of my pretty favourite."

Yet he soon did tremble; for Ellen returned, and she too was improved in person and manners, though in his eyes every way inferior to Maria, who hailed her appearance with all the fondness of infancy, and that soft, languid tenderness of joy, which was indicative of a heart oppressed by the fulness of its own unanalyzed feelings, and which gave to friendship which it was proud to express, the character of that passion it was as yet unauthorised to reveal,—this was followed by evident anxiety, by coldness, and alternate kindness, towards him who caused the struggle, and occasionally by a kind of stern self

command, which triumphed over all inquietude, and suggested to her observing friend, the hope that she had discovered the state of her own heart, and would conquer a passion felt for one who did not return it without suffering its effects to appear—without gaining from pity that which love had not accorded—a state which he well knew the pride and delicacy of her nature would render insupportable.

In all this, Frank's conduct was not only blameless but entitled to the highest praise; his constant attention to business, his affectionate attentions to his slowly declining parent, the variety of his knowledge, and his unassuming display of those talents which render domestic society captivating as well as endearing, were such as to quicken the benevolent attentions of Mr. Elderton to his feelings and manners, from a sincere desire to add to the future happiness of Maria. He was so situated in life, that he could without injury to others have offered in a share of his own extensive business the means of competence, whenever the final downfal of the house (in which the fortunes of the young people were alike centered) should render his friendship necessary

to that end. But if Frank did not love Maria as she merited to be loved, it was by no means his wish to tempt him to marry her by the offer of fortune. He believed that there existed not a man on earth who deserved her, and least of all was he inclined to accord that praise to one who, however meritorious in other respects, could daily witness the graceful energy, the glowing affection, the varied talent she displayed, within the narrow circle which circumstances now seldom extended beyond her own family, without according her equal love and admiration.

Such were the thoughts passing in Mr. Elderton's mind, when Ellen, evidently with great pain, obeyed the summons of Lady Trevannion, who had with extraordinary kindness waited for her so long, that to have trespassed farther on her forbearance, would have caused a breach of friendship between the families. As her present home was at the distance of four or five miles, though Maria had it in her power to ride over every day, yet it was evidently Ellen's duty to remain much at home, and Mr. Elderton rejoiced for her own sake in the circumstance. His eye was upon all the circle, and his heart ached for

all, under the impression that evil was impending upon them, both from threatened misfortunes without, and unsuspected enemies within.

CHAP. IV.

During the period of which we have been speaking, every thing in the affairs of Mr. Falconer had been gradually growing worse, and the conduct of that partner who was resident abroad, gave too much reason to believe that he was either, as an extravagant man, drawing from the mother country the sources of improper expenditure, or amassing wealth by which to secure himself in possession of certain property, when the affairs of the house should come to a termination by the approaching dissolution of partnership, which would take place at the time when miss Falconer came of age, a circumstance which it had been understood had some connection with her father's property now in business.

This eventful period was looked to with much anxiety by all the parties concerned, as they had found it impossible to bring Mayton to his duty, but by no person so

much as Mrs. Falconer, whose solicitude on her daughter's account had naturally been quickened from observing her artless predilection for a young man, for whom she felt herself the most decided preference. The dreams of ambition she might have had for such a daughter were nearly obliterated by anxiety, and self-reproach which though not venting itself in tears or lamentations had long sat heavy on her heart—the sad secret which preyed there, and was slowly, but certainly, wearing away health and life, was suddenly developed.

One day Mr. Elderton entered at an hour very unusual with him, and wearing a very disturbed countenance; the mother and daughter, were both at the moment engaged in making up some cheap clothing for one of their poor neighbours, but so much were they alike struck by the hurry and perplexity of his countenance, that with one voice they enquired, "what was the matter?"

"The house of Krentzers have failed in Dantzic, by which I shall lose a large sum of money, and I am obliged to set out without an hour's delay. So I ran forward to bid you good bye."

"Krentzers!" exclaimed Mrs. Falconer, "surely Frank spoke of them as being people with whom Mr. Mayton ought to lodge money."

"Very likely—we all think of ourselves first—but I certainly ought to have told you what I learnt as I came hither, that poor Ingalton died about an hour ago in Frank's arms, whilst Falconer was (according to his daily custom) reading him the letters,"—"perhaps—I really fear—it looks as if this bad news had something to do with it."

"Poor Frank!" exclaimed Maria, bursting into tears. Mrs. Falconer neither spoke, nor wept, but she looked on the point of fainting, and yet exerted herself to ring the bell and order the carriage to be got ready immediately.

"You are going to poor Mrs. Ingalton, mamma, I will go with you," said Maria.

"No my love you must not, I must see your father, I must enquire into all these distressing circumstances."

Maria was on the point of saying "Mr. Elderton will go with you," for she did not like her mother to depart evidently ill alone, when undergoing much internal agitation,

but she saw that she preferred being alone at this moment, and was well aware that although a very friendly man in the main, he was by no means a gentle binder of bleeding wounds; Mrs. Falconer, therefore, departed, without taking Mr. E. although his hat was in his hand to set out for B—— also.

"Surely," said Maria, reverting to this bad news, "you will not lose much, my dear sir?"

"I shall not be ruined by it, Maria, certainly, but I shall lose at one stroke the profits of many years' labour, which is provoking enough; *n' importe*, I am a bachelor, and my habits are not expensive."

"That is a great comfort at a time like this," said Maria, following the glance of his eye around the elegantly furnished room in which she sat—"I confess I should be more distressed for Mrs. Ingalton than you, were she, in addition to her widowhood, to lose her property too, what would become of her and the girls?"

"Think for yourself—your mother, Maria—*she* has a brother, a son, and the circumstance of her widowhood will raise her friends—but *you*, I tremble for you, I confess I do."

"You are very good, but I think there is no comparison in the case, if my father were even ruined in his business, which God forbid should be the case, my mother's property undoubtedly"——

"Has your mother property? are you sure of that?"

"I am *sure* of nothing, but I understood our estates in Wales were hers, and I always concluded"——

"Pshaw!—you *concluded*—you ought to have *known*, you had an undoubted right to know—you who have a better head for business than one man in a thousand—who were born heiress to two old estates in two different countries—I have no patience with any of ye—and so at this time of day when you must be a long way past eighteen, you don't know whether your mother really has property left, or whether your father has made ducks and drakes of it, in the same manner as he did with his own?"

Maria drew up her head haughtily, as if to say "beware how you speak of my parents."

"Nay, nay, Maria, look not thus on *me*. I honour your feelings, but there are points in life where all feeling whether of delicacy,

tenderness, or even what you erroneously deem duty, should be compelled to give way before the more imperious dictates of that positive *duty*, common honesty, and common sense. It is said in the town, that your mother unhappily holding her own settlement, has been induced from time to time to give up property over which it gave her power—in fact, I know that about two years since she did so to a great amount, and I fear she has little, very *little* left."

"It *is* so!—it must be so!" said Maria, in a voice scarcely articulate with the agitation awakened by recollections that rushed to her mind—"I remember well, when she had that long low fever on the spirits before you came home—yes, yes, she used to weep bitterly whenever she saw me, and has even yet never recovered—Frank and I used"——

"*Frank* and *you!* dear Maria, allow me to ask you one more question."

"No, no, I can answer no more," said Maria, blushing, trembling, and gasping for breath.

"But there is no engagement?"

"Oh! no, no—certainly no engagement."

Maria covered her face with her hands as

she spoke, but the throbbings of her heart, the universal pulsation of her frame, bespoke the severity of her sensations which were indescribably painful, and had she possessed the power of flight, she would certainly have fled. Mr. Elderton instantly quitted the subject, but he reverted to that which preceded it, and urged her to constrain herself to probe the wound which he could not doubt was rankling at her mother's heart, so far as to discover the actual state of her future dependance, for the express purpose of securing the little which might remain, "As, otherwise," said he, "depend upon it you will see her reduced to the most abject poverty from which your father will not be able to rescue her, for never have I yet seen a man of his sanguine temper, who was not completely overthrown in the day of actual want."

"I will work for them—beg for them"——

"Work you may my love, but beg you *cannot*, no not even for them. I would not have talked to you thus, even yesterday, but situated as I *now* am, I can only give good advice—promise me you will act with resolution, that you will endure to give pain to those

you love, in itself the most terrible of all pains —it is an imperative duty and"——

Maria rose slowly from her seat—she waived her hand, and he ceased to speak, but in another minute, she said in a solemn tone,

"I will perform it—I would be thankful to escape it, but for *her* sake I can do any thing."

Mr. Elderton took his leave, trying to whisper such words as, "Report may have made the worst of it, I trust you will save something yet," but Maria heard them not, and the door had closed on him before she recovered from the stunning blows she had received; the torrent of terrible thoughts which had overwhelmed her at a period when she had been wrapt in that oblivion to all outward circumstances, unconnected with its own object, which a timid yet all engrossing passion, spreads over a tender and youthful bosom.

Yet, when the stupor occasioned by this blow somewhat subsided, Maria was sensible that her mind was formed to endure—that she had not less fortitude and energy, than sensibility, and she endeavoured to recal that vigour of spirit which she was sensible of possessing at a period when her understanding

was less mature than now. Alas! these recollections but served to shew her the sad state of her own heart—the heart which even in this moment of alarm for her parents, yet beat high for another also, she felt that his sorrows were amongst those lamented the most sincerely, and that every hope for the future was closely intermingled with him.

Maria had paced the apartment in which she was left for several hours, unconscious how time was passing, when the return of the carriage roused her, and she began hastily to reconsider her promise, and her plans for the future, but all were alike put to flight by the appearance of their usual medical attendant, who, alighting from the carriage, entered the house, to prepare her for receiving her father in an alarming state—all she could learn was, that certain letters announcing the loss by shipwreck of Mr. Mayton, the bankruptcy already spoken of, and the death of poor Mrs. Ingalton, at a time when his spirits were so much agitated, had produced an apoplectic fit, in which he had been held for some hours, and which had placed his life in the greatest jeopardy.

In such a moment all error, and even all

sorrow was forgotten, save that which arose from sympathy in the sufferings of her father, and the grief of her mother; for many days, Maria watched by the bed-side of the invalid, with an anxiety and solicitude, scarcely exceeded by that of the fond and wretched wife, but which was far more efficaciously evinced. Her powers of mind appeared to have reached a sudden maturity under the alarming pressure of the time, and to combine a power of recollection, which gave the benefit of experience and of self-possession, and rendered the cares of affection really beneficial to their object—happy power for the alarmed, distracted mother of Maria, was at this period almost wholly helpless, alternately suffering from the agonies of grief, and overwhelmed with the stupor and exhaustion consequent upon them.

When Mr. Falconer crept down stairs after a long confinement, he appeared to have added twenty years of age to his bending, attenuated form, and the high health and manly beauty for which (together with the flow of spirits) he had been hitherto remarkable, rendered the change impressive, even to the most careless observer. His servants started when they heard the "childish treble"

of his voice, and his friends considered that he had been " killed in the cure," and the tone in which they congratulated him on his convalescence, bespoke their actual fears for his state. His first appearance, however, called upon a third class, who pressed round him the more earnestly, because they were not likely to have him long to press, if report from the others could be relied on.

These were his *creditors,* and those of the house which he now solely represented, and who naturally enquired in what their future security consisted. Mr. Falconer saw all who approached him, laid before them those letters which spoke of the failure of the bank in question, by which it appeared also that a large sum of money had actually been amassed there, which doubtless Mr. Mayton was about to bring for the relief of the house. All were satisfied, that, but for misfortunes none could foresee, notwithstanding past deficiences, no wrong had been intended, but they earnestly pressed the propriety of sending some person over immediately to Dantzic for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of the evil, and securing any further debt that might possibly remain there.

It was evident that Frank alone could be that person, since Mr. Falconer was utterly unequal to the task, and as much time had already passed, it was now settled that the traveller elect should lose not an hour in setting out—and agreeable with every trait of worth which he had hitherto displayed, the young gentleman professed his readiness to obey their wishes.

Maria's heart sunk as she heard of this determination, but she saw its propriety, and only lamented that her young friend had not the benefit of her old friend's advice and assistance, in a scene which she was well aware he was at present ill calculated to encounter. No endeavours had hitherto been spared by young Ingalton, to make himself a man of business, but he had not yet shaken off the air of a student, though he had attained the routine of counting house avocations; and his consciousness of this prevented him from assuming either the knowledge or activity which he possessed. In all the tender offices of an exemplary son, the ceaseless attentions of a warm hearted friend, he moved between the two houses so painfully situated as one whose presence inspired support and consolation, but

he entered the scene of his compelled avocations with a constrained and timid air, as one whose duties were yet to learn. Maria, tenderly as her heart was drawn towards him, was too quick to discern every peculiarity in those around not to be aware of this, and in the evening when he came to bid them farewel, wished to say something which should encourage him to have more self-reliance. She had known that he had benefitted from her advice in many other instances, and never surely had he required a stimulus more than now, yet she found it impossible to speak to him.

Frank was not only evidently oppressed with sorrow that he controlled with the utmost difficulty, but with something that pressed upon his spirits beyond, or distinct from the trouble which belonged to his disagreeable and probably fruitless journey, his eyes were continually bent towards the door, he started at the slightest sound, repeatedly opened his mouth as if beginning to ask a question, which yet died upon his lips, and at length rushed away in extreme agitation above an hour before it appeared necessary, as if he had recollected something concern-

ing his luggage, but his heart was too full to admit of explanations on trivial subjects.

Before he could have reached the garden gate, Maria also had closed the door in her own room, and tears were streaming from her eyes, whilst blessings and prayers for his safety murmured from her lips. When the first transport of grief had subsided, a soothing emotion stole over her mind, and allayed that sense of solicitude which had long pressed on her spirits, and damped much of the vivacity which was natural to her.—"Surely there was in the manners of Frank this evening a restlessness of grief that resembled her own feelings—in his sorrow, there was a tenderness, an alarm, an indefinite something—Had we been alone"—Maria blushed, as she whispered these words, but her colour as quickly receded on recollecting that they had been alone, during which time he had earnestly recommended his mother to her care—"excellent youth! he thought only of his widowed parent, even at a moment so important to himself"—she remembered also how he started with an air of disappointment on her father's entrance—in fact, his manners abundantly

spoke distress and embarrassment; it had been so great that he had forgotten to leave even a single adieu to poor Ellen.

If, however, the apprehended, the desired cause of this confusion did indeed affect Frank, it was not less evident that the same sense of duty which had so long kept him silent still operated, and would continue to do so, so long as the unhappy affairs in which both families were involved continued, and which there was but too much reason to fear would blight for ever the tender hopes of love. "Frank" said Maria, "has nobly made himself a sacrifice for his family; alas! mine is perhaps little better situated, ought I not to follow his example?"

The *how* this could be done now perpetually occupied her mind, and since Mr. Falconer was now seldom able to go to B——, yet frequently obliged to receive visits of business, Maria became an eager listener to all conversations connected with subjects, which till now she would naturally have fled from. By slow degrees Mr. Falconer's health returned, but that of Mrs. Falconer was extremely delicate; yet she continued to shew every attention true friendship could suggest

to her widowed friend, and often wept over her situation, saying, "that when Frank returned something must be done to lessen her expenditure—she must leave the house."

"She can remove from her present house," said Maria, "better, during his absence, I should think, than when he is at home—why subject him to the pain of witnessing *her* pain? she has no other dependence, and should rather spare him than use him on slight occasions!"

"But they are all females you know, Maria, what can women do?"

"Every thing, dear mother, which rational and accountable creatures are called to do; woman can cast accounts, estimate expences, contrive where to spend, and where to spare, for every housekeeper does it. She can endure toil, for in humble life, the most delicate encounter a daily portion of it, and in high life, the love of pleasure leads many to adopt it. That woman can sustain much, as well as suffer much, poor Mrs. Ingalton is herself a proof, since for years she was an unwearied attendant on a sick husband; why then should she so underrate her own powers as to delay for an hour the arrangement of her affairs—

in fact, she ought to go out of her house into a smaller, and we ought to go into it, which would enable my poor father to see after things."

Mrs. Falconer did not reply.

"If we were to part with the carriage, horses, and dogs, with one man, and two maids,—dispense of course with the gardener, and let his cottage and our house, we should"——

"Dear Maria how you talk! your father could not exist in any town, does he not always speak of a street as if it were a prison? were we not all born to consider carriages and horses as the necessaries of life? and pray do not you love the dogs better than any body—you could not walk without Sancho, Mayflower and the Poodle, and poor Vixen is Frank Ingalton's pet."

The name and the inference silenced Maria at the moment, but since she had so far broken the ice as to give her mother some idea of what was passing in her mind, without eliciting either anger or grief, she determined to venture on the subject again, under cover of poor Mrs. Ingalton's name, and one day when it was broached before her father,

had the satisfaction to hear him say, "that although he did not like his wife to be without the carriage, yet he believed it would be as well to part with it, especially as it was seldom used of late."

Mrs. Falconer instantly renounced all desire for it; and Maria saw that which she had always apprehended was indeed the case, that her mother could at all times renounce every luxury without a sigh, if it would add to her father's ease, and doubted not but that his regard for her, had prevented him from doing on the other hand that which his circumstances required. Her heart bled to think that two persons so amiable, so attached, should yet have placed themselves in a situation where even their affection would add to the difficulties by which they were surrounded.

CHAP. V.

TIME passed—letters were received from Frank, but no remittances, nor did it appear probable that any property would be obtained from his journey, as he found that the late Mr. Mayton had indeed placed so large a sum there, as to include all that could be conceived due to the house. This money had previously been in a bank at Stockholm, where it had been placed not in the name of the firm but the individual, and there was great reason to suspect that Mayton's designs were altogether sinister and nefarious, since he had completely drained his partners of their resources, and was known to have contracted a partnership with a Russia house, for which it appeared too probable that he had thus accumulated funds, actually belonging to his English connections.

Mr. Falconer was now (partly from feeling it his duty to be more open with his family than formerly, and partly from his double loss

of the Ingaltons) in the habit of speaking on the subject of his letters and affairs ; in which conversation Maria ever took a warm interest, not only perhaps for the sake of the subject, but because it enabled her to learn the movements of Frank, without rendering him the immediate subject of enquiry. One day Mr. Falconer observed, "that he had hoped to have seen him in May, but he now feared it would be October, at which time his late unhappy partnership would be dissolved."

"May!" said Maria, changing the subject to avoid shewing her disappointment—"in May, Ellen will be of age—yes, the fifteenth of May."

"Are you sure of that?" said both parents eagerly.

"Quite sure, because I shall be twenty in April."

"She is right," said Mr. Falconer tremulously, with a look full of meaning towards his wife.

For several days there was much consultation between her parents, from which, Maria was constantly excluded—again she frequently saw traces of tears on her mother's face, and observed her frequently casting her eyes

towards herself with an expression of the utmost sorrow—she became pale, her appetite failed, and the weakness which had lately been removed, returned in the most distressing degree.

"Dear mother what can we do for you?" said Maria.

"Nothing, my love, I am going soon into Wales, and my native air will probably do me good; indeed I have no ailment, I am only nervous."

"Mother, dear mother," cried Maria, in a voice full of anguish, "you are no such thing, there is something the matter with you beyond what I am permitted to see—yet surely I have a right to know and to share your troubles."

"A right—oh! Maria, do not upbraid me." Mrs. Falconer sunk, oppressed almost to fainting on the nearest seat—her face was perfectly pale, her lips blue, and her eyelids fell over eyes which seemed receding even from life. Maria was terrified, she sunk on her knees before her, and eagerly kissing her hands, besought her by every fond and tender word, which rose to her gasping lips, to pardon her if she had done wrong, to exert her-

self, and if possible to open her heart to a daughter who lived but to contribute to her happiness.

"Look at me, dear mother—speak to me," she cried in agony—"forgive me."

"I can have nothing to forgive in you, Maria, but you—oh! how much have you to forgive in your mother—I cannot, *cannot* look at you."

Maria sprang from her knees, she hastily poured some drops into water, which were restorative, and presented them to her mother's lips, at the same time saying in great agitation,

"Pray take these drops, do not thus distress yourself, I know all you would say—your settlement—it is all gone—never mind—only recover, and I—I will do every thing, mamma."

Mrs. Falconer started, gazed a moment wildly on Maria's face, clasped her round the neck, and burst into a flood of bitter tears.

Thankful for this change, Maria wisely suffered the long pent up agony to subside, fervently, though silently praying that the almighty would give her the power of devoting herself in every possible way, to a

parent whom she felt at this moment bound to by ties of pity, still more than of duty, whose purity of conduct, and pious integrity of principle, she had witnessed in innumerable instances, and whose violation of good faith (if it were such towards herself) had unquestionably brought her to the brink of the grave; when at length she was able to speak, Mrs. Falconer said, tremulously, yet as if she was a little eased by the discovery of her daughter,

"You know then, dear Maria, that I have given—that is, that I have lent your dear father"———

"I know very little, mother, but I certainly, for all our sakes, do wish to know, and think I ought to know something of my own situation as connected with yours."

"You are right Maria, I have urged this to your father many times, but he has such a full assurance that all things will come round, that he shall be enabled eventually to supply all deficiencies, that he would never permit me to speak—I have suffered from this silence —oh! how have I suffered."

"Cruel, wicked man—he has robbed, and almost murdered you—my dear mother, do

not look on me with so much horror, my feelings must have vent—at this moment I cannot forgive my father—I have no patience with him—has he not schemed, wasted, fooled away two noble fortunes? irreparably injured the best of wives? a daughter who never offended him—and does he add to this the imposition of silence on the subject, until all, *all* is gone, as though he sought to bring ruin by so dreadful a stroke, that it should at once crush reason and life—oh! fie, fie on him."

Maria spoke with a rapidity and indignation, proportioned to the feelings which agitated her, and traversed the room with that unceasing and perturbed step which seasons of severe suffering are so apt to produce—every time she lifted up her eyes, and cast one glance at her mother, her passions of grief and anger, pure compassion and unbounded affection, seemed to increase and transport her beyond all limits of patience, and all power of consolation—she beheld her as an unoffending victim, still lovely, elegant in the meridian of life, condemned in years that were past to ceaseless solicitude and self-reproach, in years to come probably to degradation, poverty, scorn, and remorse—the pros-

pect was too appalling to be borne, she shuddered and covered her eyes, but no tear issued from their burning orbs.

"Your father has undoubtedly done wrong in subjecting himself to these losses," said Mrs. Falconer in a deprecating tone, "but remember, Maria, that he was brought up with little knowledge of the world—that he lost his father very early, married one who was little more than a child, and was led by degrees into circumstances which he could not foresee, nor guard against—how many fine young men like him would have spent their money in dissipation, the common error of his countrymen—how many, in vicious, dishonourable pursuits!"

"Is it not dishonourable for a man to rob his own wife?—to entail the miseries of poverty on that being whom he has especially promised to protect, and whose very helplessness ought to have rendered her the chief object of his care?"

"The world, and the world's usages, generally require that a wife should partake the good or evil fortunes of her husband, Maria, and I believe that, on the whole, it is better

that there should be no separate interest between people so situated."

"That may be, mother—but yet no sophistry can ever persuade me, that a man has a right to do an act of injustice, either because the object or the *law* authorizes him. Laws are made by man, and like himself are fallible even when formed with the most consummate human wisdom, but that sense of justice which God himself implants in the heart—that rule which he has revealed in his word, forbids us to injure any one, most of all the creature who has placed happiness and property in our hands—of all other robbers, it appears to me that a husband is the most wicked, because he is the most powerful, he can withhold all good, bestow every degree of pain and grief—he can threaten or cajole his victim, render his tenderness or his tyranny equally efficacious for his purpose, and"—

"Hear me, Maria, you are justly wounded, and it is only a proper punishment for me, perhaps, that I should listen to words which are indeed daggers to my heart—but yet"—

"Daggers! oh God! is it by me you are wounded? but I cannot help it—if I feel, it

is for you—you know, or you will know some day, that it is for you *only* that I am thus moved."

"I do know you, Maria, I have no doubt of your duty, your disinterested affection—and I have but little doubt that in that alone, I shall find all the future good life has in store; but I conjure you by that sense of justice which I know to be the ruling movement of your breast, hear me plead for your father."

Maria threw herself on her knees before her mother, and laying her face on her lap, that she might hide the expression of her countenance, compelled herself to be silent.

"Your father has been ever a kind, attentive, and faithful husband—pleasure has never seduced him from my side, perplexity and distress have never soured his temper, abated his indulgence, or cooled his affection for me. If he has concealed misfortune at some times, it has been to save me from suffering, if he has engaged in new schemes, it has been for the purpose of retrieving losses from old ones—when circumstance at length drew him to England, and obliged him to lay his affairs before me, I offered to throw my settlement instantly into the fire, with all the warmth

incident to the heart of a young, fond wife, whose child was too young to excite fears for its future fate; but this sacrifice he strenuously refused, and merely accepted a loan, which he employed in business as an aid to us all."

"You did right, and he did not do wrong," said Maria, down whose cheeks the tears now began to trickle freely.

"Unhappily a breach once made was frequently renewed—business grew unproductive, our expenses were trebled in this country, and your father was averse to diminishing our establishment lest it should injure his credit, nor could he bear to see my situation stripped of its comforts, and"——

"Nonsense! it was his duty and yours—there is nothing imperative but duty—but go on."

He had first only five thousand pounds—then I sold a farm—when Ellen's father died, we disposed of the mine, and now"——

"Now! what have you left?"

"The manor house, and some land, for which I have received a very liberal offer."

"Which offer you shall not accept," said Maria, starting on her feet "no, no, that

little spot of your own land, in your own country, you shall retain if I have power or right either from affection or law to compel it—and such I think must be the case: 'tis enough to make my two grandfathers start from their graves, to think that a descendant so little removed as I am, should be left pennyless, landless—I will not allow it"

"Then poor Ellen."

"Ellen! what has Ellen to do with it?"

"Her father bequeathed her to the care of yours, and with her about eight hundred pounds, which, in the warmth of his kind heart he promised to make a thousand—strictly speaking, perhaps, even that sum has been expended on the dear girl, but I cannot bear so to consider the case. Yet as, since our losses, I cannot ensure to you any thing more than the three thousand pounds now offered me for the farm in question, if you insist upon it, I will not sell it, Maria?"

Maria was silent.

"I must not, however, conceal from you, that I am certain it will be the death of your father."

After a long pause, the daughter replied.

"It shall be sold, Ellen shall not be wronged, there are also two small annuitants who must be secured—my father has been a man of strict honour to all but his own family, and I believe with you it would kill him not to do his utmost, and you love him so much, that *it would kill* you also."

"You too love him, Maria, fondly love him; when he lay so lately stretched on the bed of sickness, what sacrifice would you have thought too great to give for him?"

"Question me not, mother—my heart is still too full of varied but terrible emotions, promise me only that you will struggle to recover your health, that you will assure yourself of my perfect forgiveness, and accord me your confidence—but I have nothing now to learn, degradation and poverty are before us—a long, *long* life, of altered circumstances—of pity mingled with scorn, of privation embittered by memory."

Mrs. Falconer wept in very agony again.

"Mother, dear mother, pardon me—take comfort, for I will be to you a husband, a fond, toiling, careful husband—I can at least provide manna in the wilderness where we

shall all be cast, and I pledge myself to do it —may God so bless me, as I shall fulfil the vow which binds me to you."

With these words, Maria flew to her own chamber, from whence she returned not for the remainder of the day, and where she passed the night in deep but unavailing sorrow, her mind tossed as with ceaseless tempest, one moment trembling for the present health of her mother, the next, viewing with horror the miseries that threatened her future life—sometimes glowing with rage for the folly and mismanagement of her father, then melting into sorrow, as in imagination she saw his bending form shrink under the pressure of poverty, and his grey hairs descend with sorrow to the grave.

CHAP. VI.

MARIA took a little refreshment in her room, but the perturbed state of her feelings rendered the idea of going to bed disagreeable, and she continued to walk slowly the length of her chamber and dressing room, until she was completely exhausted, when she flung herself on her couch and sunk into that profound sleep, which frequently succeeds extreme agitation.

On awaking, Maria was sensible of head ache and extreme thirst, and she instantly rose to procure water; the sun shone beamingly into the room, and she drew the curtain aside to view the refreshing green which in April spreads over the face of renovated nature the promise of future good—her eye was struck with the appearance of a post chaise at the garden gate, into which her father was assisting her mother, whose maid followed, and they instantly drove off in the direction for their intended western journey.

"They are gone," said Maria, "and I must, I will go also, but whither? what is there that I can do to avert the evils around us?—upon us!—the sure ruin which is accelerated by every turn of the wheels which convey them hence."

She dressed and descended, and was informed that as Mrs. Falconer seemed a little better than usual, it was thought advisable to set off that morning, and on finding that she was very fast asleep, both parents had given her a farewel kiss without disturbing her, but had left a message intreating her to go to Sir James Trevannion's, and either remain there during their absence, or procure the company of Miss Powis.

Maria heard this message in silence, but a bitter and scornful smile rose to her lip, and when the servant had closed the door, she exclaimed,

"No, no,—company—indulgence of every kind must be given up, I must commune with my own heart, must resolve from the dictates of my own mind. I must try to help those who cannot help themselves—ah! Frank, *dear* Frank, how young we both are, how much are we both strangers to that world, through

which we are alike fated to wing our way like the stork, carrying our parents."

Yet there was something consolatory in the thought of resembling Frank in his virtues, in his sorrows—in thinking the same thoughts, encountering the same difficulties, and being united in a bond of similar suffering, which somewhat relieved the deep dejection, and awoke the dormant energy she desired, but almost despaired of exciting in her own overcharged spirit. Maria's smile subsided, she began to weep and to bless her parents.

After some time, being roused by a question from the servant respecting dinner, she answered sharply, "I am going to Sir James Trevannion's immediately. I shall walk—I want no attendance"—

"It is a long walk, ma'am, and"—

Maria waived her hand as much as to say, "leave me alone," and the deep sorrow seated on her countenance shewed that intrusion must be indeed painful. In a few minutes she had tied on a large bonnet, and enveloped in a shawl, set out on a solitary path which led circuitously to the place which she now sought with hasty, anxious steps, but in a short time almost resolved to avoid—often

she returned for a short space, and then again she retraced her steps—at length worn out with fatigue and uneasiness, she entered the mansion by the housekeeper's room in the dusk, whilst the family were at dinner; struck with her wild, and ghastly looks, the negligence of her dress, and the manner in which she came, the mistress of the apartment who had known her from childood, accosted her with alarm, not less than kindness, when she enquired what was the matter? what she could do for her?

"Take me direct to Miss Powis's bed-room —do not tell any one I am here but her— and get me some tea, for I can take nothing else, my mouth is parched, I have over done myself, that is all."

The housekeeper complied with these requisitions; and the beloved Ellen alone glided round the bed and whispered tender enquiries respecting her health and peace—she received little reply, beyond a few terrible and astounding words, which announced the prediction uppermost on her mind, of the approaching ruin of her parents, who were scarcely less dear to Ellen than herself, and over whose misfortunes she wept bitterly, but when she

would have enquired further, she was desired in a tone cold and authoritative to ask no questions, "she had heard all that sufficed to account for the appearance and the misery of her visitant."

There was something so unlike her former self, in Maria's manners, and the whiteness of her lips, the circumscribed glowing spot upon her cheek, indicated so much fever, that as the idea of disease had been given to Ellen by the housekeeper, she really apprehended that her young friend was suffering under delirium, and knew not how far it was her duty to infringe upon her request (strenuously as it had now been urged) and inform the family. Maria, however, laid still, but was not asleep, and her lips frequently moved as if she were engaged in soliloquy or computation, but Ellen trusted she was not worse at least, and concluded, therefore, to wait till morning, sitting by the side of the bed watching her with unceasing solicitude and fond affection the whole night.

The sounds of those domestic movements which announce the return of day, roused Maria from her deep contemplation; she sat up in bed, took her purse which was under

her pillow, and emptying it before her, counted the contents carefully. "Here are eleven guineas," said she, "and seventeen shillings, have you any money, dear Ellen?

"I have about six pounds, I believe."

"You will lend it to me I am certain—but you would rather give it to me—well, I will accept it, thankfully, and with this money I will immediately begin business, and who knows how well I may do in the world? Pray for me, dear Ellen, that God may prosper my endeavour to assist my parents I trust he has inspired me with the resolution *I now feel*, and even the plan I have adopted."

Maria's voice was a little tremulous, but she spoke distinctly, and her face though very pale, was so composed in its expression, that the late fears of Ellen gave way to the conviction, that extreme distress, and the broodings of a harrassed mind over some new and difficult undertaking, had alone produced the alarming appearances which had excited her past fears, she eagerly opened her work box and instantly mingled her little store with that of Maria, who now had risen, and though evidently very poorly, was dressing herself

with as much rapidity as her health permitted.

"I have already told you, Ellen," said she, "that my parents are gone to receive the last money in my poor mother's power, it will be necessarily soon paid away—in October all their affairs will be settled, and it must inevitably be found with the late losses in Germany, that there will not be sufficient to pay the creditors, all will be broken up and sold, and there will be no residue. My father will seek for a situation as a clerk, but he is too much a gentleman, too little a tradesman to find one—his late illness has robbed him of the strength necessary for other labour, and"——

Ellen, utterly unable to endure such a picture of the man to whom from her cradle she had looked to as a master, and long loved as a father, broke into hysterical weeping, and Maria was compelled literally to "comfort her comforter."

"Nay, dear Ellen, do not weep thus, I only wanted to prove to you the necessity there is that I should guard against evils so inevitable —that like the new comedy I should "Stoop

to Conquer," and in order to spare myself the further exercise of feeling which I now find will really unfit me for the altered situation to which I must submit; I have at length determined to commence immediately. Struggle with your feelings, that you may strengthen mine. I must not allow myself to cry any more. I must act, not weep."

"What will you do, Maria."

"I will sell iron—sell it by retail in small quantities, to little manufacturers."

Ellen suddenly removed her handkerchief, and strained her tearful eyes to gaze again on Maria, to see if she were, or were not, in her senses—she dared not to speak lest she should irritate the malady she dreaded, and Maria continued,

"I have been for many weeks an attentive listener to every conversation which has passed on subjects connected with business, and I find that all the poorer masters in our great manufacturing town, labour under great disadvantages for want of a medium betwixt them and the iron masters, and I have heard it repeatedly observed, 'that if any decent workman would have the resolution to save his wages till he had obtained thirty or forty

pounds, he might begin the trade with a certainty of thriving, provided he gave no credit, and was content with a moderate, constant profit.'"

"But, my dear Maria, that which a labouring man might indeed do well, and profitably, cannot be done by a young, delicate, pretty woman—a lady too, whose birth, education, and habits, render her utterly unfit for such employment—one too, who possesses talents which she can consistently employ to advantage in the occupations becoming a gentlewoman."

"I know all you would urge, dear Ellen, for I really believe, that whilst I laid upon that bed I have had more subjects of thought, more recollections, cogitations, and deductions, than the whole lives of many women present—my conclusions have not been made in consequence of sudden impulse, but deep examination. In the first place I thought of obtaining a situation resembling yours, but that I instantly rejected, since it would only enable me to provide for myself—besides, let me confess, my pride, the long indulgence accorded to an only child, and still more the independence of my nature, renders me unfit

for servitude, even in its most ameliorated shape."

"But you might teach without entering a family."

"Not to any sufficient purpose—music lessons are now confined to the harpsichord, and on that you know I do not excel, having in despite of fashion ever adopted my own native Irish harp; and for the reason I gave you before, you will perceive that it would be easier for me to live amongst the poor, than receive from the rich, and especially the low and purse-proud, that remuneration they would feel pain to give, and I should feel more pain to receive."

"But your exquisite voice, your elegant person, Maria! I cannot bear to think you should be wasted, lost to society."

"Yet even you, Ellen, would not like to see me on the stage; though, had I been brought up to it, in a pecuniary point of view it might have answered—never let my mother know that it even passed our minds. I have, in short, *determined* to try *iron*, and nothing else. It has been the ruin of my family, and ought to make amends—it has swallowed house and land, and should therefore find

bread and lodging, which is all I now presume to hope for.

"Mr. Falconer will never endure to see you so degraded—it will break his heart."

"It will, I fear, render his temper irritable, which is indeed a great affliction to me, but yet I trust the sweetness of my mother's pleadings will soften him, and in a short time, poor man, his own affairs will engross him wholly, and make him forget me and my paltry concerns, until that time when he will find that I have laboured for his sake—disobeyed and disgraced him, (as he will term it) that I might find a shelter for his latter days, on which pride may glance with scorn, but shall never enter with insult."

"Ah! dear Maria, you think you have made up your mind to encounter difficulties, but indeed you have no idea of the extent or the nature of what you brave—the poor in these manufacturing towns are very distinct from the simple, warm-hearted creatures who used to adore his "honour and idolize his honour's child," whom you considered under your protection, and loved because you benefitted—vulgarity will disgust you—mean arts be practised upon you ten times a day."

"Unquestionably, but I must learn to endure them."

"Besides, your feelings will be so wrought upon, that you never will be able to save that which you may get—never yet have you resisted the pleadings of the poor, what will become of you when you are thrown into the midst of them? when sights of sorrow are daily before you, when complaints are the only language that meets your ear."

"Ellen, my plan will enable me most essentially to benefit my fellow creatures, and extend to them an actual good, far more efficient than any partial help such as I was wont to give, or my heart may still yearn to bestow —with this knowledge I must learn to be content, I may sometimes meet rudeness that may vex me, and I shall doubtless find ingratitude, for every body says that it abounds in the poor—but yet, I shall also undoubtedly find some honest attachment, I shall see some who thrive under my auspices, and then I shall rejoice and be encouraged. I am so young, have so long a journey before me, that it will be strange indeed if there are no green spots, no little flowery resting-places in the whole of my thorny path."

Ellen still shook her head, still wept over her friend as if she considered her a victim, yet one on whom her highest admiration rested—her mind, less gifted and less excited, did not in fact grasp, in its circle of difficulties, half so many as had already presented themselves in formidable array, or galling vexatiousness, to the imagination of her who had resolved to encounter them, had examined, weighed, and decided upon them, and who, now aware that her friend's absence would excite enquiry, prepared to leave her after taking a very slight refreshment.

"You shall not go till I have given you all I have," said Ellen—"you mean to make up the sum of which you spoke, doubtless, by disposing of your ornaments, and I too have a few, they were principally given by you, and *therefore* very dear to me, but"———

Maria, with a kind smile followed by a sigh, received the trinkets, saying, "give them to me, Ellen, now, and when I am rich you shall have much better," and added—"now good bye, you have done me a great deal of good, and given me wealth—do not hang upon me, dear Ellen, do not awaken emotions which destroy me—there—you shan't kiss me again,

you have nothing more to say, my love, have you?"

"Y—es," said Ellen, turning away her head, "I have something to say, something I wished to tell you, but in a time of such distress I could not mention it—yet, alas! my secret is in some measure connected with the sad circumstances belonging to you and yours—we are closely united in our anxieties."

"For heaven's sake tell me this secret—but, perhaps I know to what you allude?"

"I dare say you do, Maria—Mr. Francis Ingalton has"——

"Frank Ingalton has—what has he done? —speak."

"No harm, dear Maria; your spirits are in such a flutter, your imagination takes the alarm at every thing; but I know you have a sister's regard for *him*, and more than a sister's for *me*, and it is only right you should know, that on the night he set out he galloped over here, just to bid me farewel—Maria, I am sure you are ill"——

"Quite well," gasped Maria, "go on, Ellen."

"And he confessed—indeed it was a trying scene to us both—he spoke of his poverty,

his melancholy prospects, his widowed mother, helpless sister, and his long cherished love."

"His love?—*love*, go on Ellen"——

"Yes, his *love*, and do not blame me, Maria, but I certainly felt it mutual and said so."

"Love! it was love *for you*, he confessed!" Such were the words that died on Maria's tongue as she sunk fainting on the floor, and remained in a death-like swoon.

Ellen, in great terror, and full of self-reproach for not having foreseen such an effect, as the consequence of previous agitation, instantly alarmed the house, and Lady Trevannion with great surprise and some sense of displeasure, first learnt the arrival of one who had long been particularly dear to her, and over whose pale form she hung with deep solicitude—in time Maria sighed, opened her eyes, and by slow degrees regained her senses.

The first person she saw was Ellen—a slight shudder followed, and she again closed her eyes, but the voice of Lady Trevannion and her smelling-bottle recalled her, and laying her head on her bosom, she faintly whispered "that she was much better," after

which, she earnestly requested to be left alone upon the sofa.

No objection was made to this, for Lady Trevannion was anxious to enquire from Ellen what was amiss. The answer she received only confirmed those flying reports which had already reached Sir James, and awoke the sincere sympathy of both. Ellen did not betray the schemes of Maria to them, for she felt assured that they could not be put in practice, and they still appeared to her so inconsistent with all that belonged to the past life of Maria, to the elegance and fastidiousness of her cultivated mind, and lofty, though gentle bearing, that the idea of fever and delirium again presented itself. Lady Trevannion, sincerely sorry for Maria, pressed her to remain with them at least, till her mother's return, but after the restoration of an hour's solitude and a cup of chocolate, she earnestly desired to go home, and at length Lady Trevannion ordered her coach and set out thither with her.

The ride, the pure air, the effort she made to shake off the remembrance of that last overwhelming pang, which had produced an effect altogether new in her little history, so

far restored her that Lady Trevannion felt satisfied to leave her, but she went into the house with her to give directions to the servants, and inform them in what manner their young lady had been affected.

In the breakfast parlour stood her harp, at that time an instrument comparatively seldom seen, but which Lady Trevannion admired much, especially as an accompaniment to her own excellent performance—"how I wish you had been well enough, my love, to play me that air I gave you last week," said she.

Maria drew her hand across the chords, but she found it impossible to play.

"I cannot play the air, but I can give you the instrument, dear Lady Trevannion—put it into the coach with you, there is room for it."

"My dear girl, I would not rob you of it for the world—in truth, you were made for each other, in my opinion 'twould be parting a wedded pair, and little short of sacrilege."

Maria again looked very pale, but she tried to smile, and said, "but it is my fate to *live single*."

"That may be, Maria, for I have certainly never yet seen the man I thought meet to marry you, but should it be so, your instru-

ment will be doubly valuable; it will stand you instead of matrimonial music, supply the tedium of solitary hours, and the charming varieties produced by lecturing husbands, squalling children, and unmanageable servants."

"I cannot jest to-day, but you will really oblige me by taking it away for the present—divorce me from it for seven years, at the end of that time, if I have merited it, I will reclaim it; during that time, at least, books and music must be renounced by me."

"For heaven's sake, Maria, what are you about?"

"To renounce your acquaintance, dear Lady Trevannion, not your esteem, no! you will accord me that—I am unequal to explaining what I mean, and you are quite unequal to approving my decision, or changing it. I shall do nothing which as a woman or a Christian will not challenge your approbation; but as a person moving in your sphere of life, I much question that you could be so unprejudiced as to deem me eligible to the place I wish to fill—I must be the builder of my own fortune, and am the contriver of my own

scheme—I inherit a love for speculating, you know."

As Lady Trevannion could not argue against that plan to which she was a stranger, and perceived that there was in her young friend a firmness of character which was the result of deep thought, and a high sense of duty and affection, she departed, taking with her the harp, some favourite music, and a few choice books. Maria felt herself a little easier when they were out of sight; she called them "tempters, which it were well to remove," and she felt that there was a double call for their absence, since every song, and every page was full of those mementos which brought back the image, the words, the ideas of Frank, interwoven so long with all the actions of her life, the imaginings of her heart. When left to herself, long and bitterly did she weep, yet often did she reproach herself for the weakness thus betrayed, and felt astonished how a person, so resolved as she had been but a few hours before to resign every thing, even the love of this very man, (when she trusted it was hers) could yet be overpowered so completely when the pain of

separation was spared her—she knew not till now, that love *feels*, not reasons, and became most sensible how blindly, how entirely she had ventured to love, when assured that the object of her affections was in every possible way removed from her hopes for ever.

CHAP. VII.

Severely as Maria suffered at this time, it is yet certain that the resolution she had formed, and the many plans and expectations which arose out of it, greatly aided in relieving her spirits from that intolerable sense of anguish, disappointment, and mortification, to which Ellen's discovery would inevitably have subjected her, had she been enabled to indulge in solitude the heart-rending thoughts that incessantly sprung to her mind. Often did she repine that the happy insensibility into which she had sunk, was exchanged for the turmoil of contending passions, and deep-seated grief, which now assailed her, and more than once she bent her knees to pray, "that her heavenly Father would remove her from a world to her so full of suffering." At these moments the recollection of what her mother's sorrow and situation would be in consequence of such an event, arrested her words, and pierced her heart with remorse; she ceased

to pray that the "cup of sorrow might be removed," and endeavoured to say "not my will, but thine be done."

Happy indeed was it for Maria, that with a clear view of what wisdom and virtue prescribed, she partook also that pure faith which taught submission and promised reward. She felt a comfort in religious reliance on the God of Providence, those only can conceive, who, in the hour of distress have been thus supported, and becoming aware more and more that the indulgence of sorrow would render her utterly unfit for all that she meditated, again she recurred to the resolutions poor Ellen had so unintentionally interrupted, and determined that very night to sleep in B——, if possible, and begin the business she meditated in the morning.

A few of her plainest clothes were soon packed in a small portmanteau, and dispatched to the house of a workman whom she had long known for a quiet, civil man, living in the very heart of the town, in the midst of smoke and dust, but possessing a kind of large lumber-room contiguous to his dwelling, which he had once let as a coach-office, now to his great trouble removed—his wife was a

decent woman, she believed, and she knew they had only one child, to whom she had been kind; so that many circumstances combined to render this poor couple and their spare premises eligible for her plan; and none more so, than the circumstance that the man himself would be out of employment, whenever the business of her father's house came to an end, and there was at this period so little done that he could hardly fail to be thankful for any assistance she could give him.

Many times Maria endeavoured to write to her mother, but as often did she find the thing impossible, and therefore at length gave it up in despair; considering also, that a few days might safely elapse, and that Mrs. Ingalton would be a good and faithful informer and mediator between them—she was persuaded that no time could be more proper for her trial than the present, since the spirits of her parents would be somewhat lightened by the possession of ready money, and the consoling sense of doing justice to the amiable orphan who held a dear place in their hearts—that their journey would be beneficial to her mother's health, and enable her the better to sustain *her* absence, and supply to her father

the companion and the amusement he had been wont to find in his daughter. Having said all this over and over to her own heart, which, in despite of all that reason could urge and resolution demand, was still a *woman's* heart, and quailed before the "dread unknown" to which it was impelled, she once more addressed herself to her purpose.

"I am going to B—" said she to the footman, "and shall not return—I mean for some days."

"Do you ride, ma'am, or shall I attend you?"

"Neither—and, William, call the dogs away, they must not follow me."

"Not Mayflower, ma'am? Mrs. Ingalton is very fond of Mayflower, she won't think it any trouble to have him for a day or two—and the creature do so mourn after you, there's no living for him."

Maria durst not trust herself to speak, but she shook her head in token of negative—there was another person far worse to leave than Mayflower—her old Irish nurse, who remained a nondescript servant, and occasional mistress, whom it was always necessary to elude when a private stroll was intended, for Kathleen had such an idea of

the importance of her ladies that if she could have ruled, a troop of horse should have attended them. Never till the preceding day had Maria left her home for a night without bidding her farewel, and nothing less than her return in Lady Trevannion's carriage as an invalid could have reconciled her to the event; but in accounting for it, Maria had prepared her for the return of the evil, and even for the approach of greater—she was now weeping in a remote apartment: to encounter her affectionate lamentations, mingled as they were with recapitulations of the glory and honour of the Falconers, the grandeur and antiquity of Sharon-Lacey, was altogether impossible.

Terrible as these parting pangs were, and determined as Maria thought herself to avoid them, yet when she heard the well-known winnow of her beautiful little mare, which happened to espy her as she hastened through the paddock that was her nearest road to the town, she could not forbear to turn and pat the sleek neck of the favourite, which continued to follow her to the stile, as if wooing her to resume their usual airings.

"So, so, Fanny—poor Fanny, what will become of you now?—Pshaw!—what will become of *me* if I suffer such things to move me?"

Yet in despite of self-reproach, for a moment Maria's head rested on Fanny's neck, and her tears fell on it—the loud howl of her favourite greyhound roused her—she looked round, and though glad that the evening was closing, and that she should enter the town unseen, she yet also partook a little that sensation of fear, to which her sex and her habits subjected her; she hesitated whether to pursue her intention, or step back into the house and take William with her across the fields.

"Yet in that case," said she, "there will be perhaps Kathleen and Mary—no, no, I must go alone, I must suffer alone—perhaps too I may conquer *alone;* ah Frank! even now, weak and weary as I am, ignorant as I feel myself of that which I am about to learn, and to endure, yet I am sensible that I have courage, and energy enough, to bear all, sustain all that is before me, if you"—

Again she felt as if she should faint, so thickly did her breath heave and so chilly

were the sensations which crept over her trembling limbs, but she was alone, and a sense of terror lest she should fall in such a place sustained her, and after a short rest she obtained the power of proceeding.

That part of the town to which she now bent her steps was so little known to her, that she procured a child as a guide, whose steps she followed with great difficulty, through many a long dirty lane, crowded with dingy inhabitants, who stared at the lady as a novelty in their purlieus seldom seen, although she had wisely dressed herself in a dark habit and stripped her beaver of its plume. She arrived at the house of William Mitchell just at the time when its master had concluded his daily labours, and his wife was making up a cheerful fire—that comfort which the inhabitants of a coal district generally indulge in, whether required by the weather or not.

William was spelling out her name on the portmanteau which had been left an hour before, as she entered, and his astonishment at her appearance and her enquiries were soon superseded by his joy at disposing of his warehouse, and learning that she was

engaging in an undertaking which ensured him employment—the expectation she expressed that he would also accommodate her with board and lodging, was of a more startling nature to both him and his helpmate.

"I shall live with you, and promise to give you very little trouble," said Maria.

"To be sure we have a bed, such as it is, and in a day or two we might get a few things."

"But I can't say as I am any thing of a cook," said the wife.

"I require no cooking," cried Maria in great anxiety, and the bargain was soon concluded; she took a seat near the fire, and whilst the wife departed to prepare her bed, began eagerly to arrange all her future plans with the husband, whom she soon accompanied into the place destined to be the scene of her gains and her labours, and which she found calculated for its purpose beyond her hopes.

When this was over, she returned into the house, and found upon the uncovered table, a substantial loaf and a piece of pale, unpromising cheese. Maria recollected at this appearance that she had taken no tea, and

she wished for a cup exceedingly, but fearful of giving extraordinary trouble on her first entrance, and resolved to embrace in its fullest extent the change she had imposed on herself, she sat down and cut herself a piece of bread, but was beginning to find that she could not persuade, nor command it down her throat, when Sally Mitchell placed a foaming pint of beer on the table, to which she invited her with all the good will of a kind heart offering a valuable gift.

"I never drink malt liquor," said Maria, "but I will take a little"—

"Wine and water" was on the point of following, but she checked herself, and said "spring water."

"As you please, Miss," said Sally, "we have a very good pump, but to see how pale you look, and how different you be fra when I seed ye about half a year back a riding with poor Mr. Frank Ingalton, as be now beyond seas, I can't help thinking as a drop of ale be ralely needful for ye—surtainly I'd recommend it, after the walk you've had, and the trouble you're come to go through."

"Its very good advice," said William, "because if you goes for to do business,

ma'am, and to live by labour, and with poor folks, you'll find it quite needful to take support same as they."

Maria felt her heart grateful for the interest evinced in this recommendation, and determined to find no obstacles to her establishment, she took the jug and drank heartily. The sense of present refreshment, she experienced, was succeeded by heaviness, and as she had never clos'd her eyes the night before that, even on the hard truckle-bed of Sally Mitchell, she enjoyed a long, salutary sleep, in which her worn-out frame and spirits regained the strength so greatly needed.

CHAP. VIII.

MARIA had retired to her humble cabin at an hour so unusually early, that the long refreshing sleep she had enjoyed, left her with the dawn of day, which flung its beams through the uncurtained windows, and aroused her to resume those energies, and prove the stability of those resolutions, so lately but so decidedly adopted.

Yet it was some time before she could conquer the sense of surprise and dismay which seized on her senses, and confused her faculties. Where could she be? how deplorable was the place! how coarse the sheets! what noise and confusion were around her!"

By degrees she remembered her situation, remembered that this day she was to embark on a new state of existence in every respect —that humility, labour, zeal, integrity, and constancy in well-doing, were the virtues to which, in the act of thus embarking on a new, untried, and tempestuous ocean, she

had fully pledged herself. That henceforward she must deem herself tied to the oar, not less by duty than choice, and since the renunciation of all the pleasures of her past life was required from her, must endeavour to find pleasure in the exercise of powers, the anticipation of rewards, hitherto unknown and unsought for.

Retiring to the corner of her chamber, she knelt down, and long and fervently besought her heavenly father to strengthen her weakness, confirm her resolution, guide her ignorance, and enable her so to place the future welfare of her parents before her eyes, that her motive for self-devotion might ever operate on her mind, and bestow the activity and patience she required—for them too she prayed—but then her heart melted, her eyes overflowed, yet she arose calm and comforted.

Mitchell was down stairs, awaiting her commands, and a single hour sufficed for their preparations; a fire was made in the warehouse, a quantity of dry straw laid on one side of it—a waggon-load of iron bars soon afterwards were there deposited, an old desk and a stool, left by the last occupants,

were at present sufficient for the new one, but a pair of magnificent scales were purchased by Mitchell in the neighbourhood, and suspended by him from the ceiling, as such things had formerly been.

When this was arranged, Maria knew that she could breakfast—on going into the house to request a cup of tea, she found preparation made to that effect, whilst large basins of boiled milk, stuffed with bread, formed the more substantial beverage of her companions. Sensible that such food would be more likely to suit the hunger she really felt, and that she might hereafter feel, she determined on adopting it, and told Mrs. Mitchell she would henceforward drink tea only in the evening, when they would take it together—information received with great pleasure, as until now this luxury had seldom been seen in the establishment of poor Sally, save on Sundays.

Advertisements were not the fashion of that day, nor were they wanted; a sheet of paper written in a large hand, stuck in the house window, announced the welcome fact, that artizans in steel might have their material supplied in small quantities, of the best quality, at the market price, and the news ran

from mouth to mouth through garrets and smithies, workshops and dwelling houses, with equal rapidity—every where it was received with joy, as containing the promise of good; the discontented workman saw in it the power of emancipating himself from real or supposed tyranny; the humble manufacturer felt that it would relieve him from the actual despotism of those great iron-masters, who had long held him in bondage, and in a very short time, more respectable customers appeared than even the sanguine prognostications of Mitchell had ever calculated upon.

The appearance of Maria in a pair of thick leather gloves, a French night-cap, surmounted by her beaver hat, and a brown holland apron tied over her habit, surprized all who came; and when from her name, and a glance at her nearly concealed face, they were led to believe that the person before them, could be no other "than beautiful Miss Falconer of Grove Place," surprize, astonishment, and pity, involved them all in silence. The time had not yet arrived, when the lower classes were infected with those half-digested ideas of liberty and equality which taught them

to rejoice in the sufferings of their superiors, and tempted them to aim at pulling down the high, and trampling on the fallen. They all knew that misfortune and death had visited the mercantile house to which she belonged, but they had always understood that 'Squire Falconer and his Lady were more nobly descended, more substantially provided, than any other, even of the rich people of the town; that they were of a class distinct and above those to whom they were accustomed to look up, and such a change, such a *fall* as this was petrifying.

Maria weighed her iron bars with as little awkwardness, and as much precision as could be expected, firmly declining, as far as possible, even Mitchell's assistance, and after serving three persons at a time, she then walked to her rough desk, to calculate the amount of each parcel, and receive the money —for that purpose she took off the thick brown leather gloves with which her hands were guarded.

"The Lord ha mercy on us what hands!" Such was the first exclamation that broke on Maria's ear—it proceeded involuntarily from the lips of a begrimed, thick set son of

Vulcan, with shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulders; the rest of his squat form was enveloped in that useful garment, a leathern dick or apron, and a beard of some standing formed a contrast to a clean striped cap, which had been put on to give respectability to his appearance as a customer. Maria half started at his voice, and still more on finding him so near her, as he tendered a crown and some sixpences which he was going to count into her hand.

The start did not offend John Bilson, who felt that he had perhaps unwillingly given pain, and he began to frame an apology.

"I doant mean to say nout ageeanst yer hands, Miss, Madom—nobbut they're varry white, and varry little, more fitter for playin at the top of yer musicals, and sewing at embroideries than handling iron—that's all."

"They are hands that have fed the hungry, and cloathed the neaked, as I've hard say," observed one of his neighbours, "so 'tis not right to make no observations upon things as is past and gone."

"Zounds, mon, don't preach," cried John, "I've noa doubt on't, and wi God's blessing they'll doo't again—Madam, I'm the first

parson as have given ye money, shake hands wi me for luck, I mean no offence whatever."

Maria laid her hand freely in the broad black palm of her first customer, and as she did so, looked in his face, and saw that his eyes were full of tears—fearful of shewing his emotion, he hastily turned away, shouldered his purchase, and withdrew. No other person attempted the like liberty; Maria was not called upon to repel impertinence, or to silence loquacity, all seemed aware that there was "a great gulf between them," and since there could be no higgling on the subject of price, no choice in the quality, or appearance of the article; since the buyers, contrary to all similar situations in which such persons stand, were the obliged parties—the day, though one of great fatigue, yet served to shew Maria that it was possible for her to endure that which she had adopted, and even to be thankful that she found it no worse.

It is true that she could not eat the coarse half-cooked meat which furnished Sally Mitchell's provision for dinner, and she dreaded lying down again on the hard pallet, conscious that it would not afford a second night of undisturbed repose; but the remem-

brance of the kind, though rough faces she had seen around her, soothed her spirits more, the more she reflected upon them, and if any one had been near her, to whom she could have spoken, she would have been eloquent in her praise of that genuine sensibility, which can inform the humblest children of humanity with all the refinements of delicate attention—lively, yet deep respect. She rejoiced that by frequent intercourse with poverty, as a benefactress, her ear had become accustomed to phraseology that would have been otherwise, perhaps, uncouth and disgusting, and that her dealings were with the decidedly low, in preference to the vulgar, who ape gentility, and are disgusting alike from ignorance and affectation.

Could she have sat down with Frank, at the end of her day's labour, to describe the characters, or laugh at the adventures and embarrassments it had offered—could she meet her mother's gentle smile, listen to her father's prospects of success, this life might surely be borne. Alas! she felt that she must support it without any such helps; in lowliness of heart, in unshared conflict of

mind, or communication of intellect, she must persevere in her rugged path.

A very few days sufficed to shew Maria that it is not always, "*le premier pas qui coute*"—all her first customers had recovered from their taciturnity, the moment they left her presence, and related to every one they saw, the wonderful scene in which they had borne a part—the fact, "that Miss Falconer was lodging at the house of her father's warehouseman, and selling iron," ran from the manufactory to the counting-house, from the kitchen to the drawing-room, all through the extensive population of B—, and even to its surrounding villages. When combined with the absence of her father, it placed the affairs of that house he now solely represented in a more threatening point of view than they had hitherto assumed, and it is certain that his creditors in some places held consultations upon it, and looked as if they knew not how to proceed. Their wives and daughters, and those of many others in the higher circle of the society of B—, were apparently better qualified to judge; for, however they might differ as to the moving principle or person, they

alike condemned the action exhibited. Some young ladies abused Mr. Falconer as the most barbarous father who ever had existed, and imputed much of his cruelty to the land of his birth, maintaining that he alone must have caused his daughter to enter on a situation so repugnant to her habits; and there were not wanting some, who described the terrible scene which took place between them on the occasion. Others avowed "that Maria had a penchant for young Ingalton, which being discovered by her proud parents, she had been driven from their house, and compelled to adopt a trade, which, requiring no knowledge, and belonging in some measure to the connection of her future husband, she held only till he should return, when they would marry, and play at "love in a cottage" for the rest of their lives; a declaration which called a tender sigh of sympathy from some lips, and made others curl with disdain.

The elder ladies pretty generally inveighed against Maria's conduct, on the score of indelicacy, presumption, and independence—the vehement protested against young women, who could think of such a thing as leaving

their father's house to herd with low people —if the girl really knew she was ruined, and must earn her bread, why not go out as a lady's maid—or why not learn millinery? or, as she was a mighty bookish Miss, try to keep a circulating library?—the mild, thought it was always wrong for woman to intrude on the province of man—it was perverting the order of things, and could never prosper. All agreed, that although Miss Falconer was very handsome, very clever and accomplished, very fond of her parents, good to the poor, and so forth, yet "there was something odd about her." Each could recollect a little eccentricity or peculiarity; one observed, "that she was fond of conversing with men, arguing points, and asking questions, as if her mind were like theirs"—another, "that she had an Irish kind of partiality to animals, which proved that she had originally been brought up with them, poor creature, and therefore returned, perhaps not unwillingly, to the abodes of filthy people"—a third remembered, "that she had quite a passion for poetry, and though it was not generally known, yet in fact she wrote verses herself, which was a sure proof of a romantic turn,

and had probably led to this strange resolution." It was observed on all sides that it would not last long, but that it could not fail to cast a lasting stigma on the poor creature who had so insanely adopted it.

All these opinions, and judgments, with every shade and variation they could receive, necessarily fell on the ear of poor Mrs. Ingalton, who loved Maria fondly, because she knew her well, and greatly were her own troubles increased (great as they were) by information so astonishing, in the first instance, and condemnation so excessive, in the second.

She endeavoured to convince her informers that the whole story was false, that there was some imposition in it; but when driven from that by those who protested they had actually visited the horrid place where she lived, and even so far peeped in as to see a queer-looking, muffled-up woman, with half a dozen forgemen about her, the crime was proved, and the state of the culprit could not be denied.

Mrs. Ingalton and her eldest daughter proceeded to the place in the dusk of the evening, and found Maria still at the receipt of custom, and so busy, that she was some time before

she perceived them; as the last customer took up his iron, she advanced towards them, raising her hat from her brow, and displaying to them an open, friendly countenance.

"Maria! is it indeed you that I find thus employed?—I heard, but could not believe it—for heaven's sake what is the meaning of all this?"

"I mean, dear Mrs. Ingalton, in the first place, to earn my own bread, which I promise you shall be for some time coarse in quality, and not superabundant in quantity, that I may the sooner provide it for my parents also. I hope Emily also will, in some way more agreeable to her own notions, follow my example."

"Have you then had any private communication from my son? do you consider us as ruined?

"I have not—I know nothing new, nothing at least respecting business from Mr. Francis Ingalton, but I do know that whatever may be your future lot, our doom is sealed—and I will not stand by and see my mother rendered houseless, without making an effort to provide her a roof of some kind. I know the whole of our acquaintance are

condemning me, I know *that* from Mitchell, but I can bear it."

"No one can blame you for seeking to help your parents, if there should prove occasion for your exertion; but on such a subject you should have thought much, have taken advice—your father could never, surely, dictate this?"

"My father! you know well, Mrs. Ingalton, that my father has never seen a cloud in the sky, nor will do it, till the storm bursts, which will overwhelm him—I have thought much, and reasoned long, ere I formed either my plan, or adopted my resolution. My opinions on the nature of that business in which I have engaged, arose from what the first men in the place have frequently advanced—little money, little knowledge, but great industry, and great firmness, are called for—you know how well the first apply to me—it remains for me to prove the last."

"It will break your mother's heart to see you thus—it will indeed, Maria."

"Oh no! it will save that heart from breaking, for it is an honest heart, and is now relieved from a secret much heavier than my rods of iron—besides, dear Mrs. Ingalton,

you will mention it to her with tenderness, I know you will—to-morrow evening go to them, break it to them, and soften it as well as you are able."

"But may I promise you will renounce it."

"Certainly not. My resolution to persevere is inevitable; I have forbidden Mitchell ever again to tell me one single report or surmise on my conduct. I will go on in despite of the world, for I know not only my motives to be good, but my prospects, and I will not suffer my mind to be weighed down by the calumny of others, or the feelings of my own heart—I will be as hard as the article I deal in. Who will suffer in the affair as I have suffered and must suffer? who can know the pangs"—

Mrs. Ingalton wept bitterly, but Maria slowly paced the floor, and removed the straw which obtruded beyond its bounds, as if even here she wished to observe her accustomed neatness.

"Will you not go home with us, Maria?" resumed Mrs. Ingalton, when she was able to speak.

"No, thank ye—I must not render my hard fare more unpalatable by mixing it with

better; it will be some months before I shall venture upon any indulgences of that kind,—this is my resolution. All I will at this time accept from you, is a little bed-linen—in a short time I shall be rich enough to buy myself many little comforts."

As Maria spoke, she exhibited a large canvas purse, very full of silver, and another, in which were a few half-guineas, and as she did so, there was a little of that laughing archness in her eye, and dimpled smile in her expressive mouth, which, in better days, had been the subject of Mrs. Ingalton's admiration, and which she believed at this very moment held the heart of her beloved Frank in bondage. She was compelled to take her leave, and she went home to her house, oppressed with sorrow, and trembling for the *denouemènt* of the morrow.

Yet when Mrs. Ingalton revolved the matter in her mind dispassionately, she could not fail to see that in all her conclusions Maria was unquestionably right, and that her conduct was dictated by the purest motives, and even the wisest principles. She looked earnestly on her own situation, rallied her own powers, computed those of her

daughters, nor did she lay her head on her pillow, till she had fairly calculated their chance of succeeding in a Boarding-school, and concluded to seek advice on the subject from Maria herself.

CHAP. IX.

In the new view of affairs which Mrs. Ingalton's mind had adopted, it will be properly concluded that she represented the resolution taken by Maria, and the situation she had chosen, in the most favourable light that it could be placed, and in every respect endeavoured to conciliate her parents, or rather her *father;* for however Mrs. Falconer might lament the loss of her society, and the degradation to which she had submitted, it was impossible for her not to honour the principle, and feel even grateful for the love which dictated such a sacrifice. Mr. Falconer's perception of the matter was unhappily completely the reverse; his pride and his poverty equally took the alarm, and whilst the first urged him to denounce his daughter as acting in a manner totally unworthy of her ancestors and her education, undutifully towards her parents, and unbecomingly as to all her connections, the latter led him to apprehend

that all his creditors would, from such an exposure of the situation of his wife's finances, be induced to press him for that day of settlement he dreaded to name.

That such an effect, to a certain degree, did follow, must be admitted; it had been amongst those effects on which Maria had calculated, and she had joined with this knowledge the consolatory remembrance, that those poor tradesmen, to whom small sums were of great importance, would at the present time find her father able to discharge them, in doing which his credit would be strengthened. She knew perfectly well, that although an imprudent, adventurous, and speculative man, her father was intentionally honest, in the strictest sense of the word, honourable and liberal in all his transactions, and that inability to discharge such obligations would entail upon him regret, which, in his present reduced state, he was ill able to endure. Her conjectures proved right—he paid them, eased his own heart of the oppression, and blamed his daughter, as if she had committed a positive robbery on his purse, and indulged against her a strain of invective proportioned to the fond regard and

idolizing admiration with which he was wont to contemplate her.

To such a degree did this temper proceed, that the poor mother could at length bear it no longer; she wrote in the most moving terms to Maria, beseeching her "to abandon a scheme which it would be cruel, almost impious, to pursue further; since it had unhappily sown the first seeds of dissension between her parents, and produced an effect on her father's temper, which neither the misfortunes of time past, nor the apprehension of time to come, had ever awakened; she praised her warmly, thanked her tenderly, for the efforts she had made, but solemnly protested against the continuance of them, declaring that she was ready to endure evil in any other shape, but *this* she could not meet, since it separated her from all that hitherto consoled and sustained her anxious, unhappy life."

Over this meek, but affecting statement of her mother's feelings, the still fond, tender, though resolute daughter wept, and almost shuddered—she felt that she was indeed a very young woman to act so determinate a part, that the purest intention would not

justify erroneous action, nor even success warrant disobedience. Decided as she had been, and even thus far justified in her expectation of deriving good (even far beyond her most sanguine hopes) still it was possible that the evil she incurred might not be obviated by the good she meditated—perhaps she was destroying, not only the peace, but the health of her mother; it might be that her obstinate adherence to her system would bring back that terrible complaint on her father, which had left behind it ravages she dreaded to think of.

Yet on the other hand, October was drawing nigh, Frank Ingalton was returning (she dreaded to remember that) with little money, and all that she had foreseen was necessarily advancing, and her father at forty-three, with a wife scarcely thirty-seven, must be cast on the mercy of a world, for which the very dispositions they now evinced evidently rendered them peculiarly unfit. How was a man so proud, so sensitive, to endure servitude which would inevitably be his portion? since it was certain he had always been too much a gentleman, to be highly talented as a tradesman; with much activity, he had little

method, with good theory on his tongue, little practice of head or hand—liable to imposition, even from a child in cunning; generous to profusion, and utterly devoid of all that wisdom conveyed in the advice, "take care of pence—pounds take care of themselves."

Moreover, she had now established a new and very thriving concern, which if she laid down for but a week would be eagerly adopted by people with capital, who, seeing its success, had already regretted their own want of foresight in suffering such a mine to remain so long unwrought, yet would not at present oppose so young and poor an adventurer, in her humble, and as they now all began to feel, her *laudable* attempt. If she dropped it, then it was gone for ever, and whatever might be the trials it imposed, the toils it occasioned, yet she felt that to her spirit there was less of humiliation in it than any she could hope to adopt. Never had she been degraded by the "proud ones' contumely," irritated by condescending patronage, the pity which insults, the assistance which degrades.

It is true that low rogues had sought to

cheat her, that the deceitful had in a few instances cajoled her; but these attempts to impose on her credulity, and excite her charity, had been effectually useful—they had led her to explore the cell of poverty where it really existed, and enabled her to soothe the hour of want, and the bed of sickness, by a portion of her hard-earned gains, a participation of her scanty comforts—she had attained a power of encouraging the industrious, of controlling the idle, of benefiting many, and the certain prospect of extending this power beyond calculation—it was then her duty to preserve it.

Doubtless, in these hopes and expectations of good, there was the form of one whose name was not uttered, that claimed a large share of consideration, and romantic visions floated in the perspective which rational hope spread out. Alas! she who could even yet have bestowed worlds upon him, hoped not to share them with him, but a fond and generous heart took refuge now from the oppression inflicted by disappointment, in the dreams of friendship; and although it is probable that the fevered spirit felt as if the good it intended must operate "like coals of fire" on his heart,

it yet could not cease to meditate some assistance, or even aggrandizement for one so long and tenderly beloved.

After all these reviews of the subject, Maria at length considered it her duty to visit her parents, and lay before them a full statement of her feelings, her views, her profits, and her prospects, yet without pledging herself to abandon that which every examination rendered more valuable in her sight. How she had longed to see them, how ardently she desired to receive their approbation and their blessing, may be conceived, even from her absence, since, strong-minded and decisive as her conduct had already bespoke her, she had not dared to meet countenances which would melt the sinews of her resolve, and which even in their kindness would so agitate, and as it were, unman her, as to unfit her for the stern duties of her laborious and ceaseless round of occupation.

The following Sunday, under the escort of Mitchell, and by a circuitous path, about the close of day, Maria once more presented herself before her parents—the very action was an assurance to Mrs. Falconer that her letter had produced all the effect she desired, and

she fell on her neck and welcomed her with thankfulness, not less than love; it was in vain too that her father endeavoured to assume the anger he had so often fulminated in her absence—his lip trembled, the first touch of her hand disarmed him, and in another moment she was locked in his arms.

Terrible indeed was this reception to the *heart* of Maria, she could have argued point by point, have produced facts, pleaded necessities, but how could she resist the tenderness, the confidence in her submission thus displayed?—how could she look on the whitening locks of her father, and maintain her own superior wisdom? how dash from the placid countenance of her mother that glowing happiness now painted upon it, in an expression more bright than it had worn for years?

"We have just received letters from our dear Francis Ingalton," said Mrs. Falconer, "he will be here next week, most probably."

Mr. Falconer gave a profound sigh, and immediately the smile which had illuminated his lady's countenance was dispersed.

"Do not sigh, father," said Maria, "something will be done, depend upon it."

"*Something* has been done, most blameably done, but I will not reproach you for the past, Maria."

"Nor, I trust, for the future, since it is certain that all I have done and mean to do, is for *you*."

"Ridiculous! what can the earnings of a few paltry shillings drawn from the black paws of the lowest rabble do?—will your profits find strings to your harp, Miss Falconer?"

"Allow me to shew you, dear father—to explain to you the advantage—the necessity —the"

"Heavens! would you make me a party to your disgrace?—do you ask me to approve your folly and madness? to take part in your beggarly plans—your dirty savings"——

"Not now—I do not ask you *now* to share my board, or even to visit my dwelling, but as I fear the time may come, when both may be necessary, I will not say that I am sorry for providing them, at any rate I may be allowed to provide for myself—your creditors shall not reproach me for having robbed *them*. It is my duty to keep myself, since

I know that your *late* misfortunes and other things"——

"Maria, Maria, do not reproach us!" cried the mother in a voice of agony.

"Go away, girl—is it not enough that you have disgraced us—injured us—must you insult us also?"

As Mr. Falconer spake, he caught his wife in his arms, and with an angry motion, such as he had never used to her even in the days of childhood, pointed to the door.

"I go," said Maria, haughtily, for anger at that moment flushed her cheek, and dried the tears that had lingered in her eyes—"I go, but my mother may recall me—and remember I have used no word of reproach—I have not deserved—but I will say nothing—you have preserved me, and I ought to thank you for confirming me in my decision."

CHAP. X.

MARIA left the room, and was hastening out of the house, but her steps were arrested by those four-footed friends we have already alluded to, and the sound of their congratulations brought Kathleen also, who hung around her darling with all the doating fondness and obstreperous sorrow, peculiar to her country. Maria took her by the hand, and resolutely approaching the door, the old woman flung her apron over her head, and conceiving that she was going to hear some secret, suddenly became quiet and walked out with her.

They entered the paddock, and there Maria calmed the beatings of a heart (whose pulsation had been quickened by various emotions) in the enquiries she stopped to make on every particular of the health of both her parents. The answers were on the whole very satisfactory, nor could she be sorry to find also that two servants had been provided with places

in the neighbourhood; but a sigh certainly rose, when Kathleen added,

"It was all the better for sartin that George should go, seeing as he had no work at all, when the mare was sould away to young Birchett"—

"The mare?—my pretty Fanny"—

"Oh yes! sure; and you did'nt know then? and is it me that has tould you the news? ill luck to the tongue that did it, for I know it will grieve you."

"No, no, it is all right—she has got a good manger, and a kind master—I am content."

"Nay, nay, as to *content*, blessins on the swate voice of ye, there's no content in the case at all, but only ye see it just broke the hearts of them—of your parents I mane, to set eyes on her, and the cratur was of no use, seeing Master was too heavy for her; so when the youth, who is quite a bit stripling, said how he'd do by her, and offered a mighty high price into the bargain, Madam said as how it was their duty to let it go—but her eyes were as red after it, as if the blood had come from her heart to bathe them, so they were."

"But, good Kathleen, you must turn back,

you see I have Mitchell following, he will take care of *me*—but you will be alone."

"But why cannot I go wi ye altogidder, Miss? surely I'll work my fingers to the bone for ye;—sleep on straw, and eat pratees the rest of my days—if you are poor (as they tell me you are) is it not proper I should be poorer still, being your sarvant? now pray answer me that—do answer it."

"You are older than me, my good Kathleen."

"And no mighty matter o' that rather, some forty years is the outside on't, an thof my lady has made me asy in my please, there's good work in me yet for many's the day to come."

"I know it, my good Kathleen, and depend upon it, you shall work for me by and bye—only don't cry, and you shall do any thing."

"But how can I help it?—am I not delighted to labour, and to starve, and to sup sorrow by spoonfuls? and deuce a drop can I get of it—ye take it all on yourself—ye do, ye do, Miss Falconer, an it is'nt handsome of ye."

The reiterated assurances that in a very short time she should share in all her trou-

bles, at length induced Kathleen to return, and her young idolized lady pursued her melancholy walk with pensive steps, and a sense of deep depression on her spirits, which she felt utterly incapable of shaking off. Sincerely did she now repent that she had suffered her original plan to be so far infringed upon, as to have subjected herself to vexation which had answered no good end, and awakened in her memory those thousand pangs of recollected pleasures, hopes, and even sorrows, which it was necessary to blunt and destroy, or at least supplant by less endearing, but more appropriate ideas.

The morning was long in its approach to her now sleepless eyes, but when it came again, the press of business, the sense of usefulness, and even the perpetual necessity of self-control roused her from that enfeebling dejection which threatened more to subdue the energy and sap the vigour of her mind, than violent emotion. Again she counted her profits, calculated the amount of that which she required, or which she had a probability of ensuring, and for that time at least, might be said to "go on her way rejoicing." But when the remembrance of

Frank's near approach struck on her heart, at such moments it inflicted intolerable anguish, and put to flight all sober calculation, all promise of that calmness necessary for her pursuits, of that happiness which ought to be their reward.

Yet when Frank actually arrived, and called upon her with his mother, she had the satisfaction of seeing him with more self-possession than her fluttering bosom had previously promised. She thought him much altered, much improved in fact, both as to the manliness of his person, and the ease, steadiness, and quiet importance of his manners, which argued that self-reliance, and conscious assumption of necessary knowledge so desirable in every man. He was however all the less, that pale student, that interesting young man, whose virtuous struggles, warm affections, and soaring mind, had charmed her imagination, and stolen unwittingly into her heart—it was, however, certain that he became more like himself every moment, and Maria, for the first time in her life, heard him depart with a sensation of relief.

Frank did not visit her again, though he failed in no other mode of attention which

he found would be acceptable; but that business which she had strongly urged upon him in this interview, and which her example still more strongly inculcated, required every moment of his time, and scarcely allowed him to give to the real object of his love that attention his heart accorded, but which every circumstance in his unfortunate situation forbade him to indulge.

One Sunday morning, just after returning from that which had now become her *parish* church, Maria was surprized by a visit from Ellen. She wore on her entrance a cheerful countenance, but on casting her eyes around, the composure she had assumed forsook her, and she was scarcely able to speak.

"Come into my bed-room," said Maria, "you will be better there, my dear."

But Ellen felt as if she were worse as she again looked round, and remembered the beautiful chamber, and the adjoining boudoir where they had spent so many happy hours, unconscious that care or poverty was ever likely to reach them.

"I am happy, Ellen, in having anticipated those changes which I perceive are now affecting you—it is a great deal better to

adopt them from choice than necessity, to feed our own pride by firmness and decision, than endure the wounds which others may inflict upon it"—

"Ah! Maria, you are indeed a heroine—but I am not."

Maria felt that Ellen was that which she, alas! could never be, but she rallied her spirits and said cheerfully,

"Dear Ellen, we will not talk of my qualities but my success—your gift was invaluable, and I have so turned my little stock, that it has cleared me already nearly seventy pounds, besides paying for my board, purchasing these chairs, that counterpane, and several other articles towards housekeeping, on which, I assure you, I cast very different eyes from you, saucy girl as you are."

"Dear Maria, I am come to talk to you on that very subject—to beg you will take the money which your father paid to me as my fortune last Thursday, in the presence of Sir James. I certainly never expected any thing after what you had said, still less desired that my generous, dear guardian should distress himself about it, but he insisted on paying it, and even the interest due

since my coming of age. All is here; if you can make so much money out of a little, I trust you will make a great deal out of this, and be able to help those excellent parents effectually whom we are equally bound to assist."

As Ellen spake, she laid on the table a draft on the banker of Sir James Trevannion, for nearly nine hundred pounds, observing he thought it safer than notes, and although his lady set her down at a little distance, they were unwilling to trust cash to her care, she was so little accustomed to a town.

Maria heard not a word of this exordium —her heart swelled in her bosom almost to suffocation, her eye glanced from the draft to Ellen's face, which was very pale, but not the variation of a single feature gave indication of change in her sentiments, and when she had deliberately placed it in her pocket-book, Ellen whispered—" thank you, Maria."

" Bravo, Ellen !—now who is the heroine ?"

" Not me, I am sure—I should be the most ungrateful being that lived if I forgot"—

" Oh yes !—yes !—I know what the value of such a sacrifice at such a moment is—but I am satisfied—I will be happy—you merit him, and you shall marry him; I will raise

heaven and earth in your behalf—I will carry the point"—

With these words Maria, oppressed to suffocation by mingled emotions, burst into a flood of tears.

At length the desire to conceal, even from Ellen, the real state of her heart enabled her to appear composed, and it was not difficult to deceive her, for Ellen felt only surprized how she could have received her at all, without displaying that agitation her situation seemed to call for. She blushed excessively, and would have asked Maria "what she meant?" but for the consciousness that she had for two days been really fighting a hard battle between her deep regard for her guardian and her unbounded love for Maria on the one hand, and the still tenderer preference she felt for the interests of her lover on the other; and she dreaded any further exposition of feelings she was too artless to hide—Maria relieved her by saying, "Why did not my father pay you this when you came of age, my dear Ellen?"

"He said the law justified him in the delay of six months, which he gladly took, lest I should, by lending you any part of it, en-

courage you in what he once considered wrong, and indeed never should approve; and he added, that as you were a minor it was not possible for any person to lend you money safely."

"Can that be true?" said Maria.

"It certainly is, for Sir James said so too."

"Then why did he allow you to bring me this?"

"Because I told him that I *would* have it to *give* you, not *lend* you, so that security was of no use in the business at all."

"There are, dear Ellen, who say that *love* matures the understanding, and makes many a giddy girl into a thoughtful woman, but the worldly wise would say the reverse was your case."

"They would say wrong, for I thought much, I felt much, but your example inspired me, decided me—see what it has also done for Mrs. Ingalton; she has procured friends, taken a house, and hopes to begin a Boarding-school at Christmas: it is all owing to you, and Frank says so—but every body will in time say the same, and that there never was such a daughter born as you—cruel as your reward has hitherto been."

Maria wished the "every body" had been forgotten for the one person's sake, but she could ask no questions, not even on those points which it most concerned her to know, and without informing Ellen what she intended to do with her money, suffered her to depart and seek rewards in her conscience and her friendship—consolation in the envied society of Frank, whom she was not less inclined to thank for this generous boon, than Ellen herself.

CHAP. XI.

The time was now arrived, when the long-dreaded settlement of affairs could be post-poned no longer, by the sole representative of that house to which our friend belonged. Frank had, with the utmost exertion, been able to glean but a small portion of debts left by Mr. Mayton, and although it was confidently reported that the Banking-house, by which they were such great losers, had considerable property, it would be a long period before it could be called in, or ren-dered effective in producing dividends.

It therefore followed that every thing left in the power of the survivors must be brought forward, to liquidate claims which had been frequently made in vain already, and given to the house an appearance of deficiency beyond the truth. Mrs. Ingalton, accus-tomed to suffering, and now first obtaining light whereby to see her duty, and hope as to the issue, freely gave up all she had

possessed, too conscious that the property brought by her late husband to the concern, was trifling in comparison with that of poor Falconer, and his richly dowried wife, and her son lost no time in bringing forward his accounts, remittances, and stock in hand; much more was not required, for the whole demand could not be considered great, when the former importance of the business was recollected, and the losses sustained by it.

In truth, from time to time, the property of Mr. Falconer had been called upon for the supply of all emergencies, the pursuit of all speculations. Mayton had preyed upon him systematically, and Ingalton, who was an amiable and good man, had become so involved, as to do it from necessity, and his affliction from that cause confirmed the disease that consumed him. The frequent sale of property to which the once wealthy partner was compelled to have resource, injured the credit of the house, and thus reduced it in a double sense, long before the time when the failure of the Bank at Dantzic confirmed its ruin.

Ever closing his eyes to danger, and deriving hope from the sanguine temper which

had misled him through life, Mr. Falconer, now the hour of distress really arrived, abandoned all to his creditors, not only with the frank honesty of an upright man, but the astonishment and despair of one, who for the first time discovers danger of which he had never been warned, and troubles for which he was utterly unprepared. So much was pity excited for his state, and that of his faultless wife (whose only cares were for his health) that the principal creditor of the house most kindly offered to take all his property at a fair valuation, and carry the money it should produce to his credit, and told him, "on no account to hurry himself in evacuating the premises."

When this was done, to the astonishment of many, and the satisfaction of all interested, it was found that the house, so long subject to suspicion, paid within a mere trifle all that was brought against it, and full proof was therefore given, that within a short period there was a handsome surplus. This was often repeated in every possible way to Mr. Falconer by his lady, but she could not rouse him to taste of comfort—even the want of that little residue oppressed and galled

him—he refused to be seen by even his best friends, and if he had not happily had the power of still flattering himself with the belief (however slightly founded) that he should eventually regain property from Dantzic, his mind undoubtedly had sunk into an utter wreck.

A few weeks previous to this arrangement, their old friend Mr. Elderton returned from Germany, and having already heard something of Maria's movements, lost not an hour in hastening to see her. She had by this time fitted up a small room, which was one of the four which constituted Mitchell's house, into a kind of counting-house parlour, where he found her regulating her books, and for some moments too much engaged to notice his entrance.

The old man took off his spectacles to wipe away the moisture on them just as Maria looked up—the moment she saw him, all the cares and the manners of her new occupation ceased, and she flew into his arms, delighted to see him, and protesting "that she had sighed for him a whole twelvemonth, and deemed him a recreant knight."

"I have had a great deal to do, and to go

through," said Mr. Elderton, "I have lost a large sum of money, or at least lost the use of it, (for I do think we shall all be paid at last) and as I am growing older, and have neither wife nor child, or even near relation, have resolved to draw my affairs into a smaller compass, and to close my German connections altogether."

"Had I known," continued he, "what you were doing, I would have come home sooner, child, to teach you, and support you under the trial you have so nobly entered upon."

"That you would I am certain—but you are in good time now—for Frank is returned and"—

"I know it, child, and know also that he has done his duty whilst he was abroad—in short, that he is an excellent young man; we will talk about *him* by and bye—in the first place, what can I do for you?"

"The greatest possible service—speak well of Frank to the creditors of our house, which will incline them to lenient measures—move them in my poor father's behalf, and, if possible, save him from the pain of a public sale of his effects, for be assured that he will give

up every thing beyond the expectations, and almost the wishes, of his creditors."

"Good—what else?"—

"Visit him, comfort him, give him distant hopes of the Dantzic money, keep him from all self-reproach, and speak of me as if we were perfectly friends, which will save him from the awkwardness of yielding, the pain of accepting help from one he has treated a *little* unwisely and unkindly, but as Yorick says, 'not from his heart.'"

It was under this influence, therefore, that the affair was managed in the manner we have anticipated—when it was thus arranged, Maria, whose spirits in their great anxiety and excitement bore her through new and excessive fatigue, one evening at a late hour, called on Mr. Elderton, and requested him to accompany her to look at a house she was about taking for her parents.

"It is a pretty-looking place near —— out of repair at present, to which a piece of common right is just now adjudged—has a back screen of elm trees, and a pleasant view from the front windows over a flower-garden."

"I know it perfectly well, old Bisset lived there; it is a very pleasant place, and a good

house, but wants repair—the garden is a wilderness."

"That is my reason for taking it. I get it cheap, on a long lease, with a power of purchase, and I have no fear of being able to spare money by degrees, to render it neat and commodious—'tis my great comfort, that making it so will employ my father—you know he cannot live without improving something, speculating on something, and I know nothing he is more likely to do than render his home comfortable, for my dear mother's sake."

"You are right—child, quite right, especially in preferring his welfare to your own natural desire of providing a place, which, however small, should exhibit your own taste and neatness. I will see your landlord to-morrow, and examine your lease, and now go home, for I am busy—but tell me the truth, did you not come to borrow money?"

"No," said Maria, smiling, "not this time, by and bye I shall appear on that errand."

She departed, and in the course of another week, with the aid of Mitchell and John Bilson, who was as fond of seeking a job for her as from her, all her purchases, and whatever

else was necessary for the accommodation of a small family were placed in the house, one parlour of which was handsomely papered, carpetted, and rendered every way genteel and comfortable, thereby affording at once a commodious habitation, and an incitement to improve the exterior, consistent with it. A small bed was put up for herself—Kathleen's wants abundantly considered, and an active young woman hired as her assistant—beyond this Maria durst not engage at present.

Her last journey was to take provisions, to place every thing in the most easy and habitable form, see that her beds were aired, her saucepans seasoned. "Ah!" said Maria, "sweet are the uses of adversity! how much have they already taught me, I have been compelled to cook or I must have been starved—I have become an adept at upholstery, or my little money would never have spun out so far. One desperate plunge has taught me how to swim in the roughest waters."

It was now winter, and again, on a Sunday evening, Maria bent her way to her father's house; she entered by the back road, and after gladdening the heart of Kathleen by com-

manding her to pack up her clothes immediately, proceeded to the breakfast parlour, at present the only room used by the reduced inhabitants. She found her mother reading, or endeavouring to read the gospel of the day to her father, who sometimes listened with the eager air of one who is earnestly seeking for the comforts he greatly needs, at others cast his eyes around in all the listless abstraction of wandering, distressful mind. Both were pale and thin, but the appearance of Mr. Falconer was much more haggard than his wife; his dress was that of melancholy negligence, her's was very plain, but perfectly neat; it was evident that she struggled to support herself, to save him from the unutterable pangs her sufferings and self-desertion would unquestionably have inflicted on him.

Maria's light foot was not perceived on her entrance, and she stood reading the expression on each beloved countenance, herself pale, fluttered, but too happy to be painfully overcome, even by the affecting sight before her. She pronounced the word "mother" in a quick, tremulous voice, and the eyes of both were instantly turned upon her.

Maria sunk upon her knees and clasped her arms around her father. "Forgive me, dear Sir—forgive your naughty Maria."

"I am in no humour for jesting, Maria," said Mr. Falconer, a momentary hectic tinging his pale cheek—"I have nothing perhaps to forgive in you, since it was policy, sound policy, to quit a falling house"—

"Nay, dear father," said Maria, still trying to smile, "but I have got a falling house, which you, and *only you*, will be able to build up—such as it is, however, it is yours, only yours, and so far better than this which is borrowed, and, as I am given to understand, wanted by Mr. Abdy for his son, who is going to marry Eliza Greenlaw."

"What shall we do?" said Mr. Falconer, looking wistfully at his wife.

"What shall we do, my love, but listen to our dear Maria, our matchless girl."

"No—I cannot see you in such a place, I can die first—to-morrow I will exert myself, I will"—

"To-night, dear father, you will go with me. I tell you the truth, I have a *home* for you on the outskirts of the town, where no intruding eye shall glance upon you, no want

distress you. Kathleen and another servant are now ready for you, and by the time your roquelaire, and mamma's cardinal are adjusted, the chaise will be here; your night-clothes are all we remove for the present."

"In such a hurry?—on a Sunday night, too—impossible, child, impossible!"

"Some things are done best in a hurry. Hark, the chaise is at the gates—we will take the Bible with us, and only that, come, come, my dear father."

Thus, with trembling eagerness, Maria caught her prize, and when caged, her emotions overflowed in silent tears that would no longer be suppressed. The fond pressure of her mother's hand, and afterwards her whisper, encouraged her to persevere in those manners which were calculated to save her father from any retrospect of his faults or misfortunes, that might awaken acute sorrow, and in a very few minutes she began again to speak.

"Indeed my dear father, you must exert yourself in modernizing this cob-castle of ours, for it is a sweet situation, and I know you will get it into nice order in the spring—the wood may be cut for paling, and there is a fine piece of ground for a kitchen garden;

to be sure it is very poor land—I doubt I must have no asparagus from it, but perhaps you will manage artichokes ?"

"We can procure manure for the land, child, perhaps it may be necessary to get a layer of new soil"—

The hearts of both mother and daughter palpitated with joy as these words broke on their ears, but especially that of the wife, for she had many days been trembling under the most alarming fears that one human being can entertain for another—fears which had annihilated all thought of herself and her situation, and half banished her solicitude for that only and much-loved child, whose situation had so long claimed her unceasing anxiety. Scarcely could she forbear to utter aloud the thankfulness which sprung to her lips and agitated her bosom.

The chaise stopped at the house, which was called Elm Cottage, just as Mitchell and Kathleen, each carrying a parcel and lighted by the lanthorn of the former, reached the wicket gate. No new faces therefore met the eyes to whom they might have been painful, and although, as the light glanced over the dilapidated palisades, Mrs. Falconer gave

an involuntary sigh which Maria caught, it only rendered her the more eager to conduct them into the parlour, where a bright fire, lighted candles, new paper and curtains, with chairs and tables that were not new, gave that air of united gaiety and comfort which delights the eye and solaces the spirits.

Kathleen preceded them, because his honour's slippers were in her bundle, and "he would be after wanting them"—in truth, her glance at the outside of the dwelling had alarmed her, and she dreaded its effect on him—"an this be the place for the last of the Falconers!" had twice past her lips, but when she entered the parlour, her fear and sorrow suddenly were dispelled, and throwing up her hands she exclaimed,

"Oh! to be sure and it's only a single step *down,* your honour, after all, and mighty asy to my thinking, seeing what we've gone through, laving the holy land, and fore-fathers, and glory a' ones own country, for here's nither poverty nor smithy smoke here at all, may the tongue be blistered that said there was, for here lies the cloth for supper, and a fine cratur is the cat onthe hearth, and by no manes starved at all, and the darlin herself

—but goodness on me she's wonderful thin and pale-looking."

Maria had now taken her bonnet and cloak off, and the exclamation of Kathleen drew the eyes of both her parents to her—she was indeed thin; care, toil, and altered diet had withered the roses on her young cheeks, and diminished the dazzling lustre of her complexion, and her dress, devoid of every ornament, at a time when it was the fashion to use a superabundance, gave altogether a painful alteration in her appearance that was almost affecting, and in the present moment almost alarming.

But even the solicitude they now equally expressed on this subject, was rendered subservient to her great design of increasing their happiness, and of so employing her father in his home concerns, as to prevent him from engaging in any new business. "I only want change of air, and ease of mind," said she, "aided by vegetable diet, for I am perfectly free from all disorder. I shall get the first by frequently sleeping here, the second by seeing, I trust, that you are both well and happy—The third my dear father will provide by cultivating the garden,

to which end I can send him numerous assistants. You know I am a complete fidget in all matters requiring neatness, and when the house is in repair, the palisades renewed, a wall built to the west end, and a bay window in the adjoining room, I shall be satisfied, and look quite well, you will see—however I am not so inconsistent as to desire all these things at once, I know that they will take time and money, and we must manage them by degrees—if you see after them personally they will be done for half the money I am certain, my dear sir."

Thus was poor Falconer flattered and consoled by the belief that in due time he would save by his excellent management, perhaps a pound for every thousand he had lost—if he saw (as probably he did) the real motive of his unparalleled daughter, he saw also that it was his duty to yield to her wishes—it is at least certain that he appeared to do so, and they separated from each other for the night with no reference to the past, though every heart was imbued with its memory, but with hopes for the future, which were warmly expressed—each in the hour of prayer, probably poured out more freely, the gratitude, the

repentance, the blended feelings, and the glowing affections, by which they were deeply, and most happily moved.

Long before her parents left their pillow, Maria had entered her regular lodging, and was engaged in her occupation. She had now attained the great point to which she had long looked, that of providing a home for her parents; but when she reflected that the money which she had so economically saved to that end hitherto, would yet barely have sufficed for even their humblest maintenance, she saw clearly that, if possible, she must extend her business, and to that purpose increase her capital considerably. It was painful to her, to think of asking Mr. Elderton for money, because she had reason to believe him to be at this time unprovided; but yet something must be done, and she held Ellen's property sacred—it was the resource of Frank, who was at this time still looking out for a situation as a clerk or a traveller.

The old gentleman had called one evening to see Mr. Falconer in his new situation, for which friendly intercourse it was well situated. All he saw, of course, tended to confirm the high opinion, and the warm approbation he

felt for Maria; but his observations made him aware how she was situated, and the next evening he sent to request that she would come and make his coffee, and leave Mitchell to close the warehouse by himself for once.

"I went to see the good people last night," said he, as she entered, "and found your mother really looking better and happier than I ever saw her. Falconer is certainly altered sadly, but he bustled about, and told me of fifty things he was going to do for Maria, with as much ease as if he had forgotten all he owed her in the way of reparation for unkindness, to say nothing of other debts."

"Thank God!—may he never, *never* remember it."

"Well, well, you are a good girl and a consistent one, which is an extraordinary thing to say of any woman. I know less than some men, 'tis true, yet I have seen many women capable of great generosity—and some few who added to it persevering goodness, patience without end, and fortitude that was really amazing, but they always liked a little *exhibition* of their virtues, or a little parade of their feelings—indeed crying and speechify-

ing are very natural to us all, when we are touched in strong points; and how you, Maria, who are naturally fluent, resist it on such trying occasion, I know not."

"I conceive it a positive duty, to guard my poor father (indeed both my parents) from all excitement, and I never have forgot the maxim you implanted, that *duty is imperative*."

"Aye, aye, you're a flatterer—sit down—well, before I came out, Frank came in. I like that young man exceedingly; he paid great attention to me when I was unwell at Frankfort. I wish to help him."

"I wish you would," said Maria with a frankness that a little surprised her auditor; but he replied,

"Well then, hear my plan; I must either give up my German business, or that which I engaged in after the peace with America, and I think that much the more promising."

"Probably it may, but I like Germany best."

"So do I, but I have also connections of value in the other, and I am certain it would answer for me to fix a clever young man at Liverpool as my agent—but by rights he should be my partner."

"Take him—take Frank Ingalton—he is upright, active—it will make his mother so happy"—

"Yes, that is all true, but it is not convenient for me to find all the money, just now."

"Nor do you need; Frank, to my knowledge, can immediately produce a thousand pounds, and I have little doubt but he could borrow another."

"But I *have*, for these are stirring times, and every body hereabouts is employing money for himself—but, I pray, how comes he by the first, Maria?

"A prudent, amiable, good girl has it, who —I mean to say, he may marry—in short, Mr. Elderton, between ourselves, there is an attachment—and of course he wishes to marry."

"I understand, my dear, and promise you that the second thousand shall be forthcoming, and I *will* make him my partner. Then I apprehend your mother has saved one thousand pounds from the wreck of her fortune, and I rejoice in it; you are well aware how much may be made of it."

"My mother sacrificed her last property

to pay it, and Ellen, thank God, has received it."

"Ellen, say you?—Ellen Powis?"

"Yes, certainly; it is her to whom Frank is engaged; she is a noble, kind-hearted, generous girl, so generous, that she brought it all to me, saying, "it would be well used by me for the benefit of my parents," and indeed so I think it might be, for I now see my way clearly, and could indeed use it well; but if you will thus accept of Frank and this little modicum, all will be well, all happy, and I can still manage."

Maria spoke with amazing rapidity, and her colour varied every moment, though she affected to smile away the mingled emotions which were unquestionably lacerating her heart. The old gentleman saw through the disguise she assumed, and the idea of *her* distress brought the tears into his eyes, but he too looked another way and succeeded in saving the delicacy of a noble mind so singularly circumstanced from another wound, and it was finally agreed that on the morrow he should make the proposal to young Ingalton, and act in every respect as his friend and father.

"But then, Maria, this ties my hands with regard to you, whom I certainly desire to help much more than the young people in question."

"You cannot then lend me fifty pounds?"

"Yes, I can do that undoubtedly—I can double that, but what is it?"

"Oh! a great deal of money in my little way. You know mine is either a ready-money trade, or, at the most, a fortnight's credit, for I deal only with the poor—I turn the little I have so quickly that I have great gains even on small profits, have no one to pay but Mitchell, and cost so little myself that I hope to be able to maintain my parents even with that—I ought to have no fears for the future, when I consider what the past has produced."

"I have no fears for your success, Maria, but many for your health—you have been too careful, too anxious, I must insist on your taking some wine, and shall send you that which I know to be old and good If you do not take care of yourself you neglect the most important of all duties to your parents—tell me, my dear girl, that you will take care of yourself."

"I will obey you," said Maria, "for you

are going to oblige *me*—perhaps to save me"—

The suppressed struggle of her bosom would no longer be concealed—she burst into an agony of tears, and wept long and freely; but when the passion had spent itself, she repeatedly assured her worthy old friend, "that she knew she should soon get the better of all her weaknesses, and prove under his guidance an excellent tradeswoman, and rise in time, perhaps, to rival"——

"The Grecian Daughter," cried the old man, as he shook her hand; "ah! girl, she was a fool to you, but go away, or you will make one of me—depend upon it I will order every thing in the manner you wish. I will protect Frank, reward Ellen, and leave you the glory of steering your own little vessel through a rough sea into a safe haven—but, my child, drink the Tent-wine I send you—promise me that."

"I do promise most religiously; I will endeavour to take every thing that may sustain me in the path I must walk in—the longer I travel, the less rugged shall I find it."

CHAP. XII.

NOTHING could be more true than the assertion made by Maria at the close of our last chapter; for the bustle in which she was compelled to engage the early part of the day, the recollections and accompts which occupied the latter part of it, the contrivance how to seize a few hours of evening holiday with her parents, and how to spare from her daily-increasing business the ready money which would supply the wants of the house, and the little improvements in which she delightedly beheld her father engage, most happily prevented her from dwelling much on that subject from which alone she shrank in dismay.

The unbending resolution she had evinced to renounce all company which interfered with her pursuit, to engage in no possible expenditure that could be avoided, together with the distance of her present residence from the house of Sir James Trevannion,

formed an excuse that was consistent with her plan and her character, when intreated to be the bridemaid of Ellen; to whom she also pointed out the circumstance, that it would be desirable to take that opportunity of introducing Emily Ingalton to the notice of a family, who might hereafter greatly benefit her mother in the plan she had so wisely adopted.

"True," said Ellen, "but indeed you think for us all, I told my dear Frank I should not wonder if you were in fact the mover of all Mr. Elderton's kindness, you have done every thing right except refusing my money—that was surely wrong."

"Yet from that error springs your present happiness, let the remembrance of that, Ellen, teach you the value of money, of which you can as yet form little idea—you are older than me thirteen months, but that period spent in this place has made me much your senior in knowledge. Remember you must not expect to live as you did either in my father's house or the Baronet's, and that you must supply to yourself, in the love of your husband and the consciousness of your utility, those indulgences to which you are accus-

tomed, and the exercise of those accomplishments you may probably be seldom called on to display."

"But, dear Maria, Frank cannot expect me to be a good housekeeper!"

"Yes he can, and depend upon it he will; for every man who labours for the support of a family, soon becomes inquisitive as to the disposal of his gains, unless he is an idiot—and every woman will soon render herself adequate to her duties as a wife, unless she is one. I expect this of you, I *demand* it of you, as the friend of—of my friend Frank."

"Dear Maria, you cannot doubt my entire love, my perfect esteem, for the excellent young man to whom I am about to be united; nor that with the example of such a woman as your excellent mother before my eyes, I should be ignorant of my duties as a wife?"

"I doubt not your purity of intention, Ellen, but I am anxious that you should attain the knowledge by which intention secures its object—anxious that your disinterested affection (for such it certainly is) should really secure all the good to you both which it ought to effect—pardon me, dear Ellen, if I speak hastily, I have been obliged

to associate with the vulgar, and to assume airs of command, but remember my words—they are offered in love."

"*Love*—oh! yes, Maria, the *purest, warmest* love; I know your heart, and every kind feeling that actuates it; I do indeed."

Maria hoped not, but the appearance of Frank at this moment made her colour rush into her cheeks, and recede as quickly.

"Maria has been lecturing me as if she were my grandmother," said Ellen.

"She is always good—and wise,"—observed the young man; but he perceived that her heart was too deeply affected for conversation, and soon bade her adieu, attributing the emotion she was ill able to suppress to the parting with Ellen, who on her part wept with all the fondness of a child, even after she had taken the arm of him on whom she fondly leaned, and who on the following day was united to her for life.

The new-married couple set out immediately for their future residence, a circumstance particularly agreeable to Maria, who had dreaded more than she had occasion to do the effect of their marriage on her own feelings; when all was over, she was able to

endure details better than she expected, and she even agreed to give Lady Trevannion the meeting at her father's house, under the persuasion that it would be really the finishing portion of that pain the repetition of the wedding particulars would inflict.

Happily this trial of her feelings was spared, and she was enabled also to achieve a deed of great magnitude to those whom it benefited. Lady Trevannion and her worthy lord, although surprised by the extraordinary resolution and the persevering firmness Maria had evinced, and shocked with the painful situation of a family they esteemed highly, never for a moment condemned the conduct of Maria in her choice of so singular a medium of assisting them. They considered trade in every shape irreconcileable with the habits of a gentleman, and thought that when he had once stooped to engage in it, or been driven from his circumstances to do so, that nothing could be more ridiculous than condemning any particular mode by which help was to be obtained; and they thought it but natural that a young woman of Maria's birth and education should better endure to precipitate herself at once into all

the evils of a great change, than to accept any dependance which continually reminded her of the home she had lost—a spirit like her's was more calculated to endure a violent wrench, than a slow-wearing, soul-frittering torture.

After their first salutations had passed, Lady Trevannion began to speak of the great loss she experienced in Ellen, and eagerly enquired "if Emily Ingalton would be able to supply her place, for she was much struck with her."

"Unquestionably she is upright, amiable, and accomplished, but she cannot leave her mother, who is at this very time endeavouring to open a Boarding-school."

"But she has three daughters—she could spare one."

"Not the eldest, on whom she must depend as a teacher, the second is very clever, but her education is incomplete, and she is too young to be left alone with children, and I understand from Mrs. Francis—from Ellen, that you and Sir James are going to Italy."

"We wish to do so exceedingly, but this unlucky marriage has deranged all our plans —our little girls are too young to travel, the

boy is still younger you will say, but to take him is our principal object, for though not ill, he is extremely delicate, and a mild climate we think would prove restorative to him."

"I have thought much about him, dear lamb!" said Maria, "and am quite certain the best thing you could do, would be to leave your daughters with Mrs. Ingalton, who would be to them a tender and judicious mother, and whose cares might be aided by mine also. I would take her second daughter (my name-sake) as a governess to your son, to whom her gaiety and good temper would be still more valuable than her instructions, and who by that means would gain such knowledge of Italian and music, as to make her a most valuable governess to his sisters when you return—the dear little girls are so young, that you can have no fears for their manners or their attachments with plebeian schoolfellows, and your confidence in Mrs. Ingalton will unquestionably give her importance in the eyes of all our wealthy inhabitants, many of whom are in truth persons of enlightened minds, and of the highest character."

"A Daniel, a second Daniel," cried Sir

James, "in her whole contrivance—how comes it, Maria, that thou art so much older than thy years?"

"I am the child of *very young* parents," said Maria in a low voice—"I have been compelled to think, perhaps prematurely, and from being in the habit of cogitating, think not only for myself, but all I have a regard for."

"You have thought well for us, I am certain," said the Lady, "and we shall lose not a day in seeing Mrs. Ingalton on the subject, she is a sweet woman, very lady-like, certainly. I never saw her at your house without wondering what star dropt her into B——."

A few days settled this arrangement, and it was followed by all the success which Maria predicted, so that the general good fortune of the whole family of the Ingalton's might be considered as established; and so much did the long oppressed spirits of the widow rise from the relief she experienced, that Maria could have no doubt that she would prove fully equal to the multifarious but endearing duties demanded by her situation.

Maria was sensibly relieved by every circumstance which assisted those she loved, and she now pleased herself with the idea that the happiness of Frank would henceforward constitute hers—a sentiment which generally tells better in theory than practice; and although she might at times impute the degree of recovered health and spirits she now enjoyed to that cause, those who are better versed in the usual operations of the heart under similar circumstances, would have imputed it to that happy diversion from such a subject of thought which other cares suggested. By degrees she thought more on Ellen than Frank—the letters she had once trembled to behold, lost their power of troubling her, and the daily mortification she experienced in not being able to extend her business from the deficiency of capital, and the weekly appropriation of all her profits, became the only mortification under which her spirits were bent.

One forenoon when engaged to the height in business, portioning out a stock far too small for the demand, she looked a little beyond her dark circle of smoke-begrimed customers, and saw with much surprize, and

some sense of that dismay inevitable to her sex in such a moment, Sir James Trevannion —yes! even Maria (heroine as she was) slipped off her black gloves and brown apron, and broke nimbly through her customers to beckon him into her little sanctum—the counting-house.

"I came to drive you home with me, Maria—to break the laws of the Medes and Persians by taking you for a very few hours to the Park—we leave England to-morrow—at least we leave home for our long journey—you will wish to kiss our little man once more, I am certain."

"Oh yes! but I must not obey my wishes."

"Surely you may; your day's labour is nearly closed: come, come, don't mistake obstinacy for firmness."

"I would go, certainly, but I cannot dress."

This was overruled, and she soon found herself once more in the house where she had finally formed the resolution, and decided on the most momentous action of her existence —the house where her heart had experienced the severest shock it had ever known, or as she believed, could ever know; and the memory of these events was much too fresh

for her to see it with calmness, though she appeared but little affected.

"I have brought Maria purely to bid you farewell, my dear, and have not said one word on the subject of which we spoke," said Sir James to his lady.

"Then I must give you both great credit —Maria for a proof of her affection I ought to esteem highly, and you for self-command on a trying subject. He has been thinking about you and you only, my dear, every hour since we fixed on departing."

"It is very true, Maria, I wish to lend you two thousand pounds, which have lately fallen into my hands, and must be secured some where."

"But I have no security to offer you. I am not even of age till the thirteenth of next month."

"I know it, my dear, and have given my steward orders to pay it into your hands the day after."

"Thank you—thank you—heaven bless you for it—I know I can use it well."

"I am sure you will use it well and wisely," said Sir James, as he ratified the bargain with a fatherly kiss.

The entrance of the child restored tranquillity to the happy party, and so pleasantly passed the few hours of her stay, that she did not hesitate to promise that, on their return, whatever might be her engagements, gratitude and affection would lead her occasionally to visit *them;* and she departed under an impression so different to that she had experienced as she last drove from the same door (although she was now weeping) that her heart ascended to heaven in thankful adoration for the change.

It will readily be believed that Maria lost no time in telling Mr. Elderton of the loan she was about to receive, which greatly rejoiced him, as he could now introduce her to his German connections, and instruct her in the general conduct of business, the choice of goods, the demands of various markets, expenses of freightage, duties, discounts, and all other necessary knowledge. To all it might be said truly, his young pupil "did seriously incline," and so much were her mind and her time engaged, it was indeed happy that she had previously gained an accession of health and strength for an occasion which demanded so much.

Mr. Elderton's prospects of Maria's success in this new and enlarged sphere of action arose in a great measure from the knowledge which he knew she possessed of the French and German languages, both of which he had endeavoured ever since his return to impress upon her mind the necessity for exercising. She was now placed in commodious premises, become a considerable purchaser of goods, and had accommodation given her, as to credit, so extensive, as to prove beyond all doubt the high estimation in which she was held at this period, by those who had seen her first step with surprize, and her perseverance with admiration. Flattering as her prospects were, not even the representations of Mr. Elderton could induce her to renounce the business in which she had been so successful, and from which she was aware of her usefulness to many. "I consider it," said she, "as a certain fund for supplying the demands of the Cottage, and it is my determination to keep it expressly as a certain though small supply for my mother's weekly expenses. The profits of my mercantile concern must in the first few years be honestly amassed to repay Sir James; all

which I can conscientiously deduct from this deposit shall be applied to my father's improvements; should little delays arise, it will only quicken his invention, and employ his mind to supply the deficiency."

By a wise distribution of time, Maria was enabled to give three hours every day to her former occupation, in which she always received those industrious men whose custom she was desirous of retaining, and although two or three persons had now followed an example evidently so beneficial, and her former warehouse was again occupied in the same manner, yet all the most respectable part followed her. Her extreme care in weighing, or seeing the iron weighed, the nicety of her calculations, which were those of even-handed justice, though complained of in the beginning of her career, was now extremely grateful, for all had seen, long ere now, that it was part of a rigid but wise system which in business neither gave nor accepted favour; but all by turns had found either in themselves or others, that she who thus steadily pursued it, had a heart that felt for all—a hand,

"Open as day to melting charity."

When Mr. Falconer found his daughter thus eligibly situated, he ventured once more to walk through the town, which he had never done before, since that awful period to which even now he could not bear to revert (little as were his pecuniary deficiencies,) when Maria saw him enter her counting-house, bringing her a bunch of her favourite flowers, and bearing in his recovered bulk and ruddy complexion proof how much their cultivation (or rather her kindness) had renovated his life, she stepped from her high seat to welcome him, and accept his fragrant gift, with a sweetness and grace such as reminded him of former days; and a pang would mingle even with the pleasure her presence never failed to inspire.

"Do I find you alone, my dear, at this busy time?"

"Only for an hour, my people are all gone to dinner."

"Can you give me no employment, my dear, although I have been rusticating so long, yet I should be glad of any thing to do?"

"You are unfortunately too old, and too young," said Maria, laughing, "I have no men

about me that are not turned of fifty, save the two boys below, who are scarcely fifteen. I consider this place a kind of receptacle for invalids—a corps of the superannuated. Every head about me must boast a sober bob-wig, save Mynheer Myeris who is privileged to wear a bag, because he never approaches the place but in a dress suit, and always bows to me as low as if I were the Stadtholder."

"But, my dear, surely my presence here"—

"Would be destructive, dear Papa, of my importance; here I sit on my throne, Empress of uncounted reams, Queen of the ledgers, Generallissima of the invoices, Ambassadress to many nations—a plenipotentiary for secret dispatches, with potential power for open negotiation. I am as infallible as the Pope, as despotic as the grand Turk, and as approachable as a British King. I pass the bills like the Lords, raise supplies like the Commons, but unlike them am free from all opposition—and that you certainly would bring me."

"Not I, child, indeed—you are very critically situated, Maria; you are very young, very handsome,"

"That I deny—this sombre habit, ancient hat, and winged cap, (my everlasting costume) render all uneasiness on that subject unnecessary; the hearts of my surrounding beaux call only for veneration, and my numerous correspondents "To Mrs. Maria Falconer, these"—never dream of embargoes on their hearts."

"It is not a subject for jesting, my dear; your mother is perpetually speaking of it, and happy as we certainly are at the Cottage (since I have brought it into decent order and put every thing *en train*) she yet is desirous that I should in some way devote myself to you."

"Then, dear father, I accept you most thankfully as my escort to Germany, where indeed I ought to have gone long ago, but I knew not how to take you from my mother, at a time when she enjoys your society in such peace and contentedness as she never knew before."

This journey was taken most successfully, and included Holland and Flanders. Every where she was well received as the successor of Mr. Elderton, and her extreme exactness and attention to minutiæ—the regularity and

punctuality she observed with respect to time, her care in the interpretation of all commissions, and even her moderation in personal expenses, were all strong recommendations in her favour to the careful, plodding Dutchmen; nor were even they perhaps insensible to the pleasure of talking over a barren subject, with a woman so young and so lovely, and whose convenient dress was not inelegant in their eyes.

On her return from this expedition she learned with great surprize and some trifling sensation of alarm, that Mr. and Mrs. Francis Ingalton with their two lovely children were in B——, and impatient to see her, "indeed" said Mrs. Falconer, "they mean to be governed entirely by your advice, my dear Maria."

"In what respect, pray?"

"Poor John Ingalton is dead in the East Indies, and has left very considerable property, and a connection of the greatest importance, which it would be well if Frank could step into—but he hesitates on account of Mr. Elderton, who may be inconvenienced by any unlooked-for change, and whose great

kindness to him in the day of his distress demands some sacrifice."

"I will undertake to settle that for him; the world has plenty of people ready to step into good things, if they are properly sought for. It is a duty Frank owes to himself and all his family, to go over, and I am certain his pretty wife will do honour to the land of palanquins and silver muslins—how does she look? how do her matron cares sit upon her?"

"Admirably! but she is much troubled about the children. Frank is three years old (how time flies!) and to take him would be a pity, as he ought soon to go to school, you know; and his grandmother can do nothing with him, because he is a boy."

"But could not you do with him, dear mother? is he like his parents?"

"Very like his father—he has his fine, mild, dark eye, and his thoughtful, examining countenance—you will see him in the morning, for Mrs. Ingalton could not accommodate them all, so Frank and the maid sleep here."

When Maria retired, she visited the bed

where the urchin lay, and throwing off her hat, approached on tiptoe to look at him. There were indeed those features never to be forgotten, more soft and beautiful than she had beheld them before she stooped to take a kiss of those rosy lips, and his eyes opened, (those lovely eyes) the light dazzled them, and putting out his hands, he said, "ah mamma, are you here?"

"I am not mamma, my pretty fellow," said Maria, her heart beating quick and painfully as she added internally, "No! never must I be thus hailed, *never*." "I remember now, you are Mrs. Falconer, I love you next to mamma."

With these words, again the bright orbs closed, and the unconscious prattler sunk to repose; but he awakened an emotion in the heart of Maria that banished sleep, and secured to him a friend for life.

The following morning the whole party arrived, impatient to see the travellers, and the friends were soon locked in each other's arms; Maria returning the pressure of Ellen at this period, with more than equal warmth. She was, to her own sincere joy and surprize, able to meet Mr. Ingalton with-

out the slightest pain or confusion, and discuss with him the momentous subject of his removal, which she strongly recommended.

"But can you prevail on Ellen, Miss Falconer?"

"Ellen has much less pretext than you for objection, since you leave a mother, (the strongest tie in life, according to my estimation) besides sisters, who, being fatherless, look to you for parental protection—Ellen has only you to claim her attention; she takes her world with her."

"How can you say so, Maria, when I leave you behind—our parting has not been long enough to wear away my affection, whatever it may have done with yours."

"Ellen, we love each other dearly, and I firmly believe much better than many female friends in novels ever did, but we are each irrevocably tied to objects who are, and must be, of infinitely more personal consequence to each of us than the other can be; so do not let us increase the pain of parting by adverting to it. Our intercourse will be only a little more delayed than it has been, it will not be less affectionate."

"Well, I grant, if ever woman ought to

go cheerfully over the wide world with her husband, it is I," said Ellen; "for Frank has been to me the most indulgent, tender, attentive—where are you going, Maria? oh! here comes my boy—dear fellow, how can I leave such a child as this? what can I do without him?"

"You will manage very well," said Mrs. Falconer "my dear, by and bye, when the baby supplies *his* place, and the next supplies *hers*."

"My mother will take charge of little Frank," said Maria, and as she spoke a deep blush suffused her countenance, which was increased as the father warmly, gratefully thanked her, and placing the blooming boy in her arms, told him to thank her.

"I am too busy," said Maria, "to affect taking charge of him myself, but certainly I, I love children"———

"You will love him for his own sake," said Ellen, "and I know if that were not the case you would love him for mine—thank you, Maria, a thousand times. I will now say no more of objections—pardon me, my love, that I have harrassed you by saying so much, but I am a spoilt child myself."

"Ah!" thought Maria, "how different has been your lot and mine!—humbly born, your father by industry and œconomy scraped up for you a little dower, which, wisely and happily bestowed, places you in a situation which commands all the best blessings of life—you have realized the dearest gift wealth can bestow, by benefiting the husband you loved; yet were you chosen by a heart as generous and disinterested as your own—care has never turned your downy pillow into stone, sorrow and shame never blighted the rose on your cheek, or disappointment planted her thorn in your heart. Increasing prosperity is before you, the arms of connubial love protect you, the smiles of infant fondness delight you. Well—thank God for it—had it been otherwise, I should have felt bitter grief, my sweet Ellen, for the sufferings of thy artless, generous heart."

CHAP. XIII.

It had frequently struck Maria that it was a great pity that Mr. Elderton had no connections by whom his advancing age might be cheered, or his personal comforts attended to. She knew he had been the only son of his mother, but thought his father had had other children, and therefore most probably there were descendants somewhere who might supply to him the child she had long thought his situation required. Every other person in the circle of their acquaintance conceived that she was herself "as a daughter."

When therefore she waited upon him in pursuance of her promise to the Ingaltons, after his warm congratulations on her return were passed, she spoke highly of all she had seen in Germany, and the reception she had met with, saying, "I think your mother, Sir, was from Frankfort on the Maine; 'tis a lovely country."

"Yes, my dear, it is; and my mother was

worthy of it, she was an excellent creature—but like many other excellent women in her situation, she was not esteemed as she deserved to be."

"Save by a good son. I am sure she was happy in you."

"I trust she was, Maria, for I loved her so well as to renounce all other ties for her sake; and it is my solace in many a lonely hour to believe that her latter days were made so happy as to atone for the former—we were indeed almost romantically attached, I may say, for never were mother and son more completely moved by the same principles, animated by the same affections, influenced by the same taste—early sympathy in her sufferings, and the necessity of labouring to supply our mutual wants, rendered me to a certain degree an old man early in life, and there is in your sex a happy spring of spirits and flow of imagination, which preserves youth in the mind long after it leaves the face; so that each, as it were, bent to meet the other's wants, and few unions have been more productive of felicity. I lost her about the time when your father settled in this neighbourhood, and can truly say that you were the

first human being who awoke in me any interest after that terrible event, and are nearly the only one that has preserved the same feeling."

"Then you have no relations, my dear Sir?"

"Yes, I have—my mother married a widower who had a son and two daughters, one of whom, after a life of much suffering, died single. The other married and went to America—they used my poor mother very ill, detested her as a mother-in-law, ridiculed her as a foreigner, termed her wise economy, *meanness*, her liberality, *extravagance*, and all I can recollect of early life reminds me of treatment which seemed to mark us as "a bondwoman and her son."—It is true, James fought our battles; he was I think a very good fellow, but I remember little of him, he left us when I was young."

"And had James no child?"

"He left a daughter who had daughters—poor things! they are orphans, I believe, now, and not well provided for, though my father impoverished me to help his eldest son very unjustly."

"Never mind that—enquire for them."

"They are not *poor*, Maria; had that been the case it would have been my duty to enquire more—by the way, I believe one is lately married at Liverpool, I will get Ingalton to enquire after her, it was a very old correspondent who mentioned it to me."

The news of Ingalton's removal, and this enquiry, led eventually to placing the young man in question in the situation which secured him early competency and eventual wealth; and the same channel eventually placed the unmarried great niece of Mr. Elderton at the head of his establishment—to her great satisfaction and his increased comfort—all were happily settled before the travellers were ready to sail.

When at length they departed, the trial was very severe to Maria, though the late daily intercourse she had held with them, convinced her that the affection which had been the source of so much severe pain, mortification, and dejection, was, as to all these effects, completely passed away. Yet she felt an interest in the future welfare of the couple (as united) of the strongest description, and that tender regard for Ellen which had been in a certain degree changed, or at

least blended with contradictory emotions, now resumed its warmest form, and was even increased by the solicitude naturally felt for one so situated.

When they had actually sailed, Maria entered with renovated vigilance into the various duties of her situation, and presented to the observant eye decided proof of how much woman is capable. The exact distribution of her time, the knowledge and acumen she displayed in all her matters of business, the nice calculation of her own strength of capital in all temptations of speculation, maintaining at once the firmness of unbending integrity, and the proper confidence which results from skill and consideration- -the womanish exactness, prevalent in every department of her concerns, extensive as they were now become—the firmness with which she resisted all encroachments, met all difficulties, and continued to resist all temptations to relax her efforts, even in cases most tempting to her taste and disposition, and which appeared fully warranted by the prosperity she evidently enjoyed. When urged on this point she invariably answered "I know my own power of exer-

tion, and I dare not give way in any point, lest it should incapacitate me in all—I have debts to repay, a fortune to secure, which shall place the old age of my parents beyond the reach of accident. I seek only to secure this, riches I do not desire, and therefore if I "make hay while the sun shines," I may reasonably hope to retire whilst my mind still retains its early relish for literature, music, and every source of mental enjoyment which gives polished life its charm. If you knew how much it costs me to become thus wound up to my object, you would consider it a sin to tempt me from my purpose."

Those who had thus tried were the more willing to desist, from perceiving that health and spirits, and even her personal beauty, were at this period perhaps in greater perfection than they had ever been. With the sombre dress which its great convenience still induced her to use constantly in the counting-house, and at her lodgings in B—, she also changed the manners which appertained to it, and the few evenings which she allowed herself with her parents, saw her resume all the playfulness of her girlish days. With them she felt that she might unbend

safely, since their very presence, and the delight they evinced, served to remind her of the necessity and the value of her continued services, and were at once her stimulant and her reward—the incentives and sweeteners of her toil."

Her sabbaths were constantly spent with her parents, and never was devotion perhaps more pure than that offered up by a family so united and so singularly situated. The church which they frequented was at some distance from the town, and part of its congregation consisted of retired tradesmen who had secured fortunes, and were spending the latter end of life in ease, and training their sons for country gentlemen, or the learned professions, and the younger class, it may be supposed, did not see Maria unmoved. Various advances, direct and indirect, were made to her father, which he always reported to his daughter with all that faithful disinterestedness which formed a prominent part of his character, and there were even times when both parents intreated her to consider and weigh the merits of the parties. To all such intreaties Maria turned either a deaf ear, or parried the attack jestingly but firmly,

though there were times when a tear would start into her eye as she caught her mother's hand, and said, "Have I not married you? taken you to have and to hold, &c. till death do us part—we are so joined that man will not sunder us, depend upon it."

Yet the time did come, when Maria ceased to make strong assertions, when she was again very thoughtful, and although she spent the usual hours in the counting-house and warehouse, yet it was observed by her ancient assistants that her pen no longer moved like that of a ready writer, that her eye wandered listlessly over piles of goods, and vellum-bound repositories of secrets, without betraying interest in either.

For this abstraction, which, however trifling in itself, was remarkable in Maria, we will endeavour to account.

Count Frederic Hernhausen, a German nobleman, was accommodated by a mercantile house in Leipsic with letters of introduction to their correspondent, Mrs. Maria Falconer, as the best medium of obtaining the money he might have occasion for during a tour in England, and of facilitating his examination of the manufactories of B—,

which (with the enquiring mind generally found in his countrymen) constituted a very principal object in his travels.

England was the last country the Count visited, yet he spoke the language very tolerably, was well acquainted with its history, laws, institutions and commerce, and felt for it that decided preference which arises from an union of approbation and esteem with a sense of early predilection on the score of national relationship. He had visited every place in Europe generally deemed most interesting, but always reserved the Island of Great Britain as the last, best object of his attention, the crowning curiosity which should satisfy his mind, and enable him to sit down for the rest of his life in the castle of his ancestors, and dispense to his dependants the result of the knowledge gleaned from his observations, with that liberality and benevolence which were natural to his own disposition, and which their patriotic Emperor was at this period diffusing through every part of his dominions.

The Count had been suddenly called from Naples about a year before this time, in consequence of the illness of his father, and had

the melancholy satisfaction of receiving his last breath. After arranging his affairs and placing his mother in the care of his only sister, who was lately married, he resumed his plan of travel for one year more. During his abode in Italy he had become intimate with Sir James Trevannion, and as that family had considerably exceeded their original term of stay, he was in hopes that he should find them at home, but they had not yet arrived, although constantly expected and prepared for by their domestics.

Frederic Hernhausen was tall, graceful, and handsome; his countenance possessed all the best characteristics of his country, intelligence, simplicity, ingenuousness, and honesty: he had full, beaming blue eyes, a finely-formed, dimpling mouth, and that high polished brow, which denotes the power of thought, and gives the expression of lofty and soul-ennobling feelings. He had just entered his thirty-first year, and the expression of his features (altered as they lately had been by severe sorrow for the loss of his worthy and most beloved parent) aided by dark, curling hair and whiskers, bespoke the manly character befitting his age; but his

complexion was still of the fair and finely-tinted hue peculiar to the Saxons. He was so tall, and appeared to such striking advantage in his person when he first entered the counting-house of Maria, surrounded by the bowed forms and withered faces of her somewhat decrepid *coterie*, that she involuntarily rose and advanced a few steps towards him.

In doing this her warehouse costume displayed her person to the utmost possible disadvantage, and of course made her look so much older as to accord with the Count's preconceived notion, that the female merchant in question resembled the wives of those squat traders in Amsterdam, who partake the toils of their husbands. When she looked up and thereby revealed a *small* portion of the lower part of her face (for the beavers of that day were indeed extinguishers) he felt surprized that the good woman should have retained such a youthful look in the midst of such a smoky town, and in pursuits which are generally deemed injurious to health—the fact was worthy of record.

The cash part of their intercourse was

readily settled, and with very few words on the part of Maria, whose taciturnity as a woman of business was strongly contrasted with those powers of conversation and that playful *badinàge*, which she exercised in the hours of relaxation. Yet when it was over, the stranger still lingered, for he was struck with the sweetness of a voice which, he had understood, belonged to one who had visited his native country and could speak the language—besides she was now employed in reading a second letter from a person who had sought to interest her in the visits of which we spoke.

When Maria laid this down she addressed him in German, having understood from her last correspondent that his knowledge of English was very bounded, and after lamenting her inability to assist him on that day, informed him "that her father would, she doubted not, have the pleasure of accompanying him, on the morrow, to any manufactories worthy of his attention."

The sound of his native tongue "in a strange land," spoken elegantly and fluently, by one who was evidently a gentlewoman, fell pleasantly and soothingly on the ear,

and the Count could not forbear to advert to her travels in Germany; nor could she, in the first instance, relinquish the pleasure of holding conversation with a companion so superior to those which circumstances usually drew to the scene of her labours. The interruption given to their conversation by a necessary question from one of her clerks called her to a recollection of other circumstances, and she again became taciturn and busy. The Count of course departed.

No mission could have been more welcome to Mr. Falconer than that which, on this evening, she walked over to deliver. He had been pleased with all he saw, and gratified by the attention he had received in Germany, and at this time he could not only meet every man in B— without the consciousness of owing them any thing, but in every manufactory he was sure to receive all the attention interest prompted as due to his daughter. Moreover, he loved to converse, as a gentleman, with a gentleman; a pleasure from which, poor man, he had been self-debarred for many years, but to which, of late, he had looked with a regret unfelt during the bustle of active life, but deemed of moment at that

season when we all look back to our early impressions and avocations with affectionate remembrance and renewed preference.

The appearance of Mr. Falconer was (considering the difference in their age) not less prepossessing than that of his young companion; and the characteristic frankness of our Irish descendant from a noble race, did not permit the Count to remain long in ignorance of those particulars which placed them on equality in a point which their respective countries deem so essential. The appearance and the employment of Maria alone puzzled Hernhausen--for a short time he thought this must be her elder brother, but the word daughter emphatically pronounced, and a nearer look into the face, which displayed not only the marking of years, but of sorrows, undeceived him, and he observed internally, "this man married in his childhood, undoubtedly, and has probably entailed the penalty of his folly on his offspring."

The day however passed pleasantly—the morrow not less so, for it was closed at the Elm Cottage, where the stranger found in Mrs. Falconer a younger woman than he

had conceived her daughter to be—he had understood that this daughter occasionally slept there, and he staid almost longer than politeness warranted in the hope of her appearance, but she did not come—a second and a third visit were not more successful.

Maria was indeed much engaged at this period; she had learned that a certain property adjoining the estate of Sir James Trevannion was on sale, and being aware that it would be extremely valuable to him on various accounts, was desirous of purchasing it; happy that she could at once repay her debt, and prove towards a family she so highly esteemed that activity of friendship for which so many had cause to thank her. This business for some days threw the handsome German completely into the back ground, and he would have been in danger of being entirely forgotten, if the following Sunday had not restored him to her memory through the conversation of her parents, who were alike warm in his praise and could speak of nothing but "the elegant, the virtuous Count—who, they were assured, was the best of sons, of masters, and of men."

"He is now gone to Wales," said Mr.

Falconer, "but he will be back in about two months, and I hope you will then, my dear Maria, be able to see more of him, for he is precisely the man whose society would delight you. He has studied the fine arts at the fountain-head, and his mind is embued with all their beauty, and endowed with that perception of all that is excellent in genius, which may be said to constitute much of its own divine essence—his acquirements in literature to me appear prodigious, and allowing that my own different pursuits prevent me from accurate judgment, yet I am certainly not far wrong in estimating them very highly—with all this he is the most unpretending and modest of human beings—is he not, my dear?"

"Yes," observed Mrs. Falconer, "he is indeed all, and more than all you have described him; he reminds me of Lord Littleton's praise of his beloved Lucy,

"Polite, as all his life in courts had been,
"And good, as he the world had never seen."—

"It seems strange to me that with so much goodness, he left his widowed mother—but allow me to tell you of the purchase I have so happily secured for the Trevannions, and

the not less pleasant circumstance of their arrival in England, so that we may now depend on seeing them soon," said Maria.

Mr. and Mrs. Falconer listened to their daughter's details with great interest, and heard (not with unmoistened cheeks, and hearts that rose in gratitude to heaven) that she had expended more than three thousand pounds without distressing herself, and had little doubt but that other loans, for which she had been indebted to other friends, would soon be liquidated, a point to which they well knew she was always anxiously looking. Still, from time to time, they reverted to the late visitant, who had evidently left an impression on their minds alike the result of esteem and admiration. The easy terms on which he soon found himself with Mr. Falconer, had (in opening his heart and displaying its present feelings, and past pursuits) comprized the progress of years in days, and laid the foundation of a sincere and permanent regard.

In due course the friendly Baronet and his family were re-assembled in their own mansion; they brought back their son, and an additional little brother, in high health, and

had the satisfaction of finding their daughters greatly improved, and to see that Mrs. Ingalton considered her daughter not less so. They found that the welfare of their children had not only been constantly attended to by Mrs. Falconer, but that Maria had found time to inspect their progress, and satisfy herself that every duty was properly discharged towards them. For this and her late improvement of their property they were truly thankful, and they rejoiced in the prosperity which had evidently crowned her endeavours, not only with sincerity but pride, as materially originating in themselves.

Maria hastened on their first arrival, to welcome them with that warm gratulation on their return, which she really felt, and also to deposit the necessary writings in the hands of Sir James, who pressed her to accept of any money requisite for the continuance and extension of her business—her visit was, however, short, but she promised to fulfil her past agreement and to spend an evening there with her parents the latter end of the following week.

"And you will put on a gown and look

like other people, my dear?" said Lady Trevannion.

"Undoubtedly—I do so every Sunday now, but were I seen within the town in any other apparel than this, my identity would be forfeited. It would undoubtedly either bring all my creditors upon me as indicating an utter change in my affairs, or subject me to suffering under a statute of Lunacy."

"For all that, before you are three months older, I will model you anew, depend upon it."

"Not unless you either give me positive independance, or a dozen years of age—in either case I will bid adieu to the business and the uniform; at present I know both for my friends, and deem them inseparable.

"What have I with dress to do?
Ladies gay—'twas made for you."—

Although the manner in which this was said, inspired Lady Trevannion with the idea that her request would not be complied with; to her great satisfaction, when the evening arrived, Maria appeared in a very elegant and becoming dress, and her beautiful hair, according to the fashion of that day, flowing

in ringlets down her back, dressed in light curls before, and merely confined by a simple bandeau. Some branches of the Birchett family, two young ladies their visitors, and an Italian gentleman with some officers then staying at B— constituted the party; and as many of them were musical, it was proposed by lady Trevannion that, on removing to the drawing-room, they would make a little concert.

"It will be a great treat to me," said Maria.

"I intend it to be so," replied the Lady of the mansion.

A duet had been performed—the Italian had proved the taste and science his country so generally display, in singing one of its exquisite airs, when two of the servants brought forward a beautiful harp to a certain space which had been purposely left for it, and their lady stepping to Maria, said in a low voice,

"Now, my dear young friend, behold once more that instrument with which you have so often delighted us. It has completed this night the solitude of seven years, to which it was condemned by you from the noblest

motives, the most praiseworthy resolution. I have had it put in order, but pray try it."

"My harp! my poor harp!" ejaculated Maria, as she stepped towards it with the sense of welcoming a friend—the instrument was closely connected in her mind with all the brightest days, and the tenderest emotions her heart had experienced in the morning of life, when such feelings glitter with the radiance of the dew-drop, and like it, are exhaled by the advancing hours. With the glowing enthusiasm which, at that period, formed a striking trait in her character, and still mingled with her feelings, and gave animation to the reflective powers so marked by her conduct, she eagerly flung her white hand over the strings, which, as they vibrated on her ear, seemed to renew in her a kind of past existence, full of sublime and endearing emotion. She seemed surprized that the strings would answer to her long alienated fingers, that the soul of music would yet spring from her bidding, yet thrill through her heart, and if ever human countenance exhibited the inspiring radiancy of angelic natures, blended with the softness

of feminine tenderness, it was that of Maria as she now leaned over her instrument with

"Smiles on her lip, and on her cheek a tear."

To her mother the sight was overpowering, and Mr. Falconer, unable to endure the current of painful recollections it awoke, was leaving the room; but before he had reached the door it was opened—a stranger was announced—"Count Hernhausen."

His tall form enabled him at the first glance to perceive all the company; that glance necessarily rested on her who was the most conspicuous figure, and although the awakened, abstracted mind of Maria was not roused from the species of rapt communion she was engaged in with her early friend, yet when she looked up and caught the entranced eye of the Count, she was covered with blushes, and hastily resuming her former seat, shrank from observation as much as she was able.

Sir James having left a letter for the Count at his Hotel, intreating to see him, *sans ceremonie*, immediately on his return, accounted for this unexpected appearance at the Park, but not altogether for his return to the place

from which he had been absent only half the time he projected. This may be, however, easily accounted for—he was a free agent, his heart had been soothed, his mind relieved by the conversation of two kind, intelligent people, and he found that the sublime and beautiful country through which he was passing, however it might charm his eye and exalt his imagination, left his heart only the more depressed; he therefore rendered that a hasty though not unobservant tour, which was intended to supply short occasional residences, and as he could hold no conversation with the Welsh, came back to talk about them to the English.

The warm welcome he received from all who knew him, detained him a short time before he reached the spot where Maria sat, to whom he was so evidently a stranger, that Lady Trevannion could not forbear saying, "I perceive that you do not know Miss Falconer, my good Count, yet I understood from her father that"——

Hernhausen apologized, and between his scanty store of English somewhat injured by his Cambrian journey, and that love of truth which was inherent in his every word and

action, his apology was any thing but complimentary to the former impressions he had received of Maria, and drew the smiles of the company in despite of their efforts. The Count felt awkward, and looked for a few moments a little embarrassed, a situation which made Maria his entire friend, not less than his previous sincerity, and so completely did this circumstance overcome her *mauvaise honte* by exciting the benevolent sentiments of her heart, that she became willing to be awkward in her turn—to prove "that she could not play, that she had forgotten how to sing." Those who could exactly recollect her former powers probably found deficiencies, and so undoubtedly did the stranger, but never had he found imperfection equally charming—seldom had he listened with more delight, and certainly never with half the surprize and interest.

When the music ceased, it naturally excited conversation on subjects connected with it; the traveller spoke of Wales and its bards, and, as a man of enquiry, endeavoured to learn somewhat of Ireland and its national instrument. Maria had not forgotten all she had read on the subject, at a period when she

also had loved to trace the page of History or the legend of poetry, and although her actual recollections of the country were few, they were blended with such vivid impressions, such captivating associations of the heart and the fancy, that the metamorphosis of her language and manners, from the sage, methodical scribe of invoices and calculator of discounts, appeared much more surprizing than that of her person. Had he met her a week before in the mountains of Brecknockshire, he must have believed that some benevolent fairy had wrought the change to wean his oppressed spirit from that sense of depression to which it lately submitted too much.

Maria returned with her parents to their home—it was a long time since she had been out of her bed at such a late hour, and she felt really surprised that time could have fled so fast and have left her so little wearied. She was glad that she had yielded to the advice of her friends, and allowed herself once more to mingle in society. She felt that she had earned the right to her past enjoyment, and though she recollected with a sigh that her prize was not won, her task

yet far from being completed, yet surely she had attained that power of self-command necessary for self-government; she should know how to bear indulgence without encroaching on the claims of duty.

But when Maria awoke at a late hour the following morning and recollected that many were at that time awaiting her presence, she was little inclined to listen to the praises of her parents, though her ear now lingered on those they poured on the Count, and she willingly admitted that their judgment had been as just as it was favourable. The request that she would contrive to come home more frequently during his stay, startled her, and she replied, "that she could not do so on any account; he would probably come over frequently, and there would be an evident impropriety in it."

"He will be in the country altogether but a very short time," said Mrs. Falconer, "and he is a kind of *rara avis* one can't expect to see often. I think it foolish to deny one's self the pleasure of his society from mere motives of etiquette—as we advance in life we find too many real causes of pain to add to the number by unnecessary privations, and

you, Maria, have voluntarily embraced too many thorns, to refuse all the roses, surely, especially those which are so very harmless."

Maria kissed her mother with more than her usual fondness, yet she departed with an unconvinced air; and the inaptitude and even the disgust she felt for business during the whole day, told her that she had been hitherto right in her conduct—that an imagination so vivid, a taste so cultivated as hers, could only have been torn from the objects to which it was ever ready to revert, by exercising determined decision as to her choice of those objects she felt it her duty to pursue, and which at present she was rewarded by attaining.

"No," she exclaimed, "with God's help, I will fight the good fight a few years longer. I will 'finish my course' and be thankful that it is no longer mixed with the soul-sickening anguish of unwise because unreturned attachment—never again shall that worm creep into the core and poison my happiness."

As she thus thought, her mind naturally recurred to Frank Ingalton, and she smiled half in contempt at her past sensations, innately observing, "that he had never been

nearly so elegant, so captivating as Hernhausen, who yet possessed many points of similarity with him; they were alike men of warm and tender affections, of perfectly unaffected manners, and highly cultivated minds.—" Neither the pride of birth (prevalent as that pride is in Germany) the high and intellectual society he has mixed with, nor the admiration he must be conscious of eliciting wherever he appears, has rendered the Count one whit less simple in his habits, less contented with domestic intercourse than the humblest tradesman—he appears born to shine rather with a steady light than a splendid coruscation, to be a sober, loving husband than a—but why should I think of him at all ?"

The next time Count Hernhausen saw Maria she was engaged in her usual occupations, " he wished not to intrude, but he had a little business," and she was too much a woman of business not to attend to him—conversations were lengthened till they became first serious then confidential. The dreadful storm which afterwards desolated the court of France, and shook that of every sovereignty in Europe, was then beginning

to alarm the wary, and excite the enthusiasm of the inexperienced, and under the idea that information on the situation of Paris might be useful to her, the Count read her certain letters, cautioned her in various points, and proved an interest in her welfare and that of her parents, of the most lively description. Probably for some time Count Hernhausen thought that his anxiety on this head really resulted only from that interest in the success of a woman so superior in her conduct and her powers, which was natural to all who considered and admired them; for he had wisely rendered himself too busy a man, and had been by the nurture of excellent and religious parents, too well-principled to understand much of love, seeing that he had hitherto formed no connubial ties. The time, however, came, when he found that he was rapidly increasing in an attachment which it was necessary he should more closely examine, and he therefore wisely determined to prosecute that journey into the northern part of the Island, which had been a part of his original plan.

Yet, during this absence, he addressed many letters to Maria on the same subject

which had first led to their unreserved communication, and in the course of them she might be said to learn every particular of his past history, his situation, the views of his father, and the wishes of his mother. It appeared as if his pen could not forbear to write when once he addressed her, and as he always used his own language, he had the advantage of being fluent, yet duly guarded. When Maria thanked him for these communications she never failed to begin her letter in the precise terms used on all mercantile occasions, and rarely did her answers exceed the due number of lines and the regular forms of such epistles; but it would so happen, that a single glance at the voluminous pacquet to which she was replying, convinced her that she was under the positive necessity of adding a line by way postscript, and it must be confessed that there were times, when the postscript in a great measure realized that character always given of it, when a lady is the writer; it became voluminous, witty, sentimental—much more like a letter to Ellen than a proper memorial of Mrs. Maria Falconer's brevity and dispatch.

In this correspondence there were unquestionably letters from Maria of the true mercantile complection—short, pithy, and conclusive enough; but alas! it answered no purpose whatever to send them, since they never failed to bring back alarmed inquiries "as to her health, or that of his dear friends at the Cottage;" fears lest he had intruded too much, and most unintentionally given offence by encroaching: in short, there was no getting rid of a most unreasonable demand on her time and thoughts, and she inveighed bitterly at home against all idle men of rank who thought themselves priviledged to waste other people's hours as well as their own—"it appeared that she was to have no peace till he got home again and had intrenched himself in his own bulwarks."

Mr. Falconer smiled at these invectives; he saw, or hoped he saw, at no great distance, the promise of a change in situation for his beloved daughter, that, in his own opinion, would atone to her for the loss of all which his imprudence had robbed her of—more than restore the forfeited honour of her birth, and even reward her for the unparalleled devotion of her faculties and ex-

ertions for her parents. His long retirement from business, and the pains taken by Maria herself, to throw him into the company of country gentlemen, in preference to that of rich iron-masters and merchants, had naturally caused his mind to recur much to its early destination, and had, in a considerable measure, even restored his love for field sports and all those occupations which belong to that class of the community. No wonder then that his ambition was roused, and that he earnestly desired to see his child restored and exalted, by the only medium which could, in his opinion, wipe away the degradation of that station which, whilst she honoured, she yet could not in his opinion dignify. He dwelt on this hope, till it might be said his very soul sickened to attain it, and he became feverish—fretful, and, in the language of that day, alarmingly "*nervous*."

Mrs. Falconer could not listen to his reveries, without being struck with the probability that his conjectures, so far as the Count was concerned, were true; but the decisive rejection of all such overtures, on former occasions, from Maria, when she was much younger, her ignorance even now of all that

had passed in the stricken heart of her daughter respecting young Ingalton, led her to believe that she was invulnerable to love, and so averse to marriage, that it would be cruel to mention it to her. She also foresaw that if her husband obtained the desire of his heart, he must do it by forfeiting in a great measure the happiness of his existence. "Tho' we are not old" she would say, "yet we have taken root too long in our native soil to be transplanted without suffering dreadfully from the change. I hate travelling, and when my husband returned from his German tour, tho' he loved the people, he did not like many other things necessary for comfort—yet if Maria goes, we must go too; I would rather die than be separated from her."

But no reasoning of hers could wean the father from the fondly-cherished hope of beholding his daughter ennobled; of considering her at the head of a feudal establishment, the admired of all eyes as the graceful, beneficent stranger, the beloved of all hearts as the liberal mistress, the hospitable friend, the idolized wife. In pursuance of his

object, he made every possible enquiry which prudence or solicitude could dictate, respecting the character, fortune, and connections of Count Hernhausen in his own country, and from every quarter his answers were more than satisfactory—all re-echoed the feelings and praises of his own heart, when this amiable and exemplary man was its subject.

At the time of the Count's return, Mr. Falconer had greatly increased the indisposition of which we spoke by a severe cold, and he was so unwell that Maria exerted herself to the utmost to spend as much time as possible at home, in order to lighten her mother's cares and relieve the tedium of confinement to her father. Hence she appeared again in a new and most endearing light to the Count, who saw, in the tenderness of that attention she paid the sufferer, the affectionate activity with which she assisted Mrs. Falconer, and the lively playfulness with which she sought to amuse the invalid, or the patient forbearance displayed by her when he was tedious or petulant, all those qualities most to be sought for in a companion

for life; and his esteem was now added to the admiration and love which already possessed his heart.

Independent in his situation—victor over his early prejudices—aware that his beloved mother earnestly desired his union with an amiable woman, to whom she would gladly resign her former seat, and naturally of a most ingenuous temper, there was no cause why his manners should veil the state of the Count's affections—In fact they were sufficiently evident to every eye, and from them the father recovered his health with a rapidity that was most gratefully hailed by the lover, not less than the daughter.

To Mr. Falconer the Count first declared the state of his affections, the wishes of his heart—not as a matter of form, but from the daily increasing sense of the value of her he sought—from considering that there was, in the commanding intellect and decisive tone of her character, much that might prove inimical to his hopes, since, although he flattered himself that he was in possession of her esteem, and that she was not indifferent to his person and feelings, he could not but see that she was capable of severing a stronger

tie if it militated against her preconceived opinions of parental claims, or rather of resolute perseverance in the path she had adopted.

Thus circumstanced, the lover ventured not to risk a declaration on which so much depended, and to which he was the less urged because it was evident that every morning interview, every evening conversation, tended to confirm her predilection in his favour; nor could it be supposed that the traces of deep thought, nor even her anxiety on matters of business and the pains she evidently had taken to contract her affairs and especially to close her connections in France, in consequence of his advice, were unfavourable to his hopes. It was natural to suppose that a woman who had given up her best days, her strongest inclinations to the attainment of a certain end, would not relinquish the advantages so gained, unadvisedly; nor was it likely that any commercial concern begun on credit and conducted with a regularity opposed to hazardous speculation (therefore not susceptible of enormous profits) should in little more than seven years have secured such a fortune as to render Mr. and Mrs.

Falconer independent—nor was Maria herself likely to accept all from a husband after being so long in the habit of possessing and bestowing. She had received a decisive lesson in the fate of her mother, and tho' naturally not less confiding than generous, and fully equal to discriminating between the different characters of her father and her lover, it was hardly likely that impressions so momentous could be lost. She was as a woman likely to feel affection intensely, constantly, sincerely, and ardently, but not at all likely to yield to love blindly—the empire of reason and the habit of examination forbade her to become the dupe of that passion which has ever a tendency to confuse the intellect, "and make the worse appear the better reason."

Yet by degrees, confidence, friendship, and even love confessedly united Maria to him who had long possessed her high regard, and with whom she could have adventured freely her own personal happiness; but she claimed not only time for further consideration and the complete adjustment of her affairs, previous to her marriage, but required that every circumstance relative to her

situation and prospects should be laid before the Countess his mother most undisguisedly, observing justly, "that when a whole family made so important a sacrifice as that of abandoning their country, it was necessary that their future footing in their adopted land, should be thoroughly understood and indisputably advantageous."

The unbounded affection both her parents felt for the Count, the actual desire her father professed for removing to a place where his past mortifications were unknown, his original rank in society understood and estimated, and a moderate income equal to maintaining an important station—the placid quiescence of her mother in all their arrangements for the future, did not however prevent Maria from foreseeing many trifling discomforts as inevitable; and when she reflected on the happy years they had enjoyed at the Cottage, in possession of increasing conveniences, and perfect freedom from all care, enjoying the society of a few chosen friends, and unincumbered by the parade, or incommoded by the bustle of life, she could not forbear to attribute a part of her father's desire to remove to that restlessness, inherent

in his nature, reviving in consequence of health and ease, nor to feel a persuasion that her mother secretly feared the change in which she acquiesced from a sense of equal love and gratitude to her. Under the solicitude these thoughts awakened she was induced once more to seek her constant adviser, and found Mr. Elderton, fortunately alone.

The awkwardness of introducing so delicate a subject was spared to her by the good old gentleman, who yet spoke of it with a very sombre air, as if he were rather looking at the bright side of a sorrowful affair, than the slight inconveniences of a good one—he was a Bachelor, and could not be made sensible to the happiness such an union could hardly fail of producing, between persons so virtuous and intellectual, attached to each other by all that is found most binding in friendship, most lasting and endearing in love—but he did know how to estimate the actual good with which he knew Maria to be surrounded, and that with which she endowed her parents. He also felt a strong desire that she should not be an undowried bride, and his painful recollections of his mother ren-

dered him sensible that more than ordinary security and honour should be given to one who, in leaving her own country, unavoidably incurs many small evils at least, and lays herself open to great ones; and he therefore observed,

"Tho' I believe it is true that your sex are much more easily moulded, and that by nature you are happily more mutable than we are, yet as all the conduct of your past life evinces that strength is not less your characteristic than affection, I have my doubts whether you could change your habits with the facility of your sex in general, Maria—in short, if you marry, pray settle in England; I am sure the Count loves you well enough to consent to that."

"If I asked him to do so, I should act unworthy of myself, believing as I do, that a man in his situation ought to live in his own country, and fulfil all the duties to which his situation calls him. If he resigned those intentions in favour of his tenantry which I know he meditates—if he forsook his widowed mother and the land of his fathers, at such a time as this, when surely every man

should be at his post—in such a case he would not be the man I could *honour*, or would marry."

"You are a brave, noble-hearted young woman, and precisely calculated for the place in society where this equally excellent man would place you, and if I—or if he had come in a couple of years later, or"—

I am not going to be married soon, perhaps never, to Frederic Hernhausen, for it is certain, as he well knows, that my union with my mother is irrevocable, and I want you to get really at the bottom of her feelings and wishes on this point;—at present I fear my father influences her, I fear too that she supposes me much weaker than she ought to suspect me of being—I am not a child now, save in my affection for her."

Maria departed, and the old man was left musing on her words; "No, Maria," said he, "you are not a child; but I rather think woman at six and twenty, when she has chosen a resting-place for her heart sanctioned by reason, clings to it with a tenacity of which sixteen is incapable—my old heart aches to think of what yours would suffer were it torn from one so worthy of your choice,

one too who would be a son to your parents, and, when they are gone, supply the chasm —you must marry him."

Having thus made up his mind to this conclusion, it was no wonder that in consequence of hearing unexpected good news from Germany a few days afterwards, he burst into the Cottage with a look of gaiety sparkling in his countenance, a rubbing of the hands and a gladsomeness in his "good morning," which prepared his auditors for intelligence of the most joyful kind.

"Welcome, my good friend," said Mr. Falconer "you look so happy that it does one good to see you."

"Aye! so will you look happy before I leave you—there you sit cogitating in your great chair on the possibility, and probability, of comparing your pedigree with a German Baron's, then sigh to think you must rob your daughter of a portion or break her heart by refusing her fortune, when all the while the winds are wafting you over the best part of twelve thousand pounds from honest Krentzer's, in lieu of the fifteen they owed you."

"Krentzer's! The Dantzic bankers?"

said Mr. Falconer in a low voice, putting his hand to his forehead.

"Aye—here's the document forwarded to me for the purpose of laying it before all their creditors; here's your name with the dividends, interests, and so forth—you are certain I lost not a moment, I—why Falconer, my dear fellow, how's this? don't look so—speak to me—for God's sake, speak!"

Mrs. Falconer was seated at the breakfast-table which Maria had that moment left, and had, in the moment of devout thansgiving to God for this most welcome news, cast her eyes upwards, and was absorbed in the joyful and pious emotion she experienced, when the alarmed tone of Mr. Elderton's voice startled her. She arose and beheld her husband sunk back in his chair, in the dreadful situation she had once, and never but *once* witnessed before. Her piercing shriek instantly brought her daughter and the servants into the room, and one had the sense instantly to fly for medical assistance.

Shocked as Mr. Elderton was, he yet instinctively raised up the stricken man, and calling on Maria to aid him, he succeeded in unbuckling his stock, and in freeing his

respiration from every external impediment; and by their joint efforts prompt and effectual assistance was given. The arrival of the medical man was as rapid as possible, and the immediate application of the lancet apparently produced relief to the patient, who was conveyed to bed before any attention could be paid to Mrs. Falconer who had fainted from terror.

When Maria had succeeded in recalling life to her mother, she had yet great difficulty in persuading her that her father lived, and for many hours fainting fits succeeded each other so rapidly, that it was found impossible to convey her to his room and convince her of his existence; and when this took place at last, she appeared in the more deplorable condition.

Maria was however soon convinced that this was not the case, and amidst all the terror and anguish of this unexpected affliction she yet saw that it was to her father that her first cares ought to be directed; she lost not a moment in summoning two physicians of eminence to consult on the case, and she waited their opinion, under the terrible conviction that the life of both her parents was

suspended in the same scale, and that whenever the soul now struggling on the lips of the husband should depart, it would summon that of the wife more slowly but not less certainly to follow.

In this sudden and agonizing affliction how welcome was the presence of her lover! How much more closely did sorrow cement and hallow their affection, giving, as it were, the perfecting link to that chain which bound them to each other! Those only who have prayed and wept together, know what it is to love with the fervour, depth, and purity, of which the human heart is capable.

Days and nights succeeded, in which it was expected that every passing hour would be the last; yet life still lingered tho' speech and reason were denied—at the end of a fortnight decided symptoms of improvement appeared, and hope arose in proportion to the severity of its late depression.

Once more the breathing of the patient became regular, his appetite returned, and the use of his right arm was partially restored. The disorder which had been considered apoplectic at the moment of seizure, was now pronounced paralytic, and it was believed

possible that the sufferer might live, and even by slow degrees recover his faculties, and his limbs. This information operated like magic on the mind and even on the constitution of Mrs. Falconer, reduced, as she had become, even to an alarming state of weakness. The moment that her spirits were relieved she became capable of taking food and medicine, of considering all the means of assistance necessary to her husband's case, and recollecting various instances in which others had been relieved who were similarly afflicted. Under the happy stimulus thus given to her affections, she became able to endure a sight far worse than death, to attend in constant but unavailable watchfulness, on the most affecting if not the most deplorable spectacle humanity can present, and which had already shook the younger and stronger frame of her daughter beyond its powers.

The fine form and still handsome features of poor Falconer, at this time, resembled so completely those of a corpse, that the sight of him in a sitting posture, as recommended by the faculty, had something in it ghastly and revolting, especially as he was obliged to be swathed by bands of linen which bound

him to the chair—That his dull, fixed, eyes were open, that the sluggish motion of his labouring breast indicated breathing, and that one marble hand showed partial possession of life, by an unvarying, undulating movement, only added to the horror of the object, which combined, in one living man, all that is most terrible in death, and ideotcy. It awoke pity so profound that it became excruciating, mingled with that cold shuddering of the senses, by which nature proclaims, even to the most attached hearts, the barrier she has placed between the living and the dead.

When this sad state had continued long enough to leave no doubt of its stabiiity, the Count, as the most beloved friend of the sufferer, (who was now supposed to be beyond the reach of further emotion) was admitted to the room, where alone he could see that afflicted wife whom he loved and revered as a mother. It will be readily supposed that he would severely experience the sensation we have spoken of on approaching the remains of one whom he had so often gazed upon with admiration, and never seen before without pleasure. Not to gaze upon him now was

impossible, there was a fascination which drew him both by awe and by tenderness—but how did the creeping shock which ran through his veins subside into compassion and melt into affectionate sorrow, when by slow degrees the pale, rigid, features relaxed, a faint smile unbent the fixed muscles of the mouth, a new brightness glimmered in the glazed eye, and a murmuring, half-articulated word issued from the parched lips, and gave sign of recognition and pleasure.

It was a sight to move the firmest heart, when the Count, overwhelmed with affection, knelt before that breathing corpse, and, as the big tears rolled down his cheeks, took that pale, helpless hand and pressed it fondly to his lips and his heart, trying to conquer the suffocating grief that impeded utterance, that he might answer the faint smile, and reassure the sufferer. As Maria beheld him thus affected, thus employed—never had he been so graceful in her eyes, so dear, so honoured by her heart, and as she heard him pour out, half unintelligibly, the sympathy and sorrow of his soul, or hail the faint glimpse of returning reason in him whom he called "beloved father, venerated friend," her silent

vows for him ascended to heaven, and called on the Eternal Father to record the promise which bound her to her lover from that hour for ever,—a vow which she felt, even then, must not be registered on earth.

CHAP. XIV.

When it had thus been ascertained that the visit of the Count produced no other emotion than one which was pleasurable, and that it had even increased apparently the patient's general powers of perception, poor Mrs. Falconer became impatient to see him again, and as habit strengthened his power of enduring the painful sight, it was evident that his visits must be useful and consolatory to them all—the mournful satisfaction he experienced in communicating good, rendered him placid if not cheerful, and on his entrance one morning with marks of recent agitation in his countenance, tho' he earnestly sought to disguise them, Maria intreated him to speak with her in the adjoining room.

"You have experienced some new distress," said she, "do not keep it from me—I have a right to share *your* cup of sorrow, for you have drunk deeply of *mine*."

The Count placed a letter which had been

written some weeks, but was only just received, in her hands ; it was from his mother, and was in reply to that which he had forwarded at the express desire of Maria. The Countess warmly approved the conduct and character of her whom he had chosen, and signified her full confidence in a son who had long been not less the object of her pride, than her love; but she urged him to complete the engagement as speedily as possible, as she was impatient to see him, having been now many months in so delicate a state of health that she had been sent by her physicians from place to place for change of air; and had at length returned to their own abode, where she anxiously awaited his presence, regretting exceedingly that, in her mistaken tenderness, she had not told him her real situation some time before.

The Countess added in a postscript, "that his sister was well, but being unable to leave her family had prevailed on her friend Henrietta Steinher to become her mother's companion, and that she had proved a most affectionate and valuable child to her, and would be a most welcome acquisition to the dear stranger, for whom they would make

every preparation circumstances permitted, and whom she earnestly longed to embrace."

Before Maria reached this part of the letter, her distress had become so great that she fled to her own room to save the feelings of her lover—to hide even from his eye the heart-rending sorrow which overwhelmed her—so severe was the agony which followed her reflections on this letter, and her clear sense of the painful, the soul-harrowing duty she was called upon to perform, that, compared with what she now suffered, she thought she had never tasted of sorrow till now. There were indeed moments when she felt utterly unequal to the task—moments when grief was so acute in the pang it inflicted, that she could have shrieked under it, or have expressed her feelings best in the language of vehement anger. Her vivid imagination, the warm, and energetic character of her mind, the tenfold ties which recent and terrible affliction had bound round the hearts of her lover and herself, making them *one being*, all added to the transport of passionate sorrow which at this moment overwhelmed her—true! she had seen the stroke advancing, she had been aware it was descending,

she had summoned all her powers to meet it and she had felt how feeble those powers were—it had now fallen, it rankled in her very "heart of hearts," and she writhed under it in undescribable torture.

An hour passed, and the lover heard not her returning step, and the gloom on his bosom increased—it changed to the restlessness which belongs to violent agitation, and he repaired to the sick chamber, as if the fearful spectacle of its unnatural quietness would allay the ferment of his spirit; but he had no power of exertion—his eye was wild, his tongue incapable of reply, and his thoughts completely estranged, even from her whom he beheld with such feelings of deep respect and admiration, as a ministering angel to her suffering husband. At one moment and only one, his eyes were fixed upon her with attention—she was feeding the helpless victim from a small silver boat in the manner infants are fed, and she did it with the same tender care blended with somewhat of respect and courtesy—the virtues, and the peculiar duties of woman as wife and mother could not be more strongly condensed, more beautifully represented—"would Maria become such, would

she, with a more-highly gifted mind, a still more impassioned sensibility, and wider capacity for good, would she emulate her mother's conduct?—ah! why was she absent? what was she considering in a moment so important to them both?"

Yet more than three hours had passed, when poor Maria, pale, exhausted, and bearing in her countenance marks of the ravages of recent suffering, once more entered the room—she looked calm, but deeply mournful—affectionate yet firm.

"I am persuaded, dear Frederic, that you see as clearly as myself that path it is now become equally our duty to pursue. I have kept you a long time waiting, but you will forgive me on the consideration that I found the task a difficult one—so difficult that I will not allow myself to revert to it again. We have other claims on our feelings than to waste them uselessly, especially you who must travel—must go hence this very night."

"Not so soon as that, Maria, surely?"

"The sooner the better—I hope your servant has prepared."

"And I—I am to go *alone—this time?*"

"My friend—my *beloved*—nay do not in-

terrupt me—we part for *ever*, it would be folly, nay wickedness in me to practise self-deception, and thus deceive and injure you. Years may pass, must pass (I hope) before I could have the right to marry you—I have already told you that I"—

"I will return, I will share all your troubles, I will make *your* country *my* country."

"No, Count Hernhausen, you shall not do this for me, nor any woman—you are not now a boy in whom such conduct might be pardoned though it were not approved. Your mother is sick and requires your care, your sister is the wife of a soldier, the Baron her husband looks to you as her future protector. In these portentous times may not your own arm be called for by your country? To rob that country of you *now*, were worse than sacrilege."

"You are right—every word is *truth*, but though not children we are yet young, Maria, and in time better prospects will arise to us."

"Do not believe it; the very thought would paralyze every good disposition in both our hearts,—we must part, we must suffer, but we do not need to be therefore unworthy.

Go to your own country, comfort your mother, protect your servants, fulfil your father's wishes, and, like him, you may in time—in *time* place a virtuous and accomplished mistress at the head of your household."

"Hold, hold, Maria—you know not what it is to love as you have been loved—I swear"—

"Hush!—do not swear—I spoke foolishly, I wish you to be happy; but certainly I cannot at this moment wish you married, save as the only means which will enable me to hear of you—all half measures would only prolong our sufferings, and destroy our usefulness—we part now finally—*I will never marry.*"

The anguish, and the language of the lover it is alike useless to dwell upon; Maria as heretofore had weighed and was decided on the point.

The Count left B— that very night, and in the woe and perturbation of his spirits, doubtless found some relief from change of place, the hurry of departure, and the fortunate power of immediate embarkation which occurred to him. He arrived in as short time as possible at his paternal residence,

and found that its salubrious breezes had already proved more restorative to his mother than any place which she had visited, and for a time the presence of her son and the necessity of consoling his affliction assisted her health; but she was advanced in life and final recovery was hardly to be expected. The death of Miss Steinher's father, who had been an old friend of the late Count, and the necessity of prosecuting a law-suit which involved the fortune of his daughter, (now left to the care of the Countess) compelled her son to exert his faculties, and remember that neither in sorrow nor joy, doth "man live for himself alone."

Although no person was less likely to fall into that error than Maria, yet at this time she was undoubtedly overwhelmed with sorrow, and her mind sunk, as it were, into the utter dejection, the quiet, but appalling repose, of inert despondency. She felt, as if overcome by the exertion used in one great achievement, she had now a right to rest—to gaze on her father until she almost resembled him in the torpor of his disease as much as the paleness of his inanimate com-

plection—to weep, as one who "mourns for the dead and refuses to be comforted."

However frequently Maria had reiterated her intention of declining all correspondence with her late lover, she yet could not forbear a secret hope that she should be disobeyed, and when she found (after a considerable lapse of time) that her mother had received a letter, she was really thankful.

Mrs. Falconer during this period had been so incessantly employed in watching (as those so afflicted alone do watch) in the vain hope of seeing some proof of amended health or returning intellect in her idolized invalid, that sincerely as she sympathised in the sorrows of her daughter, she was yet not aware of their extent. The evident agitation Maria exhibited on the arrival of this letter, opened her eyes to the wan countenance, and spectre-like form of her daughter, and the distress she exhibited, the supplications she used, drew forth a promise, "that she would exert herself, she would guard the health so necessary for her mother's welfare," that mother to whom she had devoted herself so entirely.

"Perhaps this letter may do you good, Maria, will you open it?"

"Not for the world—I will even not hear it read, but if you will tell me the general sense, I will thank you."

As Mrs. Falconer perused it she could not forbear to weep, and it required a strong effort in Maria to refrain from snatching the letter from the hands of her mother and devouring the contents with her own eyes, but she forbore and said only, "Is all well?"

"As well as a good man who has lost a good woman can be, I trust *he* is; his mother is better, which comforts him; but public affairs are very bad, and it seems his mother had property in France, where every thing is going to pieces, I think."

In the dusk of that very evening Maria visited Mr. Elderton, and arranged with him how to dispose of the money received from Germany. She listened to his remonstrances on the impropriety of allowing her business to dwindle away, instead of disposing of it, as she might have done, for a handsome sum of money, or bestowing it as a reward to some valuable servant, and observed that it was a pity such a connection should be lost,

he had once hoped little Frank Ingalton would have come in for it, adding with a sigh, "I fear his father will never be able to live in the East Indies; I hear his wife is very poorly, and although fond of Calcutta, where she is much beloved, would yet like to return if she could do it consistent with her husband's situation—their family is likely to be very large, and it would be a pity to deprive them of any help in your power to give; and undoubtedly there are other people sufferers by these disastrous times whom it would be a pleasure to assist—the Continent is in a terrible situation."

"Undoubtedly"—said Maria after a long pause—adding afterwards, "I will go again into the counting-house, I will not suffer that excellent business to be lost; for I have not any persons whom I can put into it with a chance of success. My old servants are too old for any aid but pensioning, and this I will endeavour to do."

In consequence of this resolution, aided by the full conviction that the restoration of her health and spirits would be the greatest possible blessing to her mother, she proceeded as far as she was able to exert herself once

more in that path which had been interrupted by such various occurrences. The secession of Mr. Elderton from business at this time assisted her in a twofold sense, as she engaged from him two steady men as a clerk and a traveller, and the leisure which he possessed enabled him to spend many hours with poor Mr. Falconer which tended greatly to relieve his faithful and unwearied partner.

The fond wife and daughter had also the satisfaction of perceiving that although the invalid never noticed Maria whilst she was constantly about him, yet he had now an evident perception of her movements, and always saw her come in with pleasure. If she were later than usual he would sigh heavily, and roll his eyes around in search of her, yet he never regretted her departure; it was therefore evident that certain recollections of the past floated over his mind, but beyond this shadow of intelligence it never rose.

After living nearly two years in this state of semi-existence, poor Mr. Falconer departed at last without any apparent change, and so gently that even his unwearied nurse knew not the moment when he was summoned

hence. She had taught herself to hope so long, that happy as the change might appear to every other person, to *her* it was a severe shock, and a great privation, which reduced her to a sense of solitude and desolation for which her previous affliction, however great, had not prepared her. Maria's sole attention was given to her bereaved mother, whom she considered now more especially delegated by heaven itself to her care and love; and considering that every thing around her contributed to keep alive these sad remembrances which were destructive to a spirit so broken, and a constitution so injured by long confinement and extreme solicitude, she hastened her removal to a handsome house at the borders of the town, bought her a neat carriage, and placed her establishment on the most repectable footing.

But a much more essential benefit was now insured to the amiable mourner by the company of Mrs. Ingalton, who was glad to resign the labours of her school and partake the quiet comforts and the beloved society of her friend.

Here Mrs. Falconer by degrees regained her health, and proved that resignation to the

divine will which her religion taught when she was enabled to bring its divine consolations home to her heart, and in her renovated cheerfulness, her placid acquiescence and gratitude to God for present blessings, her daughter felt a rich reward for all the past labours and sacrifices of her life. To her it was delightful to see her mother and her friend return to the pleasures of society, and, with a few well-chosen friends, renew the happy intercourse which both had necessarily resigned for so long a period, whilst her own spirits were relieved by the beneficial exertion of her talents, the extent of her power, and even of her wealth, since it was never accumulated but for the purpose of being wisely and benevolently applied to the comforts or the wants of those around her.

In the course of the time now passing, Mrs. Falconer had learnt from his own pen that Count Hernhausen had suffered much, from the disastrous state of his law affairs, the loss of much property in France due to his mother, and lately the death of that much-loved parent. She found, that after this event he had like many other noblemen in his situation entered the army to repel the

invaders of his country. Nor will it surprize many of our readers to learn also that after residing nearly two years in the house with an amiable girl, his own ward and his mother's darling, whose artless manners had often told him how dear he was to her heart, and from whom he must be separated necessarily at his mother's death, he had at length married her and hoped to find in her affection some solace for the past, although public affairs in his country encroached much on private happiness.

Several years now passed, in which the many difficulties of those engaged in commercial pursuits were such as would unquestionably have deterred Maria from embarking in them; but as her property was necessarily scattered abroad, she could not in many instances forbear to continue her connections without abandoning her past gains altogether. This she was the less willing to do, because every year of this distressing period showed her some new means by which she could benefit those around her, nor could she be insensible to the pleasure of guiding by prudence and vigilance her steady bark thro' the ocean in which so many were wrecked. Cir-

cumstances of course extended her connections and she found several persons whom she esteemed and pitied, and to whom she became so eminently useful that many, now rich and important, may be said to owe all they possess to that considerate generosity in her, which preserved their parents from utter ruin, and enabled them to educate and eventually fix their children respectably in life. It was not alone in the abode of poverty that the bounty of Maria flowed, where a trifling relief effected a great assistance, (although such objects were never neglected by her) but the noble benevolence of her heart and the comprehensiveness of her views went far beyond petty charities. Was a worthy manufacturer unable to live any longer by a business which, having its regular market closed, called upon him to pay large wages and lay the goods for which he so paid upon shelves already groaning with the accumulation—"I must share this trouble," said Maria, "I must purchase from him and enable him to go on, otherwise he will be ruined, his family driven to the lowest ranks in society, and his workmen thrown upon the parish to increase the already overburthened

rates, which in their turn will pull down more housekeepers; *this must not be.*"

Every such resolve in her case was followed by secret, but prompt assistance; and if the evil was found greater than she had apprehended, it was only met with fuller consideration and more ample help. It would sometimes happen to involve her present means so far as to render her literally poor, in which case she always quietly endured the inconvenience to which it subjected her, rather than incur personal obligation or alter the *routine* of her affairs. "I have had my treat," she would say to her mother, "and must wait till I can have another; I should be an unworthy pupil of my early school if I had not learnt like St. Paul, 'how to want and how to abound.'"

It has more than once occurred at such periods that Maria was applied to on behalf of some public charity, in which case she always quietly, but, if teazed, peremptorily, refused to give. This was considered sometimes to arise from caprice, at other times from avarice, which was deemed particularly inexcusable in one who was known to have escaped all great losses better than her neigh-

bours, and whose steady gains and moderate expenses must before this time have made actually rich. Remonstrance and intreaty were however alike unavailing, for as she always gave freely when she could do so with propriety, so she always refused firmly when she could not; yet would she never condescend to plead poverty, much less hint at the medium which made her poor. When the storm had blown past through her means, sometimes (despite of her intreaty) gratitude whispered the name of the pilot thro' whom it had been weathered, and it has been known that on the very morning when she stoutly refused a guinea subscription, she had paid a debt of a hundred pounds to save the father of a family from arrest.

How often has she placed a widow in a little shop, put out sons apprentices, made daughters into useful assistants, decent instructors, or superior servants, by bestowing on them the profits of some one branch of her commercial dealings, which, when so dedicated, she would hold religiously as their's for the time to which it was thus appropriated, and how often would she relieve humbler objects by the direct sacrifice of

some personal luxury to which her taste inclined, and her fortune warranted. But never did these denials for one moment extend to the elegant comforts which surrounded her mother, towards whom her affections seemed drawn more fondly the more they were concentrated. The carriage, the house, the very dress of Mrs. Falconer, were models for all who had good taste to copy, and Maria, who, in her own person, seemed to forget the very existence of great personal beauty, paid it homage in the person of her mother.

It is true that as time advanced, and she felt it no longer necessary to look older than she was, she dressed much better—fashions in female apparel happily became simple and convenient, at the time when it suited her to adopt them, and a plain cloth pelisse and leghorn bonnet supplied the place of the ancient habit, and formed a costume equally useful and infinitely more becoming. The activity of her habits preserved her fine form, her light step, and the quickness of her eye, and altho' the rapidity of her ideas, the strictness of her methodical arrangements, and the determinate character of her mind,

rendered her occasionally subject to a quick mode of speech, and an unbending gait, there was an openness of countenance, an assurance of protection, a full, frank kindness of reception about her, which enabled every honest child of sorrow to lay his wants before her with ease—the mean and the wicked shrunk before her eye.

Such was she in her thirty-sixth year, when a foreign lady, young, fair, and evidently oppressed with sorrow, appeared unexpectedly before her, and signified in very broken English a desire to speak to her in private.

That desire was instantly complied with, and the stranger with a trembling hand presented a billet which had been long written, but was yet legible, and had been traced by a hand never to be forgotten.

"Maria, I write to you from a prison in France, where the fate of war has thrown me. Receive, I beseech you, my wife and child. You are my only hope and consolation. Henriette will tell you how we have suffered. Cherish her, I beseech you—she is worthy of your love—commend her to your mother, to *mine*, for as such I must ever hold her. Nei-

ther my time nor my feelings allow me to say more—your brother,

F. H——."

These lines had been traced with a trembling hand, and they were read by a heart so agitated, as to render words impossible—an instantaneous and affectionate embrace assured the unhappy wanderer that her beloved lord, her long-suffering captive, had not been wrong in thus venturing to throw her on the mercy of that woman whom he could never cease to remember as the most perfect of her sex, in his estimation.

It is unnecessary to trace the sad steps which had tended to place the Count in his present situation, and induce him to write to his wife, earnestly intreating her to abandon the home which was now in the power of the French, and, by a circuitous route, reach England. He had been too good a general to have any hope of speedy release, and he had suffered so severely from his wounds that he thought it only too probable that he might die in prison—to procure an asylum for his young and lovely wife and the child he idolized, was not only the first wish of his heart, but the only circumstance, which, by

soothing his affliction, would give him a chance for existence.

When the child of her once-loved Frederic, bearing his softened resemblance in every feature, was presented to Maria, her heart throbbed audibly in her bosom—when she learned that its name was Maria, tears that dissolved, as it were, her very frame, rushed impetuously down her cheeks. The little innocent was sorry for the lady, and rushed to her arms as she had often done in the hour of sorrow to those of her mother, calling on her in her own language "not to cry, for papa would soon come to her again."

To this child Maria became attached as much as she had ever been to Frank, and had more satisfaction in her second acquisition than she could have in the first; for although she continued to love the boy, who was a very clever and amiable youth, yet that necessity for keeping him at school, and, to a certain degree, estranging him from the indulgence of her mother, did not exist in the present case, and little Maria soon was the darling of all the family. Mrs. Falconer received the unhappy lady with all the gentleness, tenderness, and affectionate courtesy,

due to her sorrows, and with a vivid interest in the fate of her husband. Here the young Countess might have been happy if friendship could have made her so, but the more easy external circumstances were rendered to her, the more it will be conceived was she uneasy respecting the fate of him from whom she had now no possibility of hearing, and she was frequently ready to lament that in obeying his mandate she had placed herself out of all power to administer to his comforts, or even learn his fate.

Whilst her older friends endeavoured to console her, and her lovely child sought to amuse her, Maria constantly endeavoured to gain the earliest political intelligence, and by every source of correspondence which remained to her, sought to convey and receive information; but the Countess had remained nearly eighteen months in England, without being able to satisfy herself of more than the actual existence of her husband. At that period, the prospect of peace awoke at once hopes and fears which affected her so severely that health and life itself seemed to fade away before them. Maria saw the state to which she was reduced, and was aware action

alone could save her; she had herself found its value, and fearful that if much longer delayed, it would be useless, she suddenly proposed to set out with her to Germany.

The offer was received with transport by the Countess, but alarm by Mrs. Falconer. "Dear Maria" said she in a whisper, "have you considered this step?"

"I have, dear mother, and take with me an excellent escort in Mr. B— whom yet I cannot send alone with our dear Henriette. If I find the Count at liberty, I will return immediately without proceeding into the country, but if this poor creature is condemned to widowhood—we part no more in this life."

Their voyage, being taken so late in the year, was very bad and tedious, and on arriving at their destination the same circumstances of delay in the arrangements of a treaty which afterwards proved of so short duration, occasioned many days of uneasiness, alleviated, however, by an assurance that the Count lived, and was even then at liberty. To this information succeeded great fear that he would set out immediately for England, but at length they found the

means of informing him, through a courier, of the present situation of his lady.

What hours those were when he was known to be on the road, how slowly they passed and how often the rooms were paced through, and the flight of time consulted, we attempt not to describe. The last two hours were the worst of all. At length however Henriette embraced her husband, her pale, thin, altered husband, over whom she sorrowed almost as much as she rejoiced, before the tumult of her feelings permitted her to seek the present guest, the inestimable benefactress, whom the Count wished yet dreaded to see, and whose name and praises even now shook him more than the memory of all his past sufferings, and the losses and desolation which encompassed him.

But Maria was gone.

A few hurried but affectionate lines, and a considerable sum of money alone remained as her memorial—she adopted the care of the child till they could together reclaim it, urged them to prosecute their endeavours to recover the property which had been desolated by the war, and that fortune of the Countess's

which the confusion of the times and the absence of her husband during the war had still withheld from them, and she promised them money wherewith to contest the point.

The appearance of Maria on her return was not only welcomed by her mother but a family of strangers, who had arrived during her absence, and who were waiting her return with impatience. This was, as our readers will suppose, the Ingaltons', which now consisted of the worthy couple and two additional children. Several had been born and died in India, but Mrs. Ingalton had never enjoyed her health there, and was evidently at this time gradually sinking to the tomb.

The love this amiable woman had ever entertained for Maria appeared even to have increased during her long absence, and from the moment of her appearance she flung herself upon her care with all the helplessness of sickness and the fond confidence of early life, so that scarcely was the burden of one anxiety removed when another was imposed on her friendship. If care and attention, if the watchful love of a husband, the tender assiduities of a sister, could have restored her, Ellen would not have died—but the case

was a lost one, and a very few weeks released them from all earthly cares for one whose life had been singularly happy, making up in ease what it wanted in duration.

Mr. Ingalton was deeply affected but not inconsolable, for he had long expected this change; and his restoration to a mother and sisters he most fondly loved, and to a son of whom he was proud, and in whom he met all his heart could wish, were necessarily circumstances of the most soothing and solacing description. He had been so far successful in following the course his brother had commenced, as to have realized a very handsome fortune, and to have secured for his younger son an honourable and lucrative situation—he had happily preserved his own health which was not affected by the climate, and which his regularity and temperance contributed to save, and, contrary to the general appearance of oriental residents, he looked younger than he really was. When he became settled, it may be readily supposed what a great addition he afforded to the pleasure of our little circle, supplying the loss of the interesting Countess by a new and endearing claimant to their sympathy.

From this lady they now heard constantly, but found that a succession of troubles surrounded and harrassed the Count, who, during the short peace, was engaged in legal warfare, useless remonstrances on the loss of his property, and incessant toil in trying to restore what was lost or injured. Maria assisted him in various ways, by money, advice, and raising up friends amongst her mercantile connexions. With the return of war, at which period the Countess had become the mother of a son, his plans were again broken into, and for a considerable time his claims disallowed, and the returning confusion of the continent again admitted only partial and contradictory accounts to reach his anxious friends in England, who were extremely desirous that his lady and child should again find a shelter from the storm in their friendship.

At this period Mr. Ingalton was thrown much on the society of Maria; for as his mother now lived with him, yet could not pass a day without seeing the friend with whom she had resided so long, the families were necessarily much together. However strange it may appear, it is certain that the

charms her person could still boast, and those which were perhaps more attractive in her manners, when in familiar conversation, than ever, made that impression on his bosom now which they had failed to do in youth. Poor Mr. Elderton had been long declining and they had frequently visited him together, had each received friendly legacies from him, and indeed in various ways been associated in such a manner that when the family intercourse also was considered, it could scarcely be surprizing that one party at least should be led to consider it desirable to cement, by an union for life, that tie which esteem and friendship already rendered so dear and valuable.

A little fearful of endangering the happy terms on which they stood, Mr. Ingalton first mentioned his wishes to his friend the mother of Maria, who promised to speak of it to her daughter. She heard her with evident pain, and at length interrupted her to lament "that when they were all so comfortably settled, Frank should be such a fool as to disturb their equanimity."

"My dear, you forget that poor Ellen has been dead more than two years—that Mr.

Ingalton is a man so fond of society in domestic life, it is no wonder that he should seek to renew his happiness—and you must allow he is a man few women would refuse."

"It is all very true, mother, so let him look round if he pleases and marry some agreeable woman whom we can all like—I *wish* he would, but it is equally certain I cannot oblige him with becoming that woman myself."

"But, dear Maria, hear what he has to say."

"Indeed, dear mother, I will not—the idea of Frank and me playing Romeo and Juliet at this time of day is so ridiculous that if I were inclined to ratify the treaty you are employed to negociate, I would certainly do it with my own hand given under my own seal, all in a regular way of contract—but depend upon it, I am as much married as ever I shall be."

"Yet surely there was a time, Maria, when"—

"True, dear mother, there was a time when your Maria (then very young) felt perhaps more and suffered more for this worthy man than she now wishes to recollect—since then she has loved another with that entire pre-

ference and constancy which render it impossible that she should either return to her early predilictions or form new ones—and to be serious, I can now sincerely rejoice that no marriage ties have ever interfered with that devotedness to you to which I pledged myself and which I have preserved."

"You have undoubtedly been enabled to do much more good, my love—and you have escaped many misfortunes, but yet with your wisdom and energy you would have endured them, and been rewarded for every privation by constituting the happiness of such a husband as the Count."

"And what would have become of you, mother ?"

"I had forgotten myself, Maria."

"True—but not for a day, an hour, should I have forgotten to tremble for you, to lament over you—it is not in my nature to dismiss those whom I love from my mind a moment so long as I can benefit them—the sorrows of Frank Ingalton first led me to love him; the greater misfortunes of my beloved parents, and his subsequent marriage alike tended to obliterate the excess of this feeling, and leave only in its place those friendly regards which

I now hold towards him. The more profound, and tender affection, which bound my very soul to Frederic Hernhausen was purposely conquered as a duty I owed to you and myself, by engaging anew in the active scenes of life, until the appearance of his wife renewed in some measure the fervour of my feelings. I became so fond of Henriette, and so attached to her child, that I now know not which of the family I love best; they furnish me all that *my heart* requires, and I supply to them the friend their *sad situation* requires. All the cares, and the pleasures of a mother have been long mine, for both Frank and Maria love me with the purest affection. Oh! it is well that I was never married, for although I can submit to any privation, encounter any toil *for* the object of my regard, yet I much question whether I could bear even a small trial *from* such object. It is now too late to try."

"Unquestionably we are all more conformable in early life, and you have been so long in the exercise of power it would be difficult for you to brook controul, but if you were married to a man of as good a temper, and as kind a heart as your own, you might

secure a friend for the decline of life, for that period when I *must* be removed, who might be very valuable—but I will not urge you."

Maria did not reply; for a recurrence to that awful, and, as she trusted, far distant hour, overcame her, and the subject was never mentioned again. Mr. Ingalton removed for a period to London, and busied himself with the education of his children. Year after year passed on—the beauty and accomplishments of Maria, as she rose to womanhood, blending the gentle suavity of her mother with the virtues implanted most assiduously by her protectress, attracted the heart of young Trevannion, and our excellent friend had begun to feel extreme solicitude on this subject, when the long-protracted miseries of war were suddenly brought to an end, and the possibility of personal intercourse with the parents of her beloved Maria relieved her mind from much of its burden on this most momentous point.

CHAP. XV.

TWELVE years had passed since Mrs. Maria Falconer had restored the Countess to the arms of her husband in Germany, since which time she had become the mother of five children, had been driven to various residences, experienced great difficulties, but never been wholly lost sight of by her generous friend, who had continued to encounter the perplexities and toils of commerce for the express purpose of dedicating its profits to her use. It will be therefore readily conceived that when the possibility of a visit to England, under the protection of her husband, once more occurred, not only the feelings of the mother but the gratitude of the friend alike urged her once more to set out for England, and circumstances happening to favour the design, they arrived unexpectedly at B— before the letters intended to announce them.

We shall not attempt to describe the meet-

ing of friends so closely united in heart, so long divided in person.—The Count was but a ruin of his former self, being robbed of his "fair proportions" by the loss of his left arm, and halting from a wound in his knee—his face was wrinkled and care-worn, but there was the same expression of countenance, the same mild blue eye, and kind intonation of voice, which had never failed to render him endearing to all around him. He beheld with surprize the slight alteration time had made in his eldest friend, but it was evident in Maria, although much less so than in his own person or that of his lady, who was considerably his junior.

"But the child, the plaything, who first taught his heart to throb with the feelings of a father, where was she?"

Maria had been walking with Frank Ingalton, the friend and brother of her youth —to him she had been opening her heart, and the blushes were still mantling on her cheeks from the remembrance of her temerity, when she entered the room and encountered the gaze of strangers, who could with difficulty be made to comprehend that the beautiful, tall, elegant, creature before them was

indeed their own lovely, affectionate child, whose heart had cherished them only the more fondly for the absence she had so long lamented.

This happy visit continued several months, nor ended until the Count was summoned to receive his property and re-enter on the comforts of that home from which he had been long exiled; his last duty in England was that of giving away his Maria at the altar, thereby insuring her abode in the country of her more than mother—that mother who suffered him not to depart, without witnessing the obliteration of all proofs of pecuniary obligation on his part, and an assurance of future aid to his offspring.

When this family had set out, and the pain of bidding adieu had subsided, the first cares of our worthy friend were given to the final closing of her accounts and the establishment of two worthy men as her successors, not as purchasers but acceptors of a well-merited reward from a generous mistress. Not one person who had shewn her kindness in the day of her own wants, excited approbation by his industry, or pity from his misfortunes, was forgotten by her at this time, if they had

not been previously provided for. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell had long been easy in their circumstances, and old John Bilson, retired from labour to dwell with a son who was well situated as a clerk, "for which he had been educated by madam," now hobbled up to the counting house to make a nominal purchase and confer what he called "luck on the beginners," and tell for the thousandth time the history of that morning, "when he was the first customer of that beautiful lady, who had been the making of him and his."

We hope that although the history of our heroine is brought down to that period when woman ceases to charm, if not to interest, yet that some of our readers, aware of her inestimable worth and that mental energy and acute, but well-regulated, sensibility which preserves the *mind* and the *heart* undecayed by time, unwithered by age, are desirous to know, "if Maria is yet alive."*

To such we answer, she yet lives, in the best sense of the word, enjoying health, practising every active virtue, and receiving from a wide circle daily proofs of honour, gratitude, and affection; and at sixty enjoys the

* This Tale is founded on facts.

rare comfort "of rocking the cradle of declining age" to that beloved parent who is still likely to enjoy life a few years longer. They are surrounded by the young who love them, the old who respect them, the poor who bless them. Mrs. Maria, released from the trammels of business, enjoys her leisure with a zest those who have never known the restraints of employment cannot well imagine, and frequently surprizes her friends (who know how much her time is occupied by her mother and the various classes who seek her advice or assistance) by the works she has lately read, the lessons she has bestowed on little Frank Ingalton, or the daughter of Mrs. Trevannion, whom she looks upon as her grandchildren.

With these lessons, which are only the outward adornments of the structure, it will be readily believed that such a woman never fails to inculcate the pure precepts of religious morality, the true heroism of self-renunciation—the wisdom of integrity, the dignity of self-controul, and the necessity many situations in life present for acting with firmness, resolution, and perseverance. Her mind stored by observation, and mellowed by time,

she yet seldom touches on this subject without earnestly intreating her hearers to guard themselves from mistaking obstinacy of temper for firmness of mind—to remember, that in early life submission and obedience are virtues more generally demanded than those of a sterner character, and that woman through life is generally called upon to practise them. "Yet," she will add, "woman, as an intellectual and accountable being, gifted with reason and capable of exertion, the first guide of man's infancy, the general influencer of his youth, and the companion of his manhood, ought to be no stranger to the importance nor the practice of any virtue demanded by our common nature; and, whether relatively or individually considered, cannot fail to find that her virtue and her happiness must depend on her DECISION."

FINIS.

BUNGAY:
Stereotyped and Printed by J. and R. Childs.

Knox P Walker