

"All this is extremely eloquent and metaphorical, Rashleigh," said Miss Vernon, who listened with unrepressed impatience; "there are only two objections to it: first, it is *not* true; secondly, if true, it is nothing to the purpose."

"It *is* true, my fairest Diana," returned Rashleigh; "and moreover, it is most instantly to the purpose. It is true, because you cannot deny that I know the country and people intimately, and the character is drawn from deep and accurate consideration;—and it is to the purpose, because it answers Mr. Francis Osbaldistone's question, and shows why this same wary Scotchman, considering our kinsman to be neither his countryman, nor a Campbell, nor his cousin in any of the inextricable combinations by which they extend their pedigree; and above all, seeing no prospect of personal advantage, but, on the contrary, much hazard of loss of time and delay of business."—

"With other inconveniences, perhaps, of a nature yet more formidable," interrupted Miss Vernon.

"Of which, doubtless, there might be many," said Rashleigh, continuing in the same tone—"In short, my theory shows why this man, hoping for no advantage, and afraid of some inconvenience, might require a degree of persuasion ere he could be prevailed on to give his testimony in favor of Mr. Osbaldistone."

"It seems surprising to me," I observed "that during the glance I cast over the declaration, or whatever it is termed, of Mr. Morris, he should never have mentioned that Campbell was in his company when he met the marauders."

"I understood from Campbell, that he had taken his solemn promise not to mention that circumstance," replied Rashleigh; "his reason for exacting such an engagement you may guess from what I have hinted—he wished to get back to his own country, undelayed and unembarrassed by any of the judicial inquiries which he would have been under the necessity of attending, had the fact of his being present at the robbery taken air while he was on this side of the Border. But let him once be as distant as the Forth, Morris will, I warrant you, come forth with all he knows about him, and, it may be a good deal more. Besides, Campbell is a very extensive dealer in cattle, and has often occasion to send great droves into Northumberland; and, when driving such a trade, he would be a great fool to embroil himself with our Northumbrian thieves, than whom no men who live are more vindictive."

"I dare be sworn of that," said Miss Vernon, with a tone which implied something more than a simple acquiescence in the proposition.

"Still," said I, resuming the subject, "allowing the force of the reasons which Campbell might have for desiring that Morris should be silent with regard to his promise when the robbery was committed, I cannot yet see how he could attain such an influence over the man, as to make him suppress his evidence in that particu-

lar, at the manifest risk of subjecting his story to discredit."

Rashleigh agreed with me, that it was very extraordinary, and seemed to regret that he had not questioned the Scotchman more closely on that subject, which he allowed looked extremely mysterious. "But," he asked, immediately after this acquiescence, "are you very sure the circumstance of Morris's being accompanied by Campbell is really not alluded to in his examination?"

"I read the paper over hastily," said I; "but it is my strong impression that no such circumstance is mentioned;—at least, it must have been touched on very slightly, since it failed to catch my attention."

"True, true," answered Rashleigh, forming his own inference while he adopted my words; "I incline to think with you, that the circumstance must in reality have been mentioned, but so slightly that it failed to attract your attention. And then, as to Campbell's interest with Morris, I incline to suppose that it must have been gained by playing upon his fears. This chicken-hearted fellow, Morris, is bound, I understand, for Scotland, destined for some little employment under Government; and, possessing the courage of the wrathful dove, or most magnanimous mouse, he may have been afraid to encounter the ill-will of such a kill-cow as Campbell, whose very appearance would be enough to fright him out of his little wits. You observed that Mr. Campbell has at times a keen and animated manner—something of a martial cast in his tone and bearing."

"I own," I replied, "that his expression struck me as being occasionally fierce and sinister, and little adapted to his peaceable professions. Has he served in the army?"

"Yes—no—not, strictly speaking, *served*; but he has been, I believe, like most of his countrymen, trained to arms. Indeed, among the hills, they carry them from boyhood to the grave. So, if you know anything of your fellow-traveller, you will easily judge, that, going to such a country, he will take care to avoid a quarrel, if he can help it, with any of the natives. But, come, I see you decline your wine—and I too am a degenerate Osbaldistone, so far as respects the circulation of the bottle. If you will go to my room, I will hold you a hand at piquet."

We rose to take leave of Miss Vernon, who had from time to time suppressed, apparently with difficulty, a strong temptation to break in upon Rashleigh's details. As we were about to leave the room, the smothered fire broke forth.

"Mr. Osbaldistone," she said, "your own observation will enable you to verify the justice, or injustice, of Rashleigh's suggestions concerning such individuals as Mr. Campbell and Mr. Morris. But, in slandering Scotland, he has borne false witness against a whole country; and I request you will allow no weight to his evidence."

"Perhaps," I answered, "I may find it somewhat difficult to obey your injunction, Miss Ver-

non; for I must own I was bred up with no very favorable idea of our northern neighbors."

"Distrust that part of your education, sir," she replied, "and let the daughter of a Scotchwoman pray you to respect the land which gave her parent birth, until your own observation has proved them to be unworthy of your good opinion. Preserve your hatred and contempt for dissimulation, baseness, and falsehood, wheresoever they are to be met with. You will find enough of all without leaving England.—Adieu, gentlemen, I wish you good-evening."

And she signed to the door, with the manner of a princess dismissing her train.

We retired to Rashleigh's apartment, where a servant brought us coffee and cards. I had formed my resolution to press Rashleigh no farther on the events of the day. A mystery, and, as I thought, not of a favorable complexion, appeared to hang over his conduct; but to ascertain if my suspicions were just, it was necessary to throw him off his guard. We cut for the deal, and were soon earnestly engaged in our play. I thought I perceived in this trifling for amusement (for the stake which Rashleigh proposed was a mere trifle) something of a fierce and ambitious temper. He seemed perfectly to understand the beautiful game at which he played, but preferred, as it were on principle, the risking bold and precarious strokes to the ordinary rules of play; and neglecting the minor and better-balanced chances of the game, he hazarded every thing for the chance of piqueing, repiqueing, or capoting his adversary. So soon as the intervention of a game or two at piquet, like the music between the acts of a drama, had completely interrupted our previous course of conversation, Rashleigh appeared to tire of the game, and the cards were superseded by discourse, in which he assumed the lead.

More learned than soundly wise—better acquainted with men's minds than with the moral principles that ought to regulate them, he had still powers of conversation which I have rarely seen equalled, never excelled. Of this, his manner implied some consciousness; at least, it appeared to me that he had studied hard to improve his natural advantages of a melodious voice, fluent and happy expression, apt language, and fervid imagination. He was never loud, never overbearing, never so much occupied with his own thoughts as to outrun either the patience or the comprehension of those he conversed with. His ideas succeeded each other with the gentle but unintermitting flow of a plentiful and bounteous spring; while I have heard those of others, who aimed at distinction in conversation, rush along like the turbid gush from the sluice of a mill-pond, as hurried, and as easily exhausted. It was late at night ere I could part from a companion so fascinating; and, when I gained my own apartment, it cost me no small effort to recall to my mind the character of Rashleigh, such as I had pictured him previous to this *à-à-tête*.

So effectual, my dear Tresham, does the sense of being pleased and amused blunt our faculties of perception and discrimination of character, that I can only compare it to the taste of certain fruits, at once luscious and poignant, which renders our palate totally unfit for relishing or distinguishing the viands which are subsequently subjected to its criticism.

CHAPTER XI.

What gars ye gaunt, my merry men a' !
What gars ye look sae dreary !
What gars ye hing your head sae sair
In the castle of Balwearie!

OLD SCOTCH BALLAD.

The next morning chanced to be Sunday, a day peculiarly hard to be got rid of at Osbaldistone Hall; for after the formal religious service of the morning had been performed, at which all the family regularly attended, it was hard to say upon which individual, Rashleigh and Miss Vernon excepted, the fiend of enmity descended with the most abundant outpouring of his spirit. To speak of my yesterday's embarrassment amused Sir Hildebrand for several minutes, and he congratulated me on my deliverance from Morpeth or Hexham jail, as he would have done if I had fallen in attempting to clear a five-barred gate and got up without hurting myself.

"Hast had a lucky turn, lad; but do na be over venturesome again. What, man! the king's road is free to all men, be they Whigs, be they Tories."

"On my word, sir, I am innocent of interrupting it; and it is the most provoking thing on earth, that every person will take it for granted that I am accessory to a crime which I despise and detest, and which would, moreover, deservedly forfeit my life to the laws of my country."

"Well, well, lad; even so be it; I ask no questions—no man bound to tell on himself—that's fair play, or the devil's in't."

Rashleigh here came to my assistance; but I could not help thinking that his arguments were calculated rather as hints to his father to put on a show of acquiescence in my declaration of innocence, than fully to establish it.

"In your own house, my dear sir—and your own nephew—you will not surely persist in hurting his feelings by seeming to discredit what he is so strongly interested in affirming. No doubt, you are fully deserving of all his confidence, and I am sure, were there any thing you could do to assist him in this strange affair, he would have recourse to your goodness. But my cousin Frank has been dismissed as an innocent man, and no one is entitled to suppose him otherwise. For my part, I have not the least doubt of his innocence; and our family honor, I conceive, requires that we should maintain it with tongue and sword against the whole country."

"Rashleigh," said his father, looking fixedly at him, "thou art a sly loon—thou hast ever been too cunning for me, and too cunning for most

folks. Have a care thou provena too cunning for thyself—two faces under one hood is no true heraldry. And since we talk of heraldry, I'll go and read Gwilym."

This resolution he intimated with a yawn, restless as that of the Goddess in the Dunciad, which was responsively echoed by his giant sons, as they dispersed in quest of the pastimes to which their minds severally inclined them—Percie to discuss a pot of March beer with the steward in the buttery,—Thornclyff to cut a pair of cudgels, and fix them in their wicker hilts,—John to dress May-fies,—Dickon to play at pitch and toss by himself, his right hand against his left,—and Wilfred to bite his thumbs and hum himself into a slumber which should last till dinner-time, if possible. Miss Vernon had retired to the library.

Rashleigh and I were left alone in the old hall, from which the servants, with their usual bustle and awkwardness, had at length contrived to hurry the remains of our substantial breakfast. I took the opportunity to upbraid him with the manner in which he had spoken of my affair to his father, which I frankly stated was highly offensive to me, as it seemed rather to exhort Sir Hildebrand to conceal his suspicions, than to root them out.

"Why, what can I do, my dear friend?" replied Rashleigh: "my father's disposition is so tenacious of suspicions of all kinds, when once they take root (which, to do him justice, does not easily happen), that I have always found it the best way to silence him upon such subjects, instead of arguing with him. Thus I get the better of the weeds which I cannot eradicate, by cutting them over as often as they appear, until at length they die away of themselves. There is neither wisdom nor profit in disputing with such a mind as Sir Hildebrand's, which hardens itself against conviction, and believes in its own inspirations as firmly as we good Catholics do in those of the Holy Father of Rome."

"It is very hard, though, that I should live in the house of a man, and he a near relation too, who will persist in believing me guilty of a high-way robbery."

"My father's foolish opinion, if one may give that epithet to any opinion of a father's, does not affect your real innocence; and as to the disgrace of the fact, depend on it, that considered in all its bearings, political as well as moral, Sir Hildebrand regards it as a meritorious action—a weakening of the enemy—a spoiling of the Amalekites; and you will stand the higher in his regard for your supposed accession to it."

"I desire no man's regard, Mr. Rashleigh, on such terms as must sink me in my own; and I think these injurious suspicions will afford a very good reason for quitting Osbaldistone Hall, which I shall do whenever I can communicate on the subject with my father."

The dark countenance of Rashleigh, though little accustomed to betray its master's feelings,

exhibited a suppressed smile, which he instantly chastened by a sigh.

"You are a happy man, Frank—you go and come, as the wind bloweth where it listeth. With your address, taste, and talents, you will soon find circles where they will be more valued, than amid the dull inmates of this mansion; while I—" He paused.

"And what is there in your lot that can make you or any one envy mine,—an outcast, as I may almost term myself, from my father's house and favor?"

"Ay, but," answered Rashleigh, "consider the gratified sense of independence which you must have attained by a very temporary sacrifice,—for such I am sure yours will prove to be; consider the power of acting as a free agent, of cultivating your own talents in the way to which your taste determines you, and in which you are well qualified to distinguish yourself. Fame and freedom are cheaply purchased by a few weeks' residence in the North, even though your place of exile be Osbaldistone Hall. A second Ovid in Thrace, you have not his reasons for writing Tristia."

"I do not know," said I, blushing as became a young scribbler, "how you should be so well acquainted with my truant studies."

"There was an emissary of your father's here some time since, a young coxcomb, one Twineall, who informed me concerning your secret sacrifices to the muses, and added, that some of your verses had been greatly admired by the best judges."

Tresham, I believe you are guiltless of having ever essayed to build the lofty rhyme; but you must have known in your day many an apprentice and fellow-craft, if not some of the master-masons, in the temple of Apollo. Vanity is their universal foible, from him who decorated the shades of Twickenham, to the veriest scribbler whom he has lashed in his Dunciad. I had my own share of this common failing, and without considering how little likely this young fellow Twineall was, by taste and habits, either to be acquainted with one or two little pieces of poetry, which I had at times insinuated into Button's coffee-house, or to report the opinion of the critics who frequented that resort of wit and literature, I almost instantly gorged the bait; which Rashleigh perceiving, improved his opportunity by a diffident, yet apparently very anxious request, to be permitted to see some of my manuscript productions.

"You shall give me an evening in my own apartment," he continued; "for I must soon lose the charms of literary society for the drudgery of commerce, and the coarse every-day avocations of the world. I repeat it, that my compliance with my father's wishes for the advantage of my family, is indeed a sacrifice, especially considering the calm and peaceful profession to which my education destined me."

I was vain, but not a fool, and this hypocrisy

was too strong for me to swallow. "You would not persuade me," I replied, "that you really regret to exchange the situation of an obscure Catholic priest, with all its privations, for wealth and society, and the pleasures of the world?"

Rashleigh saw that he had colored his affection of moderation too highly, and, after a second's pause, during which, I suppose, he calculated the degree of candor which it was necessary to use with me (that being a quality of which he was never needlessly profuse), he answered with a smile—"At my age, to be condemned, as you say, to wealth and the world, does not, indeed, sound so alarming as perhaps it ought to do. But, with pardon be it spoken, you have mistaken my destination—a Catholic priest, if you will, but not an obscure one. No, sir,—Rashleigh Osbaldistone will be more obscure, should he rise to be the richest citizen in London, than he might have been as a member of a church, whose ministers, as some one says, 'set their sandal'd feet on princes.' My family interest at a certain exiled court is high, and the weight which that court ought to possess, and does possess, at Rome is yet higher—my talents not altogether inferior to the education I have received. In sober judgment, I might have looked forward to high eminence in the church—in the dream of fancy, to the very highest. Why might not?"—(he added, laughing, for it was part of his manner to keep much of his discourse apparently betwixt jest and earnest)—"why might not Cardinal Osbaldistone have swayed the fortunes of empires, well-born and well-connected, as well as the low-born Mazarin, or Alberoni, the son of an Italian gardener!"

"Nay, I can give you no reason to the contrary; but in your place I should not much regret losing the chance of such precarious and invidious elevation."

"Neither would I," he replied, "were I sure that my present establishment was more certain; but that must depend upon circumstances which I can only learn by experience—the disposition of your father, for example."

"Confess the truth without finesse, Rashleigh; you would willingly know something of him from me?"

"Since, like Die Vernon, you make a point of following the banner of the good knight Sincerity, I reply—certainly."

"Well, then, you will find in my father a man who has followed the paths of thriving more for the exercise they afforded to his talents, than for the love of the gold with which they are strewed. His active mind would have been happy in any situation which gave it scope for exertion, though that exertion had been its sole reward. But his wealth has accumulated, because, moderate and frugal in his habits, no new sources of expense have occurred to dispose of his increasing income. He is a man who hates dissimulation in others; never practises it himself; and is peculiarly alert in discovering motives through the

coloring of language. Himself silent by habit, he is readily disgusted by great talkers; the rather, that the circumstances by which he is most interested, afford no great scope for conversation. He is severely strict in the duties of religion; but you have no reason to fear his interference with yours, for he regards toleration as a sacred principle of political economy. But if you have any Jacobitical partialities, as is naturally to be supposed, you will do well to suppress them in his presence, as well as the least tendency to the highflying or Tory principles; for he holds both in utter detestation. For the rest, his word is his own bond, and must be the law of all who act under him. He will fall in his duty to no one, and will permit no one to fall towards him; to cultivate his favor, you must execute his commands, instead of echoing his sentiments. His greatest failings arise out of prejudices connected with his own profession, or rather his exclusive devotion to it, which makes him see little worthy of praise or attention, unless it be in some measure connected with commerce."

"O rare-painted portrait!" exclaimed Rashleigh, when I was silent—"Vandyke was a dauber to you, Frank. I see thy sire before me in all his strength and weakness; loving and honoring the King as a sort of lord mayor of the empire, or chief of the board of trade—venerating the Commons, for the acts regulating the export trade;—and respecting the Peers, because the Lord Chancellor sits on a woolsack."

"Mine was a likeness, Rashleigh; yours is a caricature. But in return for the *carte du pays* which I have unfolded to you, give me some lights on the geography of the unknown lands."

"On which you are wrecked," said Rashleigh. "It is not worth while;—it is no Isle of Calypso, umbrageous with shade and intricate with sylvan labyrinth—but a bare ragged Northumbrian moor, with as little to interest curiosity as to delight the eye; you may descry it in all its nakedness in half an hour's survey, as well as if I were to lay it down before you by line and compass."

"O, but something there is, worthy a more attentive survey—What say you to Miss Vernon? Does not she form an interesting object in the landscape, were all round as rude as Iceland's coast?"

I could plainly perceive that Rashleigh disliked the topic now presented to him; but my frank communication had given me the advantageous title to make inquiries in my turn. Rashleigh felt this, and found himself obliged to follow my lead, however difficult he might find it to play his cards successfully. "I have known less of Miss Vernon," he said, "for some time, than I was wont to do formerly. In early age I was her tutor; but as she advanced towards womanhood, my various avocations,—the gravity of the profession to which I was destined,—the peculiar nature of her engagements,—our mutual situation, in short, rendered a close and constant intimacy dangerous and improper. I believe Miss

Vernon might consider my reserve as unkindness, but it was my duty; I felt as much as she seemed to do, when compelled to give way to prudence. But where was the safety in cultivating an intimacy with a beautiful and susceptible girl, whose heart, you are aware, must be given either to the cloister or to a betrothed husband?"

"The cloister or a betrothed husband?" I echoed—"Is that the alternative destined for Miss Vernon?"

"It is indeed," said Rashleigh, with a sigh. "I need not, I suppose, caution you against the danger of cultivating too closely the friendship of Miss Vernon;—you are a man of the world, and know how far you can indulge yourself in her society with safety to yourself, and justice to her. But I warn you, that considering her ardent temper, you must let your experience keep guard over her as well as yourself, for the specimen of yesterday may serve to show her extreme thoughtlessness and neglect of decorum."

There was something, I was sensible, of truth, as well as good sense, in all this; it seemed to be given as a friendly warning, and I had no right to take it amiss; yet I felt I could with pleasure have run Rashleigh Osbaldistone through the body all the time he was speaking.

"The deuce take his insolence!" was my internal meditation. "Would he wish me to infer that Miss Vernon had fallen in love with that hatchet-face of his, and become degraded so low as to require his shyness to cure her of an imprudent passion? I will have his meaning from him," was my resolution, "if I should drag it out with cart-ropes."

For this purpose, I placed my temper under as accurate guard as I could, and observed, "That, for a lady of her good sense and acquired accomplishments, it was to be regretted that Miss Vernon's manners were rather blunt and rustic."

"Frank and unreserved, at least, to the extreme," replied Rashleigh: "yet, trust me, she has an excellent heart. To tell you the truth, should she continue her extreme aversion to the cloister, and to her destined husband, and should my own labors in the mine of Plutus promise to secure me a decent independence, I shall think of renewing our acquaintance and sharing it with Miss Vernon."

"With all his fine voice, and well-turned periods," thought I, "this same Rashleigh Osbaldistone is the ugliest and most conceited coxcomb I ever met with!"

"But," continued Rashleigh, as if thinking aloud, "I should not like to supplant Thorncliff."

"Supplant Thorncliff!—Is your brother Thorncliff," I inquired, with great surprise, "the destined husband of Diana Vernon?"

"Why, ay, her father's commands, and a certain family-contract, destine her to marry one of Sir Hildebrand's sons. A dispensation has been obtained from Rome to Diana Vernon to marry *Blank* Osbaldistone, Esq., son of Sir Hildebrand

Osbaldistone, of Osbaldistone Hall, Bart., and so forth; and it only remains to pitch upon the happy man whose name shall fill the gap in the manuscript. Now, as Percie is seldom sober, my father pitched on Thorncliff, as the second prop of the family, and therefore most proper to carry on the line of the Osbaldistones."

"The young lady," said I, forcing myself to assume an air of pleasantry, which, I believe, became me extremely ill, "would perhaps have been inclined to look a little lower on the family-tree, for the branch to which she was desirous of clinging."

"I cannot say," he replied. "There is room for little choice in our family; Dick is a gambler, John a boor, and Wilfred an ass. I believe my father really made the best selection for poor Die, after all."

"The present company," said I, "being always excepted."

"Oh, my destination to the church placed me out of the question; otherwise I will not affect to say, that, qualified by my education both to instruct and guide Miss Vernon, I might not have been a more creditable choice than any of my elders."

"And so thought the young lady, doubtless?"

"You are not to suppose so," answered Rashleigh, with an affectation of denial which was contrived to convey the strongest affirmation the case admitted of: "Friendship—only friendship—formed the tie betwixt us, and the tender affection of an opening mind to its only instructor—Love came not near us—I told you I was wise in time."

I felt little inclination to pursue this conversation any farther, and shaking myself clear of Rashleigh, withdrew to my own apartment, which I recollect I traversed with much vehemence of agitation, repeating aloud the expressions which had most offended me.—"Susceptible—ardent—tender affection—Love—Diana Vernon, the most beautiful creature I ever beheld, in love with him, the bandy-legged, bull-necked, limping scoundrel Richard the Third in all but his hump-back!—And yet the opportunities he must have had during his cursed course of lectures; and the fellow's flowing and easy strain of sentiment; and her extreme seclusion from every one who spoke and acted with common sense; ay, and her obvious pique at him, mixed with admiration of his talents, which looked as like the result of neglected attachment as any thing else—Well, and what is it to me, that I should storm and rage at it? Is Diana Vernon the first pretty girl that has loved or married an ugly fellow? And if she were free of every Osbaldistone of them, what concern is it of mine?—a Catholic—a Jacobite—a ternaught into the boot—for me to look that way were utter madness."

By throwing such reflections on the flame of my displeasure, I subdued it into a sort of smouldering heart-burning, and appeared at the dinner-

table in as sulky a humor as could well be imagined.

CHAPTER XII.

Drunk!—and speak parrot!—and squabble!—swagger!—Swear!—and discourse fustian with one's own shadow!

OTHELLO.

I HAVE already told you, my dear Tresham, what probably was no news to you, that my principal fault was an unconquerable pitch of pride, which exposed me to frequent mortification. I had not even whispered to myself that I loved Diana Vernon; yet no sooner did I hear Rashleigh talk of her as a prize which he might stoop to carry off, or neglect, at his pleasure, than every step which the poor girl had taken, in the innocence and openness of her heart, to form a sort of friendship with me, seemed in my eyes the most insulting coquetry.—"Soh! she would secure me as a *pis aller*, I suppose, in case Mr. Rashleigh Osbaldistone should not take compassion upon her! But I will satisfy her that I am not a person to be trepanned in that manner—I will make her sensible that I see through her arts, and that I scorn them."

I did not reflect for a moment, that all this indignation, which I had no right whatever to entertain, proved that I was anything but indifferent to Miss Vernon's charms; and I sate down to table in high ill-humor with her and all the daughters of Eve.

Miss Vernon heard me, with surprise, return ungracious answers to one or two playful strokes of satire which she threw out with her usual freedom of speech; but, having no suspicion that offence was meant, she only replied to my rude repartees with jests somewhat similar, but polished by her good temper, though pointed by her wit. At length she perceived I was really out of humor, and answered one of my rude speeches thus:—

"They say, Mr. Frank, that one may gather sense from fools—I heard cousin Wilfred refuse to play any longer at cudgels the other day with cousin Thornie, because cousin Thornie got angry, and struck harder than the rules of amicable combat, it seems, permitted. 'Were I to break your head in good earnest,' quoth honest Wilfred, 'I care not how angry you are, for I should do it so much the more easily;—but it's hard I should get raps over the costard, and only pay you back in make-believes.'—Do you understand the moral of this, Frank?"

"I have never felt myself under the necessity, madam, of studying how to extract the slender portion of sense with which this family season their conversation."

"Necessity! and madam!—You surprise me, Mr. Osbaldistone."

"I am unfortunate in doing so."

"Am I to suppose that this capricious tone is serious? or is it only assumed, to make your good-humor more valuable?"

"You have a right to the attention of so many gentlemen in this family, Miss Vernon, that it cannot be worth your while to inquire into the cause of my staidity and bad spirits."

"What!" she said, "am I to understand, then, that you have deserted my faction, and gone over to the enemy?"

Then, looking across the table, and observing that Rashleigh, who was seated opposite, was watching us with a singular expression of interest on his harsh features, she continued—

"Horrible thought!—Ay, now I see 'tis true, For the grim-visaged Rashleigh smiles on me, And points at thee for his!"

Well, thank Heaven, and the unprotected state which has taught me endurance, I do not take offence easily; and that I may not be forced to quarrel, whether I like it or no, I have the honor, earlier than usual, to wish you a happy digestion of your dinner and your bad humor."

And she left the table accordingly.

Upon Miss Vernon's departure, I found myself very little satisfied with my own conduct. I had hurled back offered kindness, of which circumstances had but lately pointed out the honest sincerity, and I had but just stopped short of insulting the beautiful, and, as she had said with some emphasis, the unprotected being by whom it was proffered. My conduct seemed brutal in my own eyes. To combat or drown these painful reflections, I applied myself more frequently than usual to the wine which circulated on the table.

The agitated state of my feelings, combined with my habits of temperance to give rapid effect to the beverage. Habitual toppers, I believe, acquire the power of soaking themselves with a quantity of liquor that does little more than muddy those intellects which in their sober state are none of the clearest; but men who are strangers to the vice of drunkenness as a habit, are more powerfully acted upon by intoxicating liquors. My spirits, once aroused, became extravagant; I talked a great deal, argued upon what I knew nothing of, told stories of which I forgot the point, then laughed immoderately at my own forgetfulness; I accepted several bets without having the least judgment; I challenged the giant John to wrestle with me, although he had kept the ring at Hexham for a year, and I never tried so much as a single fall.

My uncle had the goodness to interpose and prevent this consummation of drunken folly, which, I suppose, would otherwise have ended in my neck being broken.

It has even been reported by maligners, that I sung a song while under this vinous influence; but, as I remember nothing of it, and never attempted to turn a tune in all my life before or since, I would willingly hope there is no actual foundation for the calumny. I was absurd enough without this exaggeration. Without positively losing my senses, I speedily lost all command of my temper, and my impetuous passions whirled

me onward at their pleasure. I had sate down sulky and discontented, and disposed to be silent—the wine rendered me loquacious, disputations, and quarrelsome. I contradicted whatever was asserted, and attacked, without any respect to my uncle's table, both his politics and his religion. The affected moderation of Rashleigh, which he well knew how to qualify with irritating ingredients, was even more provoking to me than the noisy and bullying language of his obstreperous brothers. My uncle, to do him justice, endeavored to bring us to order; but his authority was lost amidst the tumult of wine and passion. At length, frantic at some real, or supposed injurious insinuation, I actually struck Rashleigh with my fist. No stoic philosopher, superior to his own passion and that of others, could have received an insult with a higher degree of scorn. What he himself did not think it apparently worth while to resent, Thorncliff resented for him. Swords were drawn, and we exchanged one or two passes, when the other brothers separated us by main force; and I shall never forget the diabolical sneer which writhed Rashleigh's wayward features, as I was forced from the apartment by the main strength of two of these youthful Titans. They secured me in my apartment by locking the door, and I heard them, to my inexpressible rage, laugh heartily as they descended the stairs. I essayed in my fury to break out; but the window-grates, and the strength of a door clenched with iron, resisted my efforts. At length I threw myself on my bed, and fell asleep amidst vows of dire revenge to be taken in the ensuing day.

But with the morning cool repentance came. I felt, in the keenest manner, the violence and absurdity of my conduct, and was obliged to confess that wine and passion had lowered my intellects even below those of Wilfred Osbaldistone, whom I held in so much contempt. My uncomfortable reflections were by no means soothed by meditating the necessity of an apology for my improper behavior, and recollecting that Miss Vernon must be a witness of my submission. The impropriety and unkindness of my conduct to her personally, added not a little to these galling considerations, and for this I could not even plead the miserable excuse of intoxication.

Under all these aggravating feelings of shame and degradation, I descended to the breakfast-hall, like a criminal to receive sentence. It chanced that a hard frost had rendered it impossible to take out the bounds, so that I had the additional mortification to meet the family, excepting only Rashleigh and Miss Vernon, in full divan, surrounding the cold venison pasty and chine of beef. They were in high glee as I entered, and I could easily imagine that the jests were furnished at my expense. In fact, what I was disposed to consider with serious pain, was regarded as an excellent good joke by my uncle, and the greater part of my cousins. Sir Hildebrand, while he rallied me on the exploits of the preceding evening, swore he thought a young fellow had better be

thrice drunk in one day, than sneak sober to bed like a presbyterian, and leave a batch of honest fellows, and a double quart of claret. And to back this consolatory speech, he poured out a large bumper of brandy, exhorting me to swallow "a hair of the dog that had bit me."

"Never mind these lads laughing, nevoy," he continued; "they would have been all as great milksops as yourself, had I not nursed them, as one may say, on the toast and tankard."

Ill-nature was not the fault of my cousins in general; they saw I was vexed and hurt at the recollections of the preceding evening, and endeavored, with clumsy kindness, to remove the painful impression they had made on me. Thorncliff alone looked sullen and unreconciled. This young man had never liked me from the beginning; and in the marks of attention occasionally shown me by his brothers, awkward as they were, he alone had never joined. If it was true, of which, however, I began to have my doubts, that he was considered by the family, or regarded himself, as the destined husband of Miss Vernon, a sentiment of jealousy might have sprung up in his mind from the marked predilection which it was that young lady's pleasure to show for one whom Thorncliff might, perhaps, think likely to become a dangerous rival.

Rashleigh at last entered, his visage as dark as mourning weed—brooding. I could not but doubt, over the unjustifiable and disgraceful insult I had offered to him. I had already settled in my own mind how I was to behave on the occasion, and had schooled myself to believe, that true honor consisted not in defending, but in apologizing for, an injury so much disproportioned to any provocation I might have to allege.

I therefore hastened to meet Rashleigh, and to express myself in the highest degree sorry for the violence with which I had acted on the preceding evening. "No circumstances," I said, "could have wrung from me a single word of apology, save my own consciousness of the impropriety of my behavior. I hoped my cousin would accept of my regrets so sincerely offered, and consider how much of my misconduct was owing to the excessive hospitality of Osbaldistone Hall."

"He shall be friends with thee, lad," cried the honest knight, in the full effusion of his heart; "or, d—n me, if I call him son more!—Why, Rashie, dost stand there like a log? *Sorry for it* is all a gentleman can say, if he happens to do anything awry, especially over his claret. I served in Hounslow, and should know something, I think, of affairs of honor. Let me hear no more of this, and we'll go in a body and rummage out the badger in Birkenwood-bank."

Rashleigh's face resembled, as I have already noticed, no other countenance that I ever saw. But this singularity lay not only in the features, but in the mode of changing their expression. Other countenances, in altering from grief to joy, or from anger to satisfaction, pass through some brief interval, ere the expression of the predomi-

nant passion supersedes entirely that of its predecessor. There is a sort of twilight, like that between the clearing up of the darkness and the rising of the sun, while the swollen muscles subside, the dark eye clears, the forehead relaxes and expands itself, and the whole countenance loses its sterner shades, and becomes serene and placid. Rashleigh's face exhibited none of these gradations, but changed almost instantaneously from the expression of one passion to that of the contrary. I can compare it to nothing but the sudden shifting of a scene in the theatre, where, at the whistle of the prompter, a cavern disappears, and a grove arises.

My attention was strongly arrested by this peculiarity on the present occasion. At Rashleigh's first entrance, "black he stood as night!" With the same inflexible countenance he heard my excuse and his father's exhortation; and it was not until Sir Hildebrand had done speaking, that the cloud cleared away at once, and he expressed, in the kindest and most civil terms, his perfect satisfaction with the very handsome apology I had offered.

"Indeed," he said, "I have so poor a brain myself, when I impose upon it the least burden beyond my usual three glasses, that I have only, like honest Cassio, a very vague recollection of the confusion of last night—remembering a mass of things, but nothing distinctly—a quarrel, but nothing wherefore—So, my dear cousin," he continued, shaking me kindly by the hand, "conceive how much I am relieved by finding that I have to receive an apology, instead of having to make one—I will not have a word said upon the subject more; I should be very foolish to institute any scrutiny into an account, when the balance, which I expected to be against me, has been so unexpectedly and agreeably struck in my favor. You see, Mr. Osbaldistone, I am practising the language of Lombard Street, and qualifying myself for my new calling."

As I was about to answer, and raised my eyes for the purpose, they encountered those of Miss Vernon, who, having entered the room unobserved during the conversation, had given it her close attention. Abashed and confounded, I fixed my eyes on the ground, and made my escape to the breakfast-table, where I herded among my busy cousins.

My uncle, that the events of the preceding day might not pass out of our memory without a practical moral lesson, took occasion to give Rashleigh and me his serious advice to correct our milksop habits, as he termed them, and gradually to inure our brains to bear a gentlemanlike quantity of liquor, without brawls or breaking of heads. He recommended that we should begin piddling with a regular quart of claret per day, which, with the aid of March beer and brandy, made a handsome competence for a beginner in the art of toping. And for our encouragement, he assured us that he had known many a man who had lived to our years without having drunk a pint of wine at a

sitting, who yet, by falling into honest company, and following hearty example, had afterwards been numbered among the best good fellows of the time, and could carry off their six bottles under their belt quietly and comfortably, without brawling or babbling, and be neither sick nor sorry the next morning.

Sage as this advice was, and comfortable as was the prospect it held out to me, I profited but little by the exhortation—partly, perhaps, because, as often as I raised my eyes from the table, I observed Miss Vernon's looks fixed on me, in which I thought I could read grave compassion blended with regret and displeasure. I began to consider how I should seek a scene of explanation and apology with her also, when she gave me to understand she was determined to save me the trouble of soliciting an interview. "Cousin Francis," she said, addressing me by the same title she used to give to the other Osbaldistones, although I had, properly speaking, no title to be called her kinsman, "I have encountered this morning a difficult passage in the Divina Commedia of Dante; will you have the goodness to step to the library and give me your assistance? and when you have unearthed for me the meaning of the obscure Florentine, we will join the rest at Birkenwood-bank, and see their luck at unearthing the badger."

I signified, of course, my readiness to wait upon her. Rashleigh made an offer to accompany us. "I am something better skilled," he said, "at tracking the sense of Dante through the metaphors and elisions of his wild and gloomy poem, than at hunting the poor inoffensive hermit yonder out of his cave."

"Pardon me, Rashleigh," said Miss Vernon, "but as you are to occupy Mr. Francis's place in the counting-house, you must surrender to him the charge of your pupil's education at Osbaldistone Hall. We shall call you in, however, if there is any occasion; so pray do not look so grave upon it. Besides, it is a shame to you not to understand field-sports—What will you do should our uncle in Crane-Alley ask you the signs by which you track a badger?"

"Ay, true, Die,—true," said Sir Hildebrand, with a sigh. "I misdoubt Rashleigh will be found short at the leap when he is put to the trial. An he would ha' learned useful knowledge like his brothers, he was bred up where it grew, I wuss; but French antics, and book-learning, with the new turnips, and the rats, and the Hanoverians, ha' changed the world that I ha' known in Old England—But come along with us, Rashie, and carry my hunting-staff, man; thy cousin lacks none of thy company as now, and I wonna ha' Die crossed—It's ne'er be said there was but one woman in Osbaldistone Hall, and she died for lack of her will."

Rashleigh followed his father, as he commanded, not, however, ere he had whispered to Diana, "I suppose I must in discretion bring the courtier, Ceremony, in my company, and

knock when I approach the door of the library?"

"No, no, Rashleigh," said Miss Vernon; "dismiss from your company the false archimago Dissimulation, and it will better ensure your free access to our classical consultations."

So saying, she led the way to the library, and I followed—like a criminal, I was going to say, to execution; but, as I bethink me, I have used the simile once, if not twice before. Without any smile at all, then, I followed, with a sense of awkward and conscious embarrassment, which I would have given a great deal to shake off. I thought it a degrading and unworthy feeling to attend one on such an occasion, having breathed the air of the Continent long enough to have imbibed the notion that lightness, gallantry, and something approaching to well-bred self-assurance, should distinguish the gentleman whom a fair lady selects for her companion in a *tête-à-tête*.

My English feelings, however, were too many for my French education, and I made, I believe, a very pitiful figure, when Miss Vernon, seating herself majestically in a huge elbow-chair in the library, like a judge about to hear a cause of importance, signed to me to take a chair opposite to her (which I did, much like the poor fellow who is going to be tried), and entered upon conversation in a tone of bitter irony.

CHAPTER XIII.

Dire was his thought, who first in poison steeped
The weapon form'd for slaughter—direr his,
And worthier of damnation, who instilled
The mortal venom in the social cup,
To fill the veins with death instead of life.

ANONYMOUS.

"Upon my word, Mr. Francis Osbaldistone," said Miss Vernon, with the air of one who thought herself fully entitled to assume the privilege of ironical reproach, which she was pleased to exert, "your character improves upon us, sir—I could not have thought that it was in you. Yesterday might be considered as your assay-piece, to prove yourself entitled to be free of the corporation of Osbaldistone Hall. But it was a masterpiece."

"I am quite sensible of my ill-breeding, Miss Vernon, and I can only say for myself that I had received some communications by which my spirits were unusually agitated. I am conscious I was impertinent and absurd."

"You do yourself great injustice," said the merciless monitor—"you have contrived, by what I saw and have since heard, to exhibit in the course of one evening a happy display of all the various masterly qualifications which distinguish your several consins;—the gentle and generous temper of the benevolent Rashleigh,—the temperance of Percie,—the cool courage of Thorncliff,—John's skill in dog-breaking,—Dickon's aptitude to betting,—all exhibited by the single individual Mr. Francis, and that with a selection of time, place, and circumstance, wor-

thy the taste and sagacity of the sapient Wilfred."

"Have a little mercy, Miss Vernon," said I; for I confess I thought the schooling as severe as the case merited, especially considering from what quarter it came, "and forgive me if I suggest, as an excuse for follies I am not usually guilty of, the custom of this house and country. I am far from approving of it; but we have Shakspeare's authority for saying, that good wine is a good familiar creature, and that any man living may be overtaken at some time."

"Ay, Mr. Francis, but he places the panegyric and the apology in the mouth of the greatest villain his pencil has drawn. I will not, however, abuse the advantage your quotation has given me, by overwhelming you with the refutation with which the victim Cassio replies to the tempter Iago. I only wish you to know, that there is one person at least sorry to see a youth of talents and expectations sink into the slough in which the inhabitants of this house are nightly wallowing."

"I have but wet my shoe, I assure you, Miss Vernon, and am too sensible of the filth of the puddle to step farther in."

"If such be your resolution," she replied, "it is a wise one. But I was so much vexed at what I heard, that your concerns have pressed before my own.—You behaved to me yesterday, during dinner, as if something had been told you which lessened or lowered me in your opinion—I beg leave to ask you what it was?"

I was stupefied. The direct bluntness of the demand was much in the style one gentleman uses to another, when requesting explanation of any part of his conduct in a good-humored yet determined manner, and was totally devoid of the circumlocutions, shadings, softenings, and periphrasis, which usually accompany explanations betwixt persons of different sexes in the higher orders of society.

I remained completely embarrassed; for it pressed on my recollection, that Rashleigh's communications, supposing them to be correct, ought to have rendered Miss Vernon rather an object of my compassion, than of my pettish resentment; and had they furnished the best apology possible for my own conduct, still I must have had the utmost difficulty in detailing what inferred such necessary and natural offence to Miss Vernon's feelings. She observed my hesitation, and proceeded, in a tone somewhat more peremptory, but still temperate and civil—"I hope Mr. Osbaldistone does not dispute my title to request this explanation. I have no relative who can protect me; it is, therefore, just that I be permitted to protect myself."

I endeavored with hesitation to throw the blame of my rude behavior upon indisposition—upon disagreeable letters from London. She suffered me to exhaust my apologies, and fairly to run myself aground, listening all the while with a smile of absolute incredulity.

"And now, Mr. Francis, having gone through your prologue of excuses, with the same bad grace with which all prologues are delivered, please to draw the curtain, and show me that which I desire to see. In a word, let me know what Rashleigh says of me; for he is the grand engineer and first mover of all the machinery of Osbaldistone Hall."

"But, supposing there was anything to tell Miss Vernon, what does he deserve that betrays the secrets of one ally to another?—Rashleigh, you yourself told me, remained your ally, though no longer your friend."

"I have neither patience for evasion, nor inclination for jesting, on the present subject. Rashleigh cannot—ought not—dare not, hold any language respecting me, Diana Vernon, but what I may demand to hear repeated. That there are subjects of secrecy and confidence between us, is most certain; but to such, his communications to you could have no relation; and with such, I, as an individual, have no concern."

I had by this time recovered my presence of mind, and hastily determined to avoid making any disclosure of what Rashleigh had told me in a sort of confidence. There was something unworthy in retailing private conversation; it could, I thought, do no good, and must necessarily give Miss Vernon great pain. I therefore replied, gravely, "that nothing but frivolous talk had passed between Mr. Rashleigh Osbaldistone and me on the state of the family at the Hall; and I protested that nothing had been said which left a serious impression to her disadvantage. As a gentleman, I said, I could not be more explicit in reporting private conversation."

She started up with the animation of a Camilla about to advance into battle. "This shall not serve your turn, sir,—I must have another answer from you." Her features kindled—her brow became flushed—her eye glanced wild-fire as she proceeded—"I demand such an explanation, as a woman basely slandered has a right to demand from every man who calls himself a gentleman—as a creature, motherless, friendless, alone in the world, left to her own guidance and protection, has a right to require from every being having a happier lot, in the name of that God who sent them into the world to enjoy and her to suffer. You shall not deny me—or," she added, looking solemnly upwards, "you will rue your denial, if there is justice for wrong either on earth or in heaven."

I was utterly astonished at her vehemence, but felt, thus conjured, that it became my duty to lay aside scrupulous delicacy, and gave her briefly, but distinctly, the heads of the information which Rashleigh had conveyed to me.

She sat down and resumed her composure, as soon as I entered upon the subject, and when I stopped to seek for the most delicate turn of expression, she repeatedly interrupted me, with "Go on—pray, go on; the first word which occurs to you is the plainest, and must be the best.

Do not think of my feelings, but speak as you would to an unconcerned third party."

Thus urged and encouraged, I stammered through all the account which Rashleigh had given of her early contract to marry an Osbaldistone, and of the uncertainty and difficulty of her choice; and there I would willingly have paused. But her penetration discovered that there was still something behind, and even guessed to what it related.

"Well, it was ill-natured of Rashleigh to tell this tale on me. I am like the poor girl in the fairy tale, who was betrothed in her cradle to the Black Bear of Norway, but complained chiefly of being called Bruin's bride by her companions at school. But besides all this, Rashleigh said something of himself with relation to me—Did he not?"

"He certainly hinted, that were it not for the idea of supplanting his brother, he would now, in consequence of his change of profession, be desirous that the word Rashleigh should fill up the blank in the dispensation, instead of the word Thorncliff."

"Ay? indeed?" she replied—"was he so very condescending?—Too much honor for his humble handmaid, Diana Vernon—And she, I suppose, was to be enraptured with joy could such a substitute be effected?"

"To confess the truth, he intimated as much, and even farther insinuated."

"What?—Let me hear it all!" she exclaimed, hastily.

"That he had broken off your mutual intimacy, lest it should have given rise to an affection by which his destination to the church would not permit him to profit."

"I am obliged to him for his consideration," replied Miss Vernon, every feature of her fine countenance taxed to express the most supreme degree of scorn and contempt. She paused a moment, and then said, with her usual composure, "There is but little I have heard from you which I did not expect to hear, and which I ought not to have expected; because, bating one circumstance, it is all very true. But as there are some poisons so active, that a few drops, it is said, will infect a whole fountain, so there is one falsehood in Rashleigh's communication, powerful enough to corrupt the whole well in which Truth herself is said to have dwelt. It is the leading and foul falsehood, that, knowing Rashleigh as I have reason too well to know him, any circumstance on earth could make me think of sharing my lot with him. No," she continued, with a sort of inward shuddering that seemed to express involuntary horror, "any lot rather than that—the sot, the gambler, the bully, the jockey, the insensate fool, were a thousand times preferable to Rashleigh;—the convent—the jail—the grave, shall be welcome before them all."

There was a sad and melancholy cadence in her voice, corresponding with the strange and interesting romance of her situation. So young,

so beautiful, so untaught, so much abandoned to herself, and deprived of all the support which her sex derives from the countenance and protection of female friends, and even of that degree of defence which arises from the forms with which the sex are approached in civilized life,—it is scarce metaphorical to say, that my heart bled for her. Yet there was an expression of dignity in her contempt of ceremony—of upright feeling in her disdain of falsehood—of firm resolution in the manner in which she contemplated the dangers by which she was surrounded, which blended my pity with the warmest admiration. She seemed a princess deserted by her subjects, and deprived of her power, yet still scorning those formal regulations of society which are created for persons of an inferior rank; and, amid her difficulties, relying boldly and confidently on the justice of Heaven, and the unshaken constancy of her own mind.

I offered to express the mingled feelings of sympathy and admiration with which her unfortunate situation and her high spirit combined to impress me, but she imposed silence on me at once.

"I told you in jest," she said, "that I disliked compliments—I now tell you in earnest, that I do not ask sympathy, and that I despise consolation. What I have borne, I have borne—What I am to bear I will sustain as I may; no word of commiseration can make a burden feel one feather's weight lighter to the slave who must carry it. There is only one human being who could have assisted me, and that is he who has rather chosen to add to my embarrassment—Rashleigh Osbaldistone.—Yes; the time once was that I might have learned to love that man—But, great God! the purpose for which he insinuated himself into the confidence of one already so forlorn—the undeviating and continued assiduity with which he pursued that purpose from year to year, without one single momentary pause of remorse or compassion—the purpose for which he would have converted into poison the food he administered to my mind—Gracious Providence! what should I have been in this world, and the next, in body and soul, had I fallen under the arts of this accomplished villain!"

I was so much struck with the scene of perfidious treachery which these words disclosed, that I rose from my chair hardly knowing what I did, laid my hand on the hilt of my sword, and was about to leave the apartment in search of him on whom I might discharge my just indignation. Almost breathless, and with eyes and looks in which scorn and indignation had given way to the most lively alarm, Miss Vernon threw herself between me and the door of the apartment.

"Stay!" she said—"stay!—however just your resentment, you do not know half the secrets of this fearful prison-house." She then glanced her eyes anxiously round the room, and sunk her voice almost to a whisper,—“He bears a charmed life; you cannot assail him without endangering

other lives, and wider destruction. Had it been otherwise, in some hour of justice he had hardly been safe, even from this weak hand. I told you," she said, motioning me back to my seat, "that I needed no comforter. I now tell you, I need no avenger."

I resumed my seat mechanically, musing on what she said, and recollecting also, what had escaped me in my first glow of resentment, that I had no title whatever to constitute myself Miss Vernon's champion. She paused to let her own emotions and mine subside, and then addressed me with more composure.

"I have already said, that there is a mystery connected with Rashleigh, of a dangerous and fatal nature. Villain as he is, and as he knows he stands convicted in my eyes, I cannot—dare not, openly break with or defy him. You also, Mr. Osbaldistone, must bear with him with patience, foil his artifices by opposing to them prudence, not violence; and, above all, you must avoid such scenes as that of last night, which cannot but give him perilous advantages over you. This caution I designed to give you, and it was the object with which I desired this interview; but I have extended my confidence farther than I proposed."

I assured her it was not misplaced.

"I do not believe that it is," she replied. "You have that in your face and manners which authorizes trust. Let us continue to be friends. You need not fear," she said, laughing, while she blushed a little, yet speaking with a free and unembarrassed voice, "that friendship with us should prove only a specious name, as the poet says, for another feeling. I belong, in habits of thinking and acting, rather to your sex, with which I have always been brought up, than to my own. Besides, the fatal veil was wrapped round me in my cradle; for you may easily believe I have never thought of the detestable condition under which I may remove it. The time," she added, "for expressing my final determination is not arrived, and I would fain have the freedom of wild heath and open air with the other commoners of nature, as long as I can be permitted to enjoy them. And now that the passage in Dante is made so clear, pray go and see what is become of the badger-baiters. My head aches so much that I cannot join the party."

I left the library, but not to join the hunters. I felt that a solitary walk was necessary to compose my spirits, before I again trusted myself in Rashleigh's company, whose depth of calculating villany had been so strikingly exposed to me. In Dubourg's family (as he was of the reformed persuasion), I had heard many a tale of Romish priests, who gratified, at the expense of friendship, hospitality, and the most sacred ties of social life, those passions, the blameless indulgence of which is denied by the rules of their order. But the deliberate system of undertaking the education of a deserted orphan of noble birth, and so intimately allied to his own family, with the

perfidious purpose of ultimately seducing her, detailed as it was by the intended victim with all the glow of virtuous resentment, seemed more atrocious to me than the worst of the tales I had heard at Bordeaux, and I felt it would be extremely difficult for me to meet Rashleigh, and yet to suppress the abhorrence with which he impressed me. Yet this was absolutely necessary, not only on account of the mysterious charge which Diana had given me, but because I had, in reality, no ostensible ground for quarrelling with him.

I therefore resolved, as far as possible, to meet Rashleigh's dissimulation with equal caution on my part during our residence in the same family; and when he should depart for London, I resolved to give Owen at least such a hint of his character as might keep him on his guard over my father's interests. Avarice or ambition, I thought, might have as great, or greater charms, for a mind constituted like Rashleigh's, than unlawful pleasure; the energy of his character, and his power of assuming all seeming good qualities, were likely to procure him a high degree of confidence, and it was not to be hoped, that either good faith or gratitude would prevent him from abusing it. The task was somewhat difficult, especially in my circumstances, since the caution which I threw out might be imputed to jealousy of my rival, or rather of my successor, in my father's favor. Yet I thought it absolutely necessary to frame such a letter, leaving it to Owen, who, in his own line, was wary, prudent, and circumspect, to make the necessary use of his knowledge of Rashleigh's true character. Such a letter, therefore, I indited, and despatched to the post-house by the first opportunity.

At my meeting with Rashleigh, he, as well as I, appeared to have taken up distant ground, and to be disposed to avoid all pretext for collision. He was probably conscious that Miss Vernon's communications had been unfavorable to him, though he could not know that they extended to discovering his meditated villany towards her. Our intercourse, therefore, was reserved on both sides, and turned on subjects of little interest. Indeed, his stay at Osbaldistone Hall did not exceed a few days after this period, during which I only remarked two circumstances respecting him. The first was, the rapid and almost intuitive manner in which his powerful and active mind seized upon and arranged the elementary principles necessary to his new profession, which he now studied hard, and occasionally made parade of his progress, as if to show me how light it was for him to lift the burden which I had flung down from very weariness and inability to carry it. The other remarkable circumstance was, that, notwithstanding the injuries with which Miss Vernon charged Rashleigh, they had several private interviews together of considerable length, although their bearing towards each other in public did not seem more cordial than usual.

When the day of Rashleigh's departure ar-

rived, his father bade him farewell with indifference; his brothers, with the ill-concealed glee of school-boys, who see their task-master depart for a season, and feel a joy which they dare not express; and I myself with cold politeness. When he approached Miss Vernon, and would have saluted her, she drew back with a look of haughty disdain; but said, as she extended her hand to him, "Farewell, Rashleigh; God reward you for the good you have done, and forgive you for the evil you have meditated."

"Amen, my fair cousin," he replied with an air of sanctity, which belonged, I thought, to the seminary of Saint Omers; "happy is he whose good intentions have borne fruit in deeds, and whose evil thoughts have perished in the blossom."

These were his parting words. "Accomplished hypocrite!" said Miss Vernon to me, as the door closed behind him—"how nearly can what we most despise and hate, approach in outward manner to that which we most venerate!"

I had written to my father by Rashleigh, and also a few lines to Owen, besides the confidential letter which I have already mentioned, and which I thought it more proper and prudent to despatch by another conveyance. In these epistles, it would have been natural for me to have pointed out to my father and my friend, that I was at present in a situation where I could improve myself in no respect, unless in the mysteries of hunting and hawking; and where I was not unlikely to forget, in the company of rude grooms and horse-boys, any useful knowledge or elegant accomplishments which I had hitherto acquired. It would also have been natural that I should have expressed the disgust and tedium which I was likely to feel among beings whose whole souls were centered in field-sports or more degrading pastimes—that I should have complained of the habitual intemperance of the family in which I was a guest, and the difficulty and almost resentment with which my uncle Sir Hildebrand received any apology for deserting the bottle. This last, indeed, was a topic on which my father, himself a man of severe temperance, was likely to be easily alarmed, and to have touched upon this spring would to a certainty have opened the doors of my prison-house, and would either have been the means of abridging my exile, or at least would have procured me a change of residence during my rustication.

I say, my dear Tresham, that, considering how very unpleasant a prolonged residence at Osbaldistone Hall must have been to a young man of my age, and with my habits, it might have seemed very natural that I should have pointed out all these disadvantages to my father, in order to obtain his consent for leaving my uncle's mansion. Nothing, however, is more certain, than that I did not say a single word to this purpose in my letters to my father and Owen. If Osbaldistone Hall had been Athens, in all its pristine glory of