SHATTERED IDOLS.

"What, Dagon up again! I thought we had hurled him down on the threshold, never more to rise. Bring wedge and axe, and neighbours, lend your hands, and rive the idol into winter fagots."

Athelstane.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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SHATTERED IDOLS.

CHAPTER I.

"But for a purpose thus subordinate
He might have employed genii, good or evil,—
A sort of spirits called so by the learned,
Who roam about inspiring good or evil,
And from whose influence and existence we
May well infer our immortality."

Leonora came to a decision next day, which she carried into effect with all the impulsiveness of her nature. Charles Breton's sister, the little florist, who so kindly received poor Ernest D'Arval's betrothed, resided with her brother, in an apartment of the house, where Castelle occupied another, to which he had recently moved. There Leonora often visited her, as she had become lately a confirmed invalid, and was grateful for the company of some favourite
friends. Now, Leonora determined to wait in Mademoiselle Breton's rooms until there was an opportunity of effecting her purpose; and with this object, and very plainly attired, she left home at dusk to proceed on her strange errand.

Flushed and heated, she hurried through the streets as if some one pursued her, till in a very short time Castelle's dwelling was reached. She had been there before, with her father, to witness some curious phenomena, and to exhibit herself the somnambulism into which Castelle could throw her by his mesmeric passes.

From Clara Breton she used often to hear of her idol's habits; when he went out, when he returned, who were his visitors, and other particulars with which the poor invalid girl was well acquainted, as from a window in her room that opened on the stairs, she often watched the proceedings of her neighbours, for a little change, to vary the monotony of a long confinement to the
house. Leonora this evening sat with Clara in such a very abstracted mood, that she could not imagine what was the matter when Mademoiselle Villabella started and listened, and seemed both moody and restless. Soon learning what she wanted to know, and bidding Clara a hurried good night, she left the room.

It was nine o'clock, and Leonora had ascertained that the porter's wife went every night, at that hour, to arrange Castelle's apartment; she knew that the key was intrusted to the woman for this purpose, but she also heard that the laboratory was kept always locked, and that no one ever entered there, except accompanied by the owner.

The key remained in the door, when Leonora reached it, panting with haste and excitement; and turning it gently, she found herself in the student's little anteroom. Attached to this was a closet, where she had heard that he stored unused books,
and there Leonora entered stealthily, closing the door after her. The woman soon passed into the ante-room, and then out of the door, locking it outside as she did so. It was nearly dark; and as Leonora left her hiding-place, the intended search seemed fruitless, with such scanty light, for the evening had darkened suddenly. Still she walked quickly into the little sitting-room, and looked on every table, opening everything that could contain what she sought; the drawers and desk were ransacked, but all in vain; yet she persisted in the search, putting the objects which she disturbed always back again into their places. Over and over again did she look through the rooms for the drawing—it was nowhere to be seen, till tired, and disappointed, and breathless, she had just sat on a chair, to think if her task was fully accomplished, when footsteps approached the outer door, and Leonora knew that Castelle would the next moment discover her. In one instant
she had flown back to her place of concealment, and closed the door, just as his light glanced through it.

Castelle always came in at this time for a cigar, and again went out to walk an hour, before retiring to study in his laboratory for half the night. Leonora reckoned on escaping during this short absence, as the door opened with the latch inside, so she now emerged from her hiding-place, to hurry home, as soon as possible. Great was her distress at finding that Castelle, contrary to his usual custom, had locked the door, and taken the key with him to the inner room; her first impulse was to return to the closet, her next to reflect on what was to be done, in this perplexing dilemma. How was she now to escape? There was no hope of doing so, and she must remain where she was for the night. What would they think of her absence at home? might it not distract her old father, unless Manon managed to
conceal it; but she did not know of Leonora's departure, and might inadvertently express her surprise, instead of endeavouring to conceal it.

Terrified, and repenting her very foolish adventure, Leonora sat for some minutes, wholly engrossed with the anticipation of its consequences to her father, till from movements in the next room and the opening of a door, she guessed that Castelle had entered his laboratory to commence his nightly vigil. Then he drew a chair, as she supposed, to the table where he studied, and moved heavy tomes upon it.

The moon shone bright into the room, into which she now ventured, emerging very gently from the closet; there, farther on, through the little sitting-room, stood the door of the student's sanctum; it remained slightly a-jar, and with a fairy touch she tried if it would open noiselessly, so as to enable her to look within. It yielded readily to the slight pressure, and Leonora
saw that a large dark screen stood before it, to conceal the view beyond from the inspection of any chance visitor who might stand without. Insinuating herself through the half-open door, she now stood behind the screen, looking through its small crevices into the large dismal apartment, where Castelle was seated, with his head resting upon his hand, apparently wrapped in meditation.

Leonora had sufficient composure to look round the laboratory. This, then, was the room, of which she had heard so much from Clara and from Manon, when relating so many strange stories of Castelle's proceedings there. Curiosity and dread, the desire so often persistent in superstitious minds to witness what will shock or terrify, now affected Leonora, for she felt as if transfixed to the spot with fear, and yet unwilling to leave it, were she able to do so, from curiosity. Castelle still continued immoveable, and Leonora still looked round
at his strange environments, perceiving a large dark window-curtain, that hung close to her, of very thick texture, and heavy folds, that would readily conceal any one who stood behind it. With her light elastic tread she soon reached it noiselessly, and remained concealed, in the recess of a large bay window.

The room was so very dark, that, unless Castelle approached close to the curtain, he could assuredly see no change there. Now she looked again at the odd furniture of the laboratory: there was a furnace at one end of it, and utensils of curious shapes, of which she did not understand the use; then other large glass vessels seemed filled with indescribable things, and labelled with letters which she could not see; nor did she distinguish what was stored along a further wall, where the light was intercepted by some intervening object.

Castelle now bent over a large volume, and wrote occasionally on a paper beside
him, while she leant forward watching him, through a little opening in the curtain. How she saw his profile, and with her artistic appreciation of the beautiful and strange, she gazed on the splendid head that was so darkly shadowed by the partial light, and yet so brilliantly illuminated in its salient parts by the concentrated rays. How she longed to reveal herself; how she wished to accuse him of the cruelty and ingratitude with which he had deserted her! But why should she love him still? why should she not hate one whose communications with the evil spirit were evident through her own experience? To justify this conviction, she recalled the unholy mesmeric power which he exercised over her; she knew how from that gloomy room he could transport her to regions which his mind created for hers to realize. Rapt in the trance which he imposed, was not her spirit once transported to an elysium of which even the artistic mind
has no intuition? did she not see there beauty decked with colours that were never apparent on earth? and did she not hear celestial harmonies that no music here had ever combined? Had she not been where animal life, which, during its progression through ages, was eliminating the monstrous, and the coarse, and the ugly, passed through new transits before her, while billions of years seemed to glide by, carrying man onwards to his highest destiny here, that finally will merge in spiritual perfection? With such interpretations had Castelle explained to Leonora her mesmeric dreams.

Evil or good, what a splendid being he is! thought the young painter, now gazing with loving admiration on the chemist, whose presence excited fear as well as love in her superstitious nature. He had moved to the opposite side of the table, his face now turned towards the place where she was concealed, and opening a book before
him, he read audibly in a language which she knew to be Latin, then he paused, and said aloud, as if in continuation of his thoughts—

"Spirit of Evil! Genius of Life! why do men recognise thy power, succumb to thy influence, act from thy prompting, and yet never openly evoke thy help, or boldly publish thy might? Why do they question thy presence in the world around them, and believe that thy sole locality is the human mind? Do they not meet thee everywhere, intangible and invisible—perceptible only to the inward sense of those who humbly petition thee for thy gift of spiritual sight? The dark wood seems to us thy proper haunt, the gloomy cavern thy fitting abode, the raging wind thy chariot, the roaring billow thy barge; but thou art equally to be found amidst flowers, in the gorgeous garden, or the shadowy bower, listening to the lulling hum of the insect world, exhaling an ephemeral life in the chorus of pleasure which celebrates its summer day."
"Spirit of Death! I call thee here, from watching the last throes of life, in the awful chamber where, with a chill breath, thou extinguishest the combustion, with its flickering flame, which men call life. From the battle-field’s clangour and turmoil, where the sword falls and the ball flies as thou listest, here, with a wish, I bring thee to creep stealthily into the crowd of life, and fell my victim noiselessly and secretly, even in the thickest of a festive throng. One drop, one speck, one breath of what I here prepare, will send the life-blood back to the stagnant heart, will quench the brightening thought, and restore to the laboratory of nature that matter which for a time was moulded into the form humanity wears. One atom, and the compound disunites, and sinks shapeless into the earth from whence it came, or deliquesces into vapour that floats upon the atmosphere, the aerial grave-yard of dissolving nature."
A mist came over Leonora's eyes; she saw dark shadows pass before her, she heard sounds that seemed to come from no human voice, all mingling in a tangled mass of perplexity, from which her brain reeled and her muscles quivered. Terrified and heart-sick, she saw and heard no more.

After an interval of unconsciousness, she revived, alone in the terrible chamber, into which the moon threw ghastly sheets of light which seemed to wrap her in a ghostly shroud of white radiance; darkness was even better than this cold glare, and leaving the window she stood within the room. The lamp still burnt, and a flickering light from the furnace shone on the wall farthest from the place where she had been concealed; there, on a shelf, were ranged a row of hideous skulls that seemed to grin at her in mocking spite. There were shrunken specimens of dried monstrosities, and in a corner a gigantic skeleton stood, pointing with his bony hand at her young beauty,
which was so soon to fall off like a useless garment, and leave her also a monument of the vanity of life. All was too dreadful a confirmation of Castelle's terrible invocation.

Still the same ghostly figures seemed to encircle her; they closed around, till, covering up her face with both her hands, she knelt on the ground to bury her head in a chair that stood near. Words now, such as Castelle had uttered, were, she fancied, whispered close to her ears; heavy sighs breathed upon her, indescribable murmurs floated about her, as, sinking with terror, she pressed her face in the cushion, an unwilling listener to all she heard. Thus she knelt for hours collecting her thoughts, and at last, summoning courage to look out from between her half-closed fingers for a sign of day, she perceived the glimmer of dawn peeping through the small opening left in the curtain when she had quitted her hiding-place.
Still she remained quiet, scarcely daring to open her eyes for some time, till, hearing a movement in Castelle's room, the certain consequence of her position awakened a new apprehension. Again the noise was repeated, and suddenly starting to her feet and opening her eyes, she perceived the long-sought drawing lying on the table before her. With an impetuous movement she seized it, tore it into a hundred pieces, and then, crushing it with fury, she placed the crumpled fragments on the furnace, where they flared with a momentary blaze, and by that light Leonora observed the wished-for key on a little table near her. Delighted at the discovery, she seized it, and stole quickly to the door, although dreading that the noise she might make in applying it to the lock would attract Castelle, for certainly he did not sleep. With desperate resolution, however, she turned it rapidly, and quick as lightning transferred it to the
outside of the door, which she secured with another turn, and then threw the key she knew not whither.

All was done in a moment; and she descended the stairs with the same alacrity, calling to the porter to open the passengers' door in the gates: a summons from within is always usual, and the house guardian taking it for granted that some inmate requires the egress which he affords by pulling a string that communicates with the small passengers' door. Thus favoured, Leonora emerged into the street, where the cold morning air and the early light of day affected her senses so suddenly, that, sick and giddy, she sank on the stone seat outside the house; there, still dazzled with the transition from gloom to sunlit air, from panic to security, she sat motionless in the deserted street.

Presently, with half-opened eyes, she saw a dark, tall, figure approaching; it came nearer. Gracious mercy! is it one of the
phantoms of the night that has followed her from the dreadful scene to punish an intrusion there? It stood close to her, and then it touched her hand. She shrieked faintly, and started to her feet with the instinctive purpose of escaping; but a hand grasped her arm, and opening her eyes to see her assailant, she perceived the large mild eyes of Ernest looking down upon her full of pity.

She grasped his hand; she clung to him and dragged him along in the direction of their home. He at once comprehending her intention, and hurrying on, they rushed together through the silent streets, and did not stop till, having reached the door of her apartment, Leonora sank to the ground pallid and insensible. Manon was there and soon restored her young mistress, telling her how Monsieur Villabella had never suspected her absence; for an old friend called on him late, and Manon accounted for Leo-
nora's non-appearance by the fatigue of a long day's study, to recover from which she had retired early to rest.

Now the loving child's fond feelings, diverted as they often were from her father by the intensity of a first passion, resumed their early intensity. How could she have left him to endure hours of distress at her absence? Had he missed her? A rush of tenderness passed through her heart as she paused before his door, and quickened her step to enter on tip-toe and see how he slept. There lay the gentle, good old man, with his long white hair encircling his pallid face, on which the expression of kindness that it always wore was, if possible, softened by the calm of repose, and sweetened by a smile responsive to his happy thoughts, while he dreamt of his child's future happiness.

Leonora gently kissed the pillow on which he slept. There was home, and peace, and
love with him; his undivided affection she would ever retain, for the last pulses of that poor weak heart would hurry or linger with joy at her happiness, or grief at her sorrow. Now seated near her father's bed, she vowed, as she had done before, to devote her life to his love. Vainly, alas! were the words spoken, or the thought registered in her too loving heart, through which the torrent of passion was soon again to rush with the surge of young life that would overwhelm all good resolves and gentler feelings.

Manon now called her into the next room, where Ernest, in a violent shivering-fit, was suffering all the early symptoms of some severe illness, to check which the doctor was speedily summoned. At the expiration of three days he declared his patient to be attacked by inflammatory fever. Leonora alone knew how it originated in that sleepless chilly night, when seated on a stone,
and watching for her appearance, the poor imbecile might have been smitten by a death-stroke, and was now suffering for her transgression—another victim to her impetuous and unrestrained nature.
CHAPTER II.

"I see a spirit by thy side,
Purple-winged and eagle-eyed,
Looking like a heavenly guide.

Though he seem so bright and fair,
Ere thou trust his proffered care,
Pause a little and beware!"

Agnes, now quite re-established in health and spirits, enjoyed the society of Castelle, uninterrupted by Madame D’Albremont’s restlessness; he who, with the wisdom of the serpent, could decipher characters that were but hieroglyphics to ordinary perceptions, soon mastered hers. Unlike most bad men, who seldom calculate the influences of the more exalted feelings which do not act within themselves, he understood their value, and utilized them to effect his purpose. Whatever was weak or imperfect in Agnes’s character he soon detected; but
he equally perceived its virtues—and they should help him to his object, as well as her foibles.

In the balance by which he measured human conduct, the good was allowed for, as well as the evil estimated, and success in this calculation had hitherto been proportioned to his astuteness. Finding that as her mind became fully developed the moral principle grew more sensitive to good and more repugnant to evil, he pretended to concur in her corrected appreciation of things human and divine. Her benevolence he encouraged, and even took her occasionally, accompanied by her maid, to visit the hospitals, where she was not allowed to stay longer than while distributing a few permissible comforts to the convalescent patients. Then Castelle, with his flowing language, would expatiate on the miseries to which medicine brings relief; he showed her how the able physician, by checking disease and restoring health, can
bestow on us the first element of human happiness; how by contests with death, like a new creator, he can endow us with fresh life. He described the reciprocities of mind and matter, the influence of the body on its twin-sister spirit—one born in heaven, the other on earth, but equally co-heiresses to a glorious inheritance; in fact, his part was so inimitably acted, that Agnes believed in his goodness as firmly as in his genius.

It was not long before her active kindness was brought into play, for from Monsieur Breton, who was giving her lessons in drawing, she heard of the serious illness of Leonora, who became daily thinner, and more languid, and unequal to undertake the tasks by which she lived. Agnes’s admiration of Leonora’s filial piety, which, of all virtues, seemed to her the most admirable, had been increased through touching details reported by the friendly artist, in which he described her devotion to the old man, in terms that touched Agnes’s
tender heart. She hastened to offer companionship and help to the poor invalid, whose insensate jealousy she never suspected.

Leonora was in bed, where she had lain some days, when Agnes called; beside her sat Ernest, weak and pale from his recent fever, but seeming a new being, very unlike the poor idiot, whom Agnes so often pitied. The impassiveness of his former manner had been replaced by the quick intelligence which now animated his fine countenance. Agnes looked at him with attention, for she had already learnt from Breton that the malady, of which he so nearly died, had entirely restored his intellect; although aware of the renovating effect of some diseases, she was not prepared for such a phenomenon as this.

Leonora suffered severely, and accepted Agnes's sympathy more graciously than could have been expected; for the fatigue and anxiety of attending upon Ernest during his illness had subdued her.
Castelle often shared and lessened her cares, and was so kind to the unconscious artist, that he ultimately believed that to the chemist's skill and devotion he owed his life. Leonora, at first awed by the remembrance of that dreadful night, relaxed in the severity of her manner on perceiving the apparent kindness with which her idol continued his visits. They were made, not out of regard for the invalid, but because he was aware of Leonora's adventure at his house, and wished on that account to propitiate her. Having heard the outer door close that night, and finding it locked outside, and looking through his rooms for the consequence of the supposed thieves' entry there, he found a handkerchief, marked "L. B.," while soon after he discovered that the drawing had disappeared.

Anxious now to conciliate his former favourite, and to counteract any of her jealous freaks, that might awaken Agnes's curiosity, he called at once on Mr. Villa-
bella, where he found Ernest prostrated with a fever, resulting from the night's exposure during his prolonged watch for Leonora. Then she drooped, wearied by a long attendance on her cousin, and Castelle himself administered the tonics that were to restore her.

The exchequer of the poor family was again reduced by the expenditure consequent on prolonged sickness; for Ernest's illness had not allowed him to paint. Their impoverishment Agnes soon perceived, and saw how their little luxuries were hoarded, and how acceptable to them were such delicacies as she had ventured to offer. Suddenly discovering the want of a large album, to be filled at once with hasty rough sketches, such as she knew abound in a young artist's portfolio, Leonora's was ransacked, and Agnes, in selecting many of the sketches, stipulated that she was to price them herself. The amount, you may be sure, was considerable, and Miss Somerton,
on disbursing it, gave both artists commissions for the future. Ernest's first painting was to be commenced for her at once, Leonora its model, representing Hygeia bearing the balsam of life from heaven to earth.

The little comforts hitherto supplied were now offered more abundantly, and small luxuries cheered the old man, as much by the kindness with which they were presented, as for their own intrinsic value. Leonora accepted all these favours with a perplexed air, unaccompanied by the warm expressions of gratitude with which she received less available gifts.

To enliven Leonora, Miss Somerton announced the expected arrival of Clelia and Vivian, and, in doing so, expatiated warmly on the merits of both, till the poor artist longed to be made personally acquainted with persons so well recommended. Agnes promised her their patronage, and it was with great satisfaction that she had heard they reached Paris. The interval since their
marriage had been spent at Vivian's country place in Cornwall, the air of which seemed to agree with Clelia. She had never been more cheerful, and the serenity of her mind beamed like sunlight from her pellucid eyes. Louise, who had become quite an adept in making her mistress credit the fabrications with which she overcame all opposition to the marriage, now rejoiced in the success of her schemes. Still she failed in her efforts to restore poor Clelia to the equanimity which would render her occasional good spirits continuous: they were fitful, and dependent on the society of her friends. Occasionally, the old despondency would return, and again she was excited and watchful, as if expecting some impending calamity.

"Am I not an impostor, Louise?" she would say; "although what you tell me may be true, and the worst consequences of my own acts are as yet averted by good fortune, still it may be only for a time. I
live in terror lest some unexpected circumstance should betray me. I fancy that he may be alive one moment, and the next I see him like an apparition before me."

"What a lovely place this is!" said Louise, anxious to change the subject; "only deadly dull; the trees and green fields make one wretchedly low-spirited, reminding me of a churchyard."

"What an idea!" said Clelia; "don't put such thoughts into my head."

"And then," added Louise, "the people in England look so inanimate and quiet, that they appear only half alive, and move about so noiselessly and speak so low, that I always feel as if some one was dead in the house."

"This quiet regularity ensures our comfort," said Clelia; "they don't tear about, scream at the top of their voices, scramble here and rush there, as we do in French households."

"Then it appears as if we were shut into
a convent," continued Louise; "only the endless bells ring in England for perpetual meals instead of perpetual prayers. If comfort consists in eating, they have a deal of it here, for they feed all day long, and I am sure the putting on table-cloths and taking them off again is tiresome to see, and the servants seem to be always gorging."

"They do make a business of it," said Clelia; "in France, you know, domestics have but two meals a day."

"Yes, they just take a bit of something for breakfast—bread and fruit, and radishes or salad. Fancy these John Bulls breakfasting on an apple," said Louise, with a ringing laugh. "How the ladies swallow so much meat is extraordinary. I hear that they eat five times a day."

"I cannot understand it," said Clelia, whose digestion merely answered the purposes of life, and did not supply material to expend on perpetual locomotion.

"They will never be converted to our
religion, ma'am," said the observant maid; "for how could they fast?"

"I never thought of that," said Clelia, smiling; "and yet, now you mention the subject, I remember how there was a report that the Pope would give the English nation a general dispensation to eat meat on fast-days in our climate. I see the object of this indulgence, for the men would as soon allow themselves to be made Jews as the women converts to a faith which would muzzle them."

"Muzzled in both ways we are," said Louise; "some things are not to go into our mouths, and others are not to be spoken out of them."

Notwithstanding the excellence of country living, Louise was glad to see Paris when the Vivians returned there and settled themselves in the beautiful hotel in which rooms had been prepared for the bride with the greatest care and cost. She was installed there the night of her arrival, and shown
their wonders and comforts by the adoring Frederick. Nothing could equal the beauty of his arrangements throughout her apartments. The walls of her bed-room were hung with rose-coloured silk, over which festoons of muslin and lace fell in graceful folds; a golden angel suspended from the ceiling held a crown of roses, dropping from the other hand lace curtains of the most graceful pattern.

Through coloured glass, which, from a circular opening in the domed ceiling, admitted the light, the room always appeared sunlit by day, and at night, in each corner, an angel with silver wings supported a lamp of alabaster, surrounded by living flowers, on which the most gorgeous birds were perched, mounted by clever artists, in life-like positions; the large mirrors framed in silver had wreaths of real roses circling them, gathered from the greenhouses of the adjoining garden.

Then in her dressing-room a Psyche glass,
held by silver Cupids, might have been a fit mirror for Venus to dress by, and its
elegance was still enhanced by the decoration of an elaborate toilet.

Caskets of old renown, flacons of modern celebrity, covered the table, on which two
large enamelled shells bore the bouquets of roses that carried the unity of objects
throughout the fairy scene with the indication of purpose which is the great proof
of artistic feeling. The very air seemed rose colour; roses proclaimed their aromatic
welcome to the youthful bride through all the senses, and that couleur de rose, with
which French sentiment implies the most beautiful colouring of life, shed its bloom
from the loving heart of the adoring husband on the shrine of his idol. He
gathered incense from living nature fresh as the feelings with which he offered it:

"Oh! there is nought in nature bright,
Where roses do not shed their light."
A bath-room adjoined the dressing-room, where tepid water, perfumed with roses and covered by their floating leaves, awaited Clelia's pleasure; while in a small circular alcove beyond was spread a table with fruits and sherbets, ready for her refreshment throughout the night.

All was splendour and comfort there, and eagerly the next day the fair bride summoned her mother and Agnes to admire these evidences of Frederick's affection. Both ladies dined with her, Miss Williams being left at home, to keep Madame de Belleville company.

Nothing could equal Madame D'Albremont's delight at seeing her daughter surrounded by such luxury and grandeur, which would shed a reflected lustre on herself, as the happy mother of the sumptuous establishment. How rich and great ladies, who had often treated her with indifference bordering on contempt, would now envy the address which had placed Mrs. Vivian on
one of the thrones of fashion; how they would bow round it, and court the prime minister of the new dynasty in the person of Madame D’Albremont!

There was nothing to change, nothing to improve; even the mother-in-law’s proverbially active eye detected no deficiency—no error in the house, though of course she was already mentally devising the best plan for benefiting herself by its advantages.

“Well!” said Miss Williams to Agnes, the morning after her dinner at the Vivians’, “I suppose that Clelia is in the seventh heaven, and enchanted with the glories of matrimony. It is to be hoped that they may animate her with a little life, and that she won’t dawdle as much as heretofore, and think that it is a very miserable thing to be happy.”

“Poor girl,” said Agnes; “I trust that she will now have nothing to complain of,
nothing to regret, and very little to hope for."

"She is a poor creature," said Miss Williams. "and wants a husband, I suppose, to tell her what to think and what to do."

"Most women require support and counsel," said Agnes.

"And why do they? why can they not know how to conduct themselves without reference to a male intellect?" said Miss Williams, fiercely.

"Is there not a charm in the dependence that love sustains, and in the wants that a chivalrous gallantry is so ready to supply?" inquired Agnes, meekly.

"I cannot see it," replied Miss Williams; "we fondle and dress and pamper a baby, because it can do nothing for itself; by treating us like children, with the pretence of worshipping us as idols, men perpetuate the dependence to which we so humbly submit. Like the fox in the fable, they
affect to admire our helplessness, as reynard did the voice of the crow (female, no doubt), that we may surrender our liberty, as she dropped her cheese, for the benefit of our sly flatterers."

It was decided that Miss Somerton should again hire for the summer the Château de Clairville; and Vivian, most anxious for Clelia to spend the coming months with her friends, hired a villa, not far distant. It was a square building, with a portico at one side, and surrounded on the three others by arcades opening to a lovely garden, which sloped gradually towards the lake, that was backed at the opposite side by a dark wood.

Clelia's windows looked on the flower-beds, and were shaded from the mid-day sun by festoons of creepers, that encircled the stone columns of the surrounding gallery.

For a few days after her arrival Mrs. Vivian appeared to rally considerably, when
she tried, by increased cheerfulness, to re-quite Frederick for the tender care with which he had prepared this pretty residence for her gratification. They drove daily in an open carriage, and went frequently to call upon her friends at Clairville. This amendment so delighted Vivian, that he seemed to acquire fresh spirits and new life, making a hundred pleasant projects for the future.

Who should share such joy but his best friend? Who could enhance his happiness or brighten his hopes but Castelle?

The chemist had discontinued his lectures for the summer months, and was now entirely at liberty to perform a promise, which he had readily made, to spend some time at the villa. A small study, leading into a bed-room next to Clelia's apartment, was prepared for him, and as it opened also on the colonnade, he could enjoy the beauty of the garden, and the fragrance of the massive creepers garlanding the columns, and
half obscuring the window of his study with their cool shadows, throwing a refreshing green tint into his room.

Clelia rejoiced at the arrival of her husband's friend, for his presence she knew would cheer her, while the soothing effect of his mesmeric passes might promote the rest which she so much needed.

Most days she was now put into a mesmeric sleep, and always awoke from it refreshed, and elated by the visions with which the enchanter embellished her slumbers. Still, when Madame D'Albremont came to the villa, she found her paler and thinner than ever, and spoke openly of the change as conducive to beauty, rather than indicative of disease.

The poor girl began now occasionally to suffer acutely. One day she would be in great pain; the next, a remedy, administered by Castelle, might give her ease. Frederick, quite miserable at her situation, discussed it often with Castelle, who was deputed by the
Paris physician, visiting her weekly, to administer the prescribed remedies.

"I do not think that this doctor understands the case," said Frederick one day to Castelle, "nor did the other men we consulted in Paris seem to be more penetrating. I believe that you alone detect the cause of my poor Clelia's disease, and you alone can check it. Do not leave us now, my good, kind friend; stay here till some decided amendment results from the treatment which you deem expedient."

They dined early these summer days, and in the cool evenings led Clelia to seats prepared for them on the brink of the beautiful lake. There a rich carpet was spread upon the green sward, under the umbrageous trees, where luxuriant couches and large cushions afforded incentives to repose; while books in abundance were placed on a table, and near them Clelia's work in its golden casket—all supplying pastime for these quiet hours.
Reclining on her sofa and guarded by a warm shawl, she listened to Castelle as he read aloud extracts from the Italian poets, and the insect chorus and the rustling leaves softly accompanied the melodious tones of his deep voice, which sometimes, as the evening waned, lulled her into a sleepy reverie, of which the charm, she believed, was induced by his mesmeric power. Visions, harmonizing with the poet's thoughts—vapoury pictures of the scenes they described, floated before her—all evoked by the spell which Castelle alone possessed.

On warmer nights Vivian would sit on a low cushion, to fan her with a large branch of some sweet shrub; and when the earth was about to recover from the atmosphere its borrowed moisture, and a slight dampness in the air announced the falling dews, then Vivian wrapped her in a warmer covering, or bore her in his arms to the house.
He would then often return to the spot which they had just left, to see the sun setting behind the darkened wood; and, as it sank deeper and deeper, watch upon the lake unruffled by the slightest ripple, the olive shadows of the trees looking like a submerged wood, buried beneath the deep blue waters.

Vivian seldom left her; she could not bear to let him out of her sight; wherever he moved her eyes followed him with the look of apprehension that had till now disappeared since her marriage. Even while her mother was there, or that Agnes nursed her, she still turned to him, and when he was leaving the room, always asked him to return soon. There was the conviction that they must soon part implied in her anxiety, although she never expressed it, but dreaded even to complain of her suffering, or to betray her weakness, lest the fatal suspicion should arise in their minds of what was a certainty in her own.
Vivian, as she lay one day within the green shade of her room, said—

"My Clelia does not know how beautiful she grows; dearest, you look at this moment more like a seraph than a creature of human mould."

A faint blush passed over her cheek as she answered, "How happy I am to please you still! for I wish that you should always remember me as I was when first we met."

He did not seem to heed the meaning of these words, and changed the subject at once, by adding—

"I must get you painted in that attitude. You will not mind having Charles Breton take the likeness; he will do it rapidly, for the transparency of the lightest water-colour will best represent the ethereal beauty of your complexion, and the spiritual character of your whole appearance."

Poor Clelia's uplifted eyes and folded hands, when engaged in mental prayer, be-fitted this heavenly expression.
Charles Breton arrived the next day, and made a beautiful sketch of the recumbent Clelia, producing with a delicate hand the light tints that could best depict a form which seemed now made of woven air. Madame D’Albremont and Agnes, both delighted with the picture, required Charles to supply them with copies at once.

Next evening Clelia was better, and Castelle, after promising to return early the following morning, accompanied Breton to Paris. They parted at Mademoiselle Breton’s door; but at a later hour Charles ascended the many flights of stairs that led to Castelle’s apartment, where, after knocking two or three times, he gained admittance. It had been a bright evening, and the lingering day still left a slight blue tint in the sky, as both young men sat at an open window looking into a distance that was soon dimmed by the coming shades of night.

The world seemed far beneath, and the
rare noises in the quiet street below allowed the distant hum of the busy world beyond to reach them, while the clocks of the many spires that rose over the surrounding houses struck ten, and were echoed by answering bells pealing faintly from more distant churches.

"Do you think that she will be better to-morrow?" said Breton; "the medicine you gave her this morning, before I finished my drawing, seemed to soothe her immediately."

"She will perhaps be better, or she may be worse," said Castelle, "but there is no chance of her ultimate recovery."

"Vivian will never survive her," he continued; "with his sensitive character, I should fear that such a great affliction might unsettle his reason and lead him to commit suicide."

"He never would be guilty of self-murder, Castelle."

"I often think," continued Castelle, as if
not heeding Breton, "that after such a calamity he might, with his knowledge of chemistry, have recourse to poison."

"It is a dreadful anticipation," said Breton.

Castelle was silent for a few moments, and then, as if expressing to himself the thoughts which engrossed him, he exclaimed—"What is life that we should prize it so much? Is the happiest worth retaining?"

"It is only endurable," said Breton, "as the probation for another."

Castelle went on—"Instinct shrinks from its destruction in ourselves or in others; but how many would wish to be released from the mortal coil painlessly and instantaneously!"

"I am not sure of that," said Breton; "for the love of life is so inherent in our nature."

"But might it not be a mercy to rescue a human being from the anxieties, and
pains, and sorrows of life?—from the sufferings of decrepitude, from apprehensions for the future, even from the sins that life entails? Would it not be a gracious act to rescue our fellow-creatures from an existence so hampered with the ills of the body and the evils of the spirit? There are, I know, sects in the East who consider it a virtue to rescue a spirit from the bondage of the body."

"Your views are gloomy, Castelle," said Breton; "in my opinion, existence is a glorious thing. The faculty enjoyed through our senses of compassing the beautiful external world; the ideal which the imagination supplies to embellish it further; the tender sympathies that bind us to our fellow-creatures; the glorious hope that anticipates future bliss, the nature of which we are now incapable of conceiving; the scope of intellect that investigates, and masters, and utilizes the real, that invents the untried and predicts the unknown, that
creates with the images of natural things a spiritual world of its own, etherealized by that genius which is the special gift of God, and an emanation from himself;—all this is worth living for and worth dying for, even were there nothing beyond it.”

Castelle was left alone. He still sat musing at the open window, until silence and darkness seemed to obliterate the world below; he then retired into his laboratory and began the nightly study, and returned to the secret experiments, which were best effected in the gloomy hours of midnight.

“It is nearly over,” he murmured, “and my plan has been successful. No cunning chemist can detect my art; no adept of old, too expert to have been himself discovered, screened by a throne or concealed in a hovel, will return from the grave to betray so apt a pupil. Cleopatra, that early poisoner, could not detect me now that my work is done. Poor Clelia will soon sink from exhaustion produced as
much by the antidotes which I administer, as by the drugs which they are supposed to neutralize. One expels all traces of the other so effectually, that neither in life nor in death can this treatment be detected.”
CHAPTER III.

"So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
To be nailed down into a narrow place;
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more
Blythe voice of living thing; muse not again
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost.
How fearful!"

Shelley.

While Castelle was absent in Paris, Agnes prepared to visit Clelia. Madame D'Albreumont had spent the last three days at the villa, and Agnes was arranging an absence for the night there, when a letter was brought to her from the neighbouring village, where it had arrived by the post. It contained two lines:—

"Meet me in the summer-house at dusk to-night. Clelia's life depends on your presence there."
Agnes, who was always puzzled by the reserve and gloom of Clelia's manner, referred both to some inexplicable circumstance connected with her early life, and was confirmed in this supposition by the embarrassed way in which she answered questions alluding to it. Anxious to avert any evil that threatened this poor girl, she at once determined on obeying the summons so urgently expressed, and immediately countermanded the carriage which was ordered to convey her to the villa.

When the evening set in, Agnes proceeded to the summer-house, and had not waited long there in the dusk before a female figure emerged from the wood, shawled and veiled so as to be thoroughly disguised, and on a nearer approach Agnes recognised Leonora Villabella. They sat down in the inner recess, and Leonora, with a trembling voice and pallid face, prefaced her communication by exacting a promise
of inviolable secrecy, on the observance of which she insisted, declaring that her life depended upon it.

After being assured that her name should never be mentioned in connexion with the subject of this meeting, she said—“Miss Somerton, you may perhaps rescue a dear friend from the most imminent danger by your interference; by it Mrs. Vivian may yet be saved from the evil that threatens her.”

“What can you mean?” said Agnes, perplexed.

“Do not ask me too many questions,” said Leonora, nervously, looking timidly around her; “I cannot answer them. I must give you no exact reason for my advice, but I warn you against Castelle.”

“What! how can he harm her?” exclaimed Agnes. “Do pray tell me what you mean, for your manner and tone frighten me.”

“I dare not say more. I cannot tell you
all I know; but solemnly I beseech you, as you love Clelia, not to leave her alone with Castelle, and do not give her the medicine which he prepares."

"You cannot suppose that he would injure her," said Agnes, while a thrill of horror shook her frame.

"No, no; in mercy don't say so," said Leonora, with a voice as agitated as that of her querist. "I did not utter a word about poison, did I?" and the poor girl seemed to doubt her command over words or thoughts. "No, no; I did not say so. Pray ask me no more." And darting out of the summer-house, she disappeared in the wood at the side by which she had entered it.

Agnes knew that it would be useless to follow her over the dangerous rocks surrounding the spot, which were most perilous in the direction she had taken.

What did Leonora mean?

Agnes walked slowly back to the house, ruminating on this strange interview, recall-
ing what she had lately heard from Sir Harry Ashworth of Leonora's jealous temper, impetuous character, and love of mystery, and quite convinced, by the time she reached her room, that this obscure warning was but the result of a delusion which some fresh jealous fit had excited in the very sensitive mind of the impulsive artist.

At Castelle's return to the villa, he found Clelia as he had left her the day before, quiet and painless; still too weak to move, and seemingly quite absorbed in meditation, of which her placid smile, clasped hands, and bowed head betokened the object.

Louise and an old nurse sat up with her alternately, and Vivian came often noiselessly into her room during the night, carefully avoiding being seen, for distress at being the cause of his disturbed rest often agitated her prejudicially. Castelle, towards midnight, always administered a soothing
potion, after taking which she mostly slept calmly.

The night after his return from Paris, Vivian and Madame D'Albremont retired earlier than usual, as the former had rested but little during the week, and consented to go to bed when Castelle promised faithfully not to sleep, but to look into Clelia's room every hour till morning.

At twelve o'clock, before he administered the usual sleeping-draught, Clelia seemed a little revived; she asked him to sit beside her, after desiring the nurse, who raised her pillows, to leave them till again summoned. A green night-lamp cast transparent tints over her bed, where she lay wan and placid, her calm blue eyes now turned towards Castelle.

"Sit beside me," she said, "dear friend; I have something to say to you, which no one else must hear."

Castelle seated himself near the bed.
"You are better, I am sure," he answered; "and therefore I will allow you to speak to me for a few minutes, but not longer."

"Dear Castelle," she continued, taking his hand in hers, "you know how Frederick loves you as a brother, how he wishes me to feel for you like a sister; as such, I am anxious to make a request, with which I feel sure you must comply, now, when you know that it will be the last you may ever grant me."

Castelle was going to speak.

"Don't interrupt me," she said, "with assurances which cannot alter my own conviction; for, Castelle, I know that I have not long to live. For nights and days the thought has affrighted me. Here, in this room, when you found that I slept, the terrors of anticipated death appalled me, and the chill of the grave seemed to creep over me: so young, so happy, so dearly loving him, so fondly attached to my mother, it is hard to sink into that cold grave, to feel no
more, to think no more, to be cast out away from warm hearts and a happy home, and left there alone in that chill ground, along with strangers—like myself, cold and dead!"

Here Clelia's eyes expressed the terror which she felt; she looked around affrighted, as if the ghastly figures of which she spoke stood there beside her. Castelle did not attempt to interrupt her. She went on—

"These dreadful thoughts are very sinful, I know, and therefore the more unbearable. Our good clergyman would reprove me for them, and I have not dared utter them to him; to you alone, Castelle—to you, who know how the poor human mind is disordered by the ailments of the body—I may describe what I feel. Will these terrible fancies haunt me to the last, Castelle?" And she looked inquiringly into his eyes.

"They will not, indeed," he replied, "and are merely the delusions produced by sedatives required to soothe your pains."

"Oh, do not give them to me, Castelle;
any torture is preferable to these horrid thoughts. Promise me that you will not give me what will produce them!"

The chemist promised.

She continued—"I wish to preserve my senses to the last; I want to see, to hear, to understand their looks, their words, their thoughts to the end, and I have that to say to them which will require all the power that I can retain—I must speak it with my parting breath, for I could scarcely survive afterwards." She paused for a moment, and then went on—"Comfort them, Castelle, and do not leave them till they are quite composed." Castelle promised—"Oh, Castelle, I dare not tell you of my sins; but the thought of them is killing me—from him you will hear all—pity me, then, Castelle, pity me, and console my husband—my dear, dear husband, whom I have so wronged." Castelle promised again. "Another favour I want to ask," she continued; "there is a little gold casket in a cabinet of my
dressing-room, the key of which Louise will find in my purse; open it, and you will see a letter and a packet, addressed to Frederick. Keep them safely till he is calm, and then tell him it was my desire that you should read their contents to him, for he will want comfort and support, after learning what they contain. In the box are some securities for my little fortune, which Frederick would never accept—take them yourself. I need not tell you how to dispose of them; your own kind heart will do so, and rejoice at the power to effect the little good which this sum may compass.

"And, Castelle, when that kind heart throbs with satisfaction, while you smooth the rough path to death for others, as you have done for me, when you relieve the torture and cheer the spirit of some dying sufferer, when you promise to support the drooping loving mother, and to comfort the poor forlorn husband, think of me—think
of poor Clelia—Frederick has already provided for my——” Here Clelia’s voice grew so weak and tremulous, that Castelle could scarcely hear her.

“Speak no more now,” he said; “you will exhaust yourself entirely; be calm until I give you a composing draught—no, no; not the medicine to which you object; I have here one far more soothing.”

Castelle arose, and sought on the table for the usual medicine, which he soon found there. She lay still—her eyes shut, while a slow but difficult breathing upheaved her chest, on which the lace frill of her night-dress quivered gently.

He stood near the lamp, behind the bed, dropping from a small phial which he had brought with him, the deadly drug that was soon to check the action of that poor heart, struggling even now with life, and to stop its pulsations, that were like the
subsiding movements of a pendulum, slackening till the last.

Quiet and exhausted, she lay there, wrapped in the thoughts of death. Radiant with success and hope, he stood exhalating life from every pore, and with the force of his mind projecting thought into the happy future, compared with the solid realities of which the present was but an unsubstantial dream.

"Sleep well, dear Clelia," he said, while she drank the potion; "you will rest for some hours now." As he moved the counterpane to cover her shoulder, she took his hand and kissed it, saying, in a voice that was scarcely audible—

"How can I thank you enough, dear Castelle? Pray go to rest now, and let everyone sleep. You are all much too good to me."

Castelle retired to his room for a few moments, and then returned to watch the
effect of his medicine on the sleeper. She lay still as death, while he stood beside the bed, assuring himself that his work was progressing well. He thought of that casket and its key, but dared not now to seek it; and circumstances prevented the latter ever coming into his possession.

Next morning it was evident that Clelia expected an immediate change, and rested there, patiently waiting for the time when pain would extort the exclamation which might warn Frederick of what was coming. As the day advanced she became slightly uneasy.

"What disturbs you, my love?" said her watchful husband, who held her wasted hand in his. "Do you want anything?"

"I wish to say something to you, Frederick, which I have longed to speak ever since we were married; and now that I am so ill, every day I hoped to tell it to you; but Louise is always here, even if the others are away."
"Say what you wish, dearest; I alone am here, and no one will interrupt you."

She beckoned him to stoop to her, and putting her arm around his neck, she whispered with a trembling voice—

"It is something terrible, Frederick—something for which you will never, never forgive me."

"My pretty Clelia," said Frederick, "you must be dreaming. How could you ever have offended me?"

"No, no," said Clelia, raising herself up suddenly, "it is worse than that. I have wronged you."

"Dear Clelia, be calm; this delusion will pass away. I must hear no more now; rest yourself, my love. Castelle shall give you something to calm this unusual excitement."

She held him still, when he arose to bring the chemist, and then said—

"Perhaps I shall be stronger by-and-by."
I have a long and a sad story to tell, Frederick."

The potion was administered; she lay in drowsy quiet for two hours; and Frederick, in her dressing-room, sat looking out upon the bright garden, and thinking, with the tenderness of a woman, of the dreary future, when nature would be overshadowed for him with the gloom of a perpetual sorrow. He looked around the room, in which everything evoked a painful thought; how he loved, and yet shrank from these evidences of her presence—relics of past days, that would henceforward be to him torturing records of the feelings with which he presented these costly ornaments, these graceful trifles, eloquent testimonies of his tenderness.

Clelia summoned Vivian from the next room, and re-arranged herself on the sofa, asking Louise to bathe her temples and smooth her hair; then she whispered gently—

"Louise, you have preserved my bridal
wreath; place it on my brow when all is over, and cover me with this veil; put a bouquet of my own beautiful roses in my hand—he must gather them.”

She lay quietly for an hour, and Frederick did not disturb her till Madame D’Albremont arrived; then she called Vivian close to her, and said—

“Now, Frederick, now that my mother is come, you shall hear my dreadful secret. Come closer, mother; sit there, at my feet. Frederick, hold my hand, and fan me while I speak, for I feel so weak—so weak.”

The sun shone brightly into the window on the little group, as if nature put on her gayest aspect to contrast it with the gloom and sorrows of death. The birds carolled without, and Clelia’s answered them from their gilded cages within, while nature, solicited by the bright mid-day sun, sang a breathed joy, and life, and love.

Pearly drops now stood upon Clelia’s forehead, a deadly paleness overspread it, as
with a resolute effort she raised herself on the cushions beside her. With quivering lips she began, looking away out towards the mellow woods and the radiant garden. Suddenly a form intercepted the light; she rose with a convulsive start from the couch, her eyes strained and dilated, her lips parted, and her arms were raised—horror fixed her features for a moment, then came a piercing shriek, and a cry which uttered words that transfixed her hearers, and that were the last she ever spoke.

"My husband! my husband!" she cried, and sank on the ground a corpse.

Hearts may feel, but words cannot speak, nor writing picture, the misery of that moment for Frederick. He bent over her, and, as if his tender invocations could call her back, uttered them in tones that would have thrilled through a living heart, and now were unheeded by ears which had ever vibrated at the gentlest sound of his loved voice.
As he prayed beside the couch where they had laid her, Madame D'Albremont turned an anxious glance to the window, from whence the figure had just disappeared. Frederick never saw it, and with a woman's quick decision she did not betray her notice of it.

The dreadful week was past; Clelia reposed in the distant cemetery of Cornwall, beside Vivian's parents.

After ten days' absence he returned to the villa, and found Madame D'Albremont pale and ill, and suffering as much sorrow as was compatible with her nature. She awaited his arrival before going to stay with Agnes, who had kindly invited her to Clairville. Castelle, who had pretended business engagements in Paris, as a reason for not accompanying Vivian to England, was now ready to receive him with open arms.

Vivian soon made preparations to leave the country, and removed, and placed carefully with his own hands, in cases to be
forwarded to Paris, the things which poor Clelia had used or liked. Her drawings, her work, he touched with tender reverence, as if they had become sacred, now that the hands which had so often held them were palsied by death. One casket was found amongst her little treasures sealed in a paper, on which Frederick's name was written. This he brought to his room, and shut himself up there to remain undisturbed in the pious duty of reading some valedictory word or some parting behest that would be to him henceforth a balm to soothe his wounded heart, or a sacred trust.

On opening the box, he first found a letter, and then a journal; the letter filled many pages; the former, again sealed and directed to "Frederick," he opened. The writing was neither clear nor firm; he read with amazement the first lines, and paused long before he could recover from the shock
they gave him, and take courage to proceed further:—

"Dearest Frederick,

"Before opening this letter, you may not have heard from my own lips my fearful secret; you will not yet have learnt what caused the apparent coldness and the caprice of which you so often and so justly complained. I ought to have had courage then to confess my folly; but my love for you blinded me, and, hurried on by the fatal evil influences that ever directed me, I had not power to seek the evidence that would either kill me if it parted us, or blight my life if you were made aware of my wicked folly. At times, I believed in my release, and felt convinced of it at the period of our marriage; but, lately, weakened as I was by illness, it seemed as if every day the dread of being criminated increased, till I could scarcely bear it. How
can I even write what I never dared utter, or scarcely think of? But, Frederick, I am not your wife; my husband perhaps lives! Oh, dearest life, forgive my deceit, and pardon, if you can, my disgraceful conduct, which I am about to expiate by dying of the torments with which remorse kills me.

"The dread of losing you for ever, the apprehension of forfeiting your esteem, even were I free, has nearly driven me mad. To my mother I never confessed my errors, nor yet that I had adopted the Protestant religion, for I wished to die rather than criminate myself. Now, as all will soon be over, I rejoice that I shall be near you to the last, that my eyes may be closed by your loved hand, and that, uttered with a dying voice, my cry for pardon will reach your own heart. This last appeal you will perhaps have heard, and with it my sacred assurances that the girlish folly of that time, long passed, has been but as a dream to me ever
since, leaving no other feelings than those of shame and sorrow.

"To you alone have I been devoted, with an affection which absorbed my whole being—an affection that has prompted me to sacrifice truth, duty, and honour, by a long persistence in deceit, the remembrance of which now adds another pang to my sufferings. But the excess of my love for you, Frederick, has been my punishment—the daily increasing terror of a discovery that might separate us was too much for your poor weak, loving"

"Clelia."

It was twelve o'clock at night. Frederick sat immovable; knock after knock at the door was disregarded; he answered only to beg for quiet; and at last, when Madame D'Albremont called, he merely took a candle from her hand, and said that he felt tired, and wished to sleep. She knew how much he suffered, and how he always entreated
that she would allow him to remain shut up for hours in Clelia's room.

It was long past midnight when he opened the little diary which, begun a year before, detailed more fully the feelings expressed in her letter. There were noted daily her fears, her repentance, and her devotion to him, in simple, tender language; there, too, he read an account of the incident that had marred her life; how she was persuaded to meet Benson after their first interviews; how she had been discovered returning from the last, and prevented fulfilling her appointment the following night; how she was shut up, and fed on bread and water, in the convent, and at the end of the week made to swear never to breathe a word of the adventure through her life, nor yet acknowledge her profession of the Protestant faith till she came of age. After this solemn asseveration, she was released and sent off at night to another religious house, as the
Abbess of St. Augustine's thought that the climate of Italy might improve her health.

At the bottom of the casket was a miniature-case, which Vivian took into his hand, and held long before he could take courage to look upon the features of one who had caused him so much misery. At last he raised the lid, and saw the face of a handsome young man with a good expression of countenance, that did not indicate the conduct of which he was guilty. Vivian's anger, softened as he was by recent sorrow, relaxed when he looked at it. What error could he not pardon, that love for his own Clelia prompted? Jealousy was now buried in the grave with her, and this poor fellow might already rest in his, or be still a disconsolate wanderer, seeking for the treasure which had been wrenched from him, just when he imagined that it was secured for life.

Next day, Madame D'Albremont, finding
that Vivian did not answer when she knocked at his door, after a repeated summons, reached his room through a window which she had broken open from the conservatory. He was stretched on a couch in a stupor, and near him lay the miniature, which at a glance she saw was a likeness of the man whose momentary appearance at the window had so terrified Clelia, and whom the poor dying girl recognised as her husband.

When Vivian was restored to consciousness, he handed sadly to his mother-in-law the fatal letter, crumpled in the first movement of surprise when he had thrust it into his breast. He then gave her the journal, and in a few words asked her to leave him to himself and his sorrow.
CHAPTER IV.

"And 'tis remarkable that they
Talk most that have the least to say.
Your dainty speakers have the curse
To plead their causes down to worse;
As dames who native beauty want,
Still uglier look the more they paint."

Agnes and Miss Williams were not at all pleased at hearing of Lady Mary Mantonford's return to Paris. The sponging-tour in England came to an end prematurely, and neither of the girls had been removed from under the maternal wing; so that she still appeared, dressed for company, with an appendage of her own produce under each pinion.

Rosalind flirted and talked as usual, and had added some Scotch airs to her vocal repertory which amazed French amateurs.
"Maude had not come into the garden" yet, but the "blue bonnets were over the border," and Zariffa already "laid her golden cushion down" at the musical treaty of singing ladies.

Lady Mary grew very anxious to be acquainted with foreigners; but those she met with in society did not seem to patronise her. During the coming winter, however, she determined on availing herself of every opportunity for knowing more of them, and resolved to improve her French, which was hitherto incomprehensible, from the very strong Scotch accent which she assumed with the view of making it as different as possible from English.

At the theatre one night, the Mantons met Monsieur de Belleville, who was always looking out for English acquaintances, no doubt with the intention of providing himself from amongst them with a successor to madame, who, he always declared, would not live many months. It was quite a mistake
to imagine that either of the Miss Mantonfords could supply the fortune at which he estimated himself, even at second-hand; but still, as Lady Mary was always talking of a rich old aunt who was to die soon, and to leave her girls a great deal of money, he may have been influenced by this prospect to show attention to the family. It was a strange coincidence that all these three ladies should receive Belleville's advances favourably, and, when he called, seem much pleased with his visits.

This adventurer had acquitted himself towards his ally Mr. O'Rourk with tolerable honesty; and the latter received one thousand pounds of Madame de Belleville's money for his furtherance of the unholy alliance. With this sum he gambled, dressed well, paid a French master, and lived very much to his own satisfaction till the whole amount was expended.

By some stratagem of the artful friends, he got himself engaged as intendant, or house
steward, to a young Russian nobleman, who was shortly to arrive in Paris, and whose agents had provisionally formed a large establishment, at the head of which O'Rourk revelled in luxury.

He dressed as well, and gave himself more airs, than any Russian prince come down the steppes of Tartary to figure in fashionable life.

Many a good dinner did he provide for Count Belleville, great was his hospitality, boundless was his generosity of his master's goods, as is usual with servants in general. "The prince being absent from Paris, and not expected to return for a week, why shall I not give Lady Mary Mantonford a party at his expense?" thought Belleville. He could not pretend to possess a fine apartment such as that of the prince, but he might appear to be his most intimate friend.

"O'Rourk shall personate the prince, whose servants are all at that fellow's disposal, and I will invite Lady Mary to
sup with his highness,” said Belleville to himself.

O’Rourk was too much of an Irishman to resist the prospect of fun, even at the risk of being discovered by his master, so the plan was soon arranged that Belleville should invite the Mantonfords to a soirée.

Mr. O’Rourk had dyed his red hair, eyebrows, and whiskers a jet black, and otherwise changed his appearance so much for the better, that his own maternal parent would not have recognised him. In their preparatory dialogue, Belleville’s English being better than O’Rourk’s French, the friends talked in the former language.

“ ’Tis my place you’ll lose for me,” said O’Rourk, after reflecting on the proposal, “and I only just here a fortnight.”

“No, no,” replied Belleville, “the prince will never hear of our fun.”

“And what is it for, if you please,” said O’Rourk; “are you in love with either of the young ladies? ’Tis a nice girl that young
thing is, the older one is sleepy-looking to my mind, what we call in the country I come from, a 'knock-softly'—a body that hasn't spirit enough to give a good thump to a door. And what sort of a sorry do you wish to give them? A hot supper and plenty of champagne?"

"Yes, if you please," said the Count, "and we can have music; I shall bring the guitar."

"I will sing myself, too," said O'Rourk; "there's not a man in Ireland can tune the Groves of Blarney like myself."

"You are to be the prince, my good fellow," said Belleville. "You give me permission to introduce my charming friends to you, and you must be dull and dignified; aristocracy is always so."

"Oh, then, won't I be a grand prince? and won't I make 'em all in love with me!"

"That's not at all necessary," said Belleville, who did not quite admire his colleague's
Hibernian display; and began to think that most Irish people recently imported would be the better for kicking traces in genteel society. "My good fellow, I advise you to be very solemn and reserved, just like a real Russian prince."

"He wants all the fun and credit for himself," thought O'Rourk; "but 'tis very much mistaken he is, if he fancies that I am going to give him a supper for nothing."

"These Mantonfords will never recognise me," said he, aloud; "I scarcely ever saw them."

"I daresay not," answered Belleville; "you took care, if possible, never to be at home, and left Madame de Belleville to the care of a laquais de place; still, Lady Mary is too sharp not to recognise you, if that Irish accent is very audible. But I have arranged our plan, and mean to inform her that you caught a bad cold travelling, and are hoarse and suffering from tooth-ache, so you need not speak above a whisper."
"Not a bit of it," said O'Rourk, looking very savage; "I am not going to be muzzled to please you, or any man alive."

"What harm will it do you," said Belleville, "to be quiet for a short time? You are not used to it, I know, but for once hold your tongue, to oblige me. I have just thought of a capital trick for deceiving the old lady: put half an apple into your cheek to make it look swelled."

"'Tis swallow it I would, and choke myself," said O'Rourk. "I may drink the champagne and other foreign liquors?" he added, with a smile.

"Not too much of that, either," said Belleville.

"Hang it!" roared O'Rourk, "what's the use of the party, then?"

"That's my concern," said Belleville. "Now if you dare to break out with your loud Irish voice, or take too great a part in the entertainment, you know the consequences."
O'Rourk was quite aware of what Belleville could do to injure him, therefore he only looked his anger—a modified way of expressing it very agreeable to the Frenchman, who had some experience of the muscular irascibility of the powerful Irishman.

All preliminaries being arranged agreeably, Lady Mary was informed by Belleville that his cousin, the Prince Dolgorozky, had begged him to invite her and the Miss Mantonfords to a supper at his house, the next night, after the opera, to which Belleville would attend them, as the prince placed a box at their disposal. Lady Mary was quite enchanted at this proposal, and accepted it gladly, with a pleasure much enhanced when the count accidentally hinted that the prince was anxious to marry an Englishwoman.

Great were the preparations made by Mr. O'Rourk for his grand party; all the chandeliers in an extensive suite of rooms were to be lighted, flowers placed in the
jardinières, while the cook had orders to prepare a delicate repast, to be preceded by sugared delicacies and fragrant ices. The host, being an Irishman, did not attach great importance to eatables, which Englishmen consider the chief element in every pleasure; for he naturally preferred drinking to any other amusement, and ever kept his Hibernian confidence up to the national exuberance by frequent libations.

O'Rourk had lately tried to conceal his brogue by an affected foreign pronunciation, which he practised all day in order to enact Prince Dolgorozky's Russian accent; he muttered incessantly while Belleville escorted the ladies to the opera—O'Rourk not daring to occupy his master's box there.

When the Lady Mary and her daughters arrived to supper, O'Rourk was splendidly attired in somewhat gaudy apparel, with a profusion of mock jewellery. He received them most graciously with low flourishing
bows in the Regency style—that elaborate manner which is now dead and buried, or only practised by old men of sixty, antiquarians of grace. It was admirably displayed by Mr. O'Rourk, who inherited a deceased dancing-master’s attitudes; his feet well turned out, his legs making extensive circular movements, and his whole attitude realizing Vestris’s advice to his pupils, male or female, “Manifestez la poitrine et dissimulez l’estomac, s’il vous plaît.”

A finishing step backwards, after a graceful movement, always rested O'Rourk on one leg, while the other was advanced on the foreground in the third position. Altogether he affected the pose of a dancer who, having made a successful pirouette, looks at the audience with an air which says, “What think you of that? match it if you can,” and then retreats to the back of the stage, exhibiting a seductive grin, while the expectant nymph, or shepherdess, or hamadryad his companion, flies forward at
a bound, with a shot of her right leg at the audience, which startles the uninitiated by the dislocations of her agility, and shocks the prudes with the volatility of her petticoats.

"I regret," said Belleville, gracefully, to Lady Mary on her arrival, "that his highness is unable to receive your ladyship as he could wish, for a very bad tooth-ache and pain in his face, caught on the journey from Poland, keep him in constant torture." Here O'Rourk made a grimace expressive of anguish, and held a flaring scarlet handkerchief to his jaw.

"I am very sorry," said Lady Mary, "that your highness should be so suffering, and that you did not postpone our visit, which must be very irksome to you."

"It will do him a great deal of good to see you," said Belleville, "and divert him from thinking of his pain."

"Some warm tisane is the best thing for
a cold like his highness's, and fomentation to the face, or perhaps a mustard-poultice," said Lady Mary. This was uttered with much apparent kindness, and O'Rourk smiled gratefully. "I have heard," continued Lady Mary, "that eau-de-Cologne, or even brandy held in the mouth, will relieve tooth-ache."

The latter remedy was very much to O'Rourk's taste, so, giving a nod to the attendant servant, a carafe of his favourite beverage, which he called liquid good-humour, was soon placed beside him, and the gulps with which he filled his mouth, when the company were not observing him, made but a short stay in that receptacle.

Lady Mary thought the prince coarse-looking and overdressed; but, in her English estimation, foreigners were emancipated from the laws of toilet or from any other paltry restrictions. Belleville did the honours most graciously, and rose immensely in
Lady Mary's opinion when she perceived how very much he was at home with the great Russian prince.

O'Rourk now spread out his portly presence on an ottoman, and coffee and tea, and ices, and cakes, and sweetmeats, and liqueurs, and lemonade and orgeat, kept pouring in, according to the most imperious orders of the Irish autocrat, who issued them repeatedly in a very loud, declamatory style, forgetful of the tooth-ache.

Then appeared a large bol de ponche, such as culminates the hospitality of Parisian soirées, but of a very different potency. Belleville was much annoyed when he saw O'Rourk pour out for himself tumbler after tumbler of this seductive mixture, and tried in vain to make him understand that it was a dangerous proceeding. To stop him from indulging further, the Count seized his guitar and began scratching the bolero with thumps and twangs that would have excited the risible propensities of Miss.
Rosalind, in less dignified company. Then he broke off into a sentimental ditty, with a great many ahas! and an accompaniment of grimace which he meant to express the despondency of Spanish passion.

This demonstration continued through seven verses, till O'Rourk, after sundry grunts and jerks, indicative of impatience at being placed in the background and playing second fiddle to so inferior an instrument, started up, and standing in the middle of the room, began to attitudinize and display his ample proportions, in movements like those of the acted ballets which he had seen in Italy. Belleville did not seem at all pleased with the performance.

Then appeared a tall, pallid young man in a very bright rose-coloured waistcoat, who was introduced to Lady Mary as Monsieur Auguste Baillet, and lost no time in commencing a wheezing performance on an asthmatic flute, to which he seemed very partial. She soon perceived that he was
tormented by the unfortunate passion for music which is so often unrequited. O'Rourk used to declare that young Baillet lived by suction, and inhaled his meals through that flute, as Americans imbibe sherry-cobbler through a less obnoxious tube.

The performance seemed interminable; O'Rourk made faces, and the ladies laughed, till Belleville silenced Baillet, by recommending him to practise for a little while downstairs; upon which the pink waistcoat vanished, while the garde de corps assured the company that, so engrossed was Baillet with his flute, that he wished to play incessantly, and would forget them and everything else, lost below stairs in the mazes of some musical labyrinth.

Mr. O'Rourk having proposed himself to sing, commenced at once "The Groves of Blarney," without words, in a voice that might be heard from the next street, using sentimental action to suit the sup-
pressed verses and emotions, and occasionally grasping at the place where his heart lay concealed, with an enormous hand, which he again waved in the air, to the unseen object of his musical adoration. A seductive smile and falsetto voice, in the tenderest parts, were, no doubt, irresistible to the invisible lady.

Supper announced, the prince shone forth in his glory, first priming himself with a tumbler of champagne. Delicacies abounded. The young ladies who ate so much at home, would scarcely taste anything now; while their mother, like all very thin people, found her appetite too urgent for genteel repression, and ate with the usual courage and enjoyment of a living skeleton.

Lady Mary, who, that morning, when boasting of an invitation to the Prince Dolgorozky had learnt that his sister was a Duchess de Clermont, whom she knew in Italy, began an interesting conversation
by saying—"Prince, I find that a charming sister of yours is an old acquaintance, and that she is coming shortly to Paris; I mean Madame de Clermont; when do you expect her?"

Not the least embarrassed, O'Rourk answered—"Next week, my lady."

"She is a charming woman," said Lady Mary.

"Delightful," ejaculated O'Rourk.

"Is her health better? The air of Poland did not agree with her when she took possession of that estate which your uncle left her; 'tis a dreadful climate."

"So it is," said O'Rourk; "the heat is excruciating. I was always very warm there, saving your presence."

"I never heard it accused of that quality," said Lady Mary, smiling.

Belleville's threatening looks were of no avail.

"Were you ever in them parts?" said O'Rourk.
"Never," answered Lady Mary.

"Then don't mind what the people say about them, for 'tis all humbug. I went ambassador there last year, and got the yellow fever from the heat."

"You don't say so," said Lady Mary, very much astonished.

Belleville fidgeted and threw angry glances at his coadjutor, who, swallowing another tumbler of champagne, seemed now determined to defy all control.

"How well you speak English, prince," said Rosalind; "quite like a native."

Belleville now perceived that O'Rourk, forgetting the prescribed silence, was relapsing into his native brogue, through the effects of that notorious blab, wine, and therefore prepared for the display by saying, "His highness has a little Irish accent, miladi; his nurse was a Hibernian."

"That's true for you," said O'Rourk, tenderly; "rest her soul, she's dead these thirty years."
Lady Mary, who, in the morning, had heard that the Prince Dolgorozky was a very young man, attributing to the rigour of his native climate the aged appearance of Mr. O’Rourk, now stared incredulously, and said—“You joke, prince, for I know that you are only thirty.”

This mistake was so flattering, that O’Rourk smiled pleasantly, and drank more champagne.

“Your mother was a Frenchwoman, I believe,” said Lady Mary.

“Not that I know of,” answered O’Rourk; “to be sure I had one, of some sort or another; everyone must have been blessed with a mother, I suppose.”

O’Rourk’s father had been transported years before.

“My father went off into foreign parts, long ago,” said he; “sent by Government.”

“So I heard,” answered Lady Mary, remembering some Prince Dolgorozky, who had acted ambassador in England.
“And who told you that?” said O’Rourk, quite off his guard; “is it that rascal over there? If you ever said a word against me, you sneaking mountebank of a Frenchman, I’ll break every bone in your body!”

Belleville, now exceedingly embarrassed, and not knowing what would come next, proposed that the ladies should adjourn to the drawing-room. O’Rourk jumped up.

“No, faith, ladies,” said he, “you shall see me dance a jig first;” and capering round the table with a poker in his hand to represent a shillelah, he bounded and jumped, and pranced and yelled, like the people of his nation in their hilarious moods, till he looked more like a savage than a Russian prince, or even an Irish butler.

Belleville now attempted to hand the ladies into the drawing-room, but O’Rourk immediately intercepted them with the double shuffle, and when Belleville endeavoured to push him aside, the Irishman, with powerful dexterity, seated the thin, tall,
fragile Frenchman, to his great astonishment, on the floor.

Gaul could not stand another Waterloo, so the count, picking himself up, sprang like a cat upon his assailant, when, fearing a further display of muscular action, the Mantonfords escaped into the drawing-room. There, to their surprise, stood a gentleman-like looking young man, seeming exceedingly amazed at the uproar and at the terrified appearance of the scared ladies.

"For Heaven's sake, sir," said they all at once, "save the Prince Dolgorozky from a French maniac, who is murdering him in the dining-room. Run, run—pray hasten to save his highness, or you'll be too late."

The young man hurried into the dining-room, where he saw O'Rourk standing triumphantly over Belleville, who, seated upon the ground, looked up anxiously at the poker, which his wild conqueror was brandishing above him.

"What is all this?" said the young man
who had just appeared: "I desire that you'll put down that poker and tell me what you mean. Put it down, I say, sir."

O'Rourk, whose blood had become princely from the effects of the champagne, and who was delighted to have another antagonist on whom to expend his effervescent wrath, feeling that his powers were thrown away on the fragile Frenchman, seized the newcomer between his finger and thumb, and seated him on the ground beside the discomfited Frenchman.

"That's what it is to meddle in business that does not belong to you," roared O'Rourk, performing a war-dance, and whooping an Irish war-cry as he capered in circles round the recumbent foe, who dared not move, while he beat the air above them with the poker, which now hit the chandelier, throwing down the lights; and suggesting a new idea to the Celt, for with the same instrument he immediately knocked over all the candles within reach.

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The young man, escaping to the drawing-room, found Miss Mantonford in a dead faint, supported by her mother and sister, both calling lustily for help. This soon came; two footmen appeared, bearing travelling equipments, and looking even more bewildered than their master at the strange scene before them.

Miss Mantonford, much pleased with the sensation she was making, began a fit of hysterics, with kickings and shriekings, so that the male combatants, tired of their prolonged struggle—for O'Rourke had resisted all Belleville's efforts to stand erect—rushed out of the dining-room to ascertain the cause of this new commotion.

The young man bent over the fainting lady, handing a bottle of eau-de-Cologne towards Lady Mary; when O'Rourke, jerking it out of his hand, and the contents into Lady Mary's eyes, asked him with a fierce brogue what he meant by interfering with these ladies, who, being unprotected females
in distress, he intended to defend with the last drop of his blood.

"Get out of the house, you sneak," said he.

"Oh, prince, pray calm yourself," cried Rosalind, addressing O'Rourk; "we thought that this gentleman was a friend of yours."

"A friend of mine, indeed! hang the pale-faced snob," vociferated O'Rourk; while Lady Mary, with her shut and smarting eyes, in a very decided manner, commanded the youth not to interfere with her daughter, and to obey the prince's orders, and leave the house immediately.

"What do you want here, my good man?" said she, disdainfully; "who are you?"

"I am the Prince of Dolgorozky," replied the youth with an air disagreeably convincing to Belleville, who, hiding a damaged face, made the best of his way out of the room, finding at the front door the prince's carriage, which had followed
him when he walked to his hotel, in order to surprise the new intendant, of whose pranks he had lately been informed.

"You are not the prince," said O'Rourk; "what imposition are you trying to practise upon people of our rank?"

Here he became very violent, and when the porter and the prince's servants came to the rescue, he was with great difficulty dragged out of the room, still anxious to fight with anyone.

Of course the prince supposed that Lady Mary and her daughters were suitable companions for O'Rourk, so he desired them very cavalierly, as soon as Mirabel was quiet, to retire. Lady Mary looked round for Belleville to explain the whole affair to her, for she still did not understand the position of her late host.

When, at last, the truth broke upon her, and when she learnt how the vile O'Rourk had deceived them, her rage knew no bounds. The prince believed it to be assumed, and
that the assertion of her social position was a pure invention.

Discomfited and humbled, the three ladies descended the stairs, hurrying to their carriage, when they heard the eternal flute, struggling with some obstinate arpeggios in a room opening to the hall. Lady Mary, relying on the musical sympathy of the gentle Baillet, knocked at the door, from which he soon emerged, flute in hand.

"We have been insulted, sir," she said, "and look to you for protection."

Baillet, who mostly wanted protection himself, much perplexed, made no reply.

"They have insulted you, too," continued Lady Mary, "by sending you out of the room, and laughing at your music. If I were you, I would not stand such treatment, but call Belleville out; he at least is a gentleman."

Baillet turned very red at this advice, and showed Lady Mary that he was equal to bear any given insult.
While Baillet was looking for his courage, the servants announced the arrival of a hackney-coach, into which they bundled Lady Mary and her daughters, while they considered this ejectment as the most amusing part of the night's entertainment. Baillet, quite bewildered, was pushed in after the ladies, who, on alighting, left him in the coach without a hat, but firmly clutching the flute, which he probably played during his drive home.

For some days Lady Mary did not recover from this adventure; but her self-love being very elastic, soon resumed its usual status, when she visited Miss Somerton and talked of Parisian news as coolly as if she had not just supplied the most amusing incident which it recorded.

Auguste Baillet called on the Mantonfords in a few days, and was tolerably well received, for Lady Mary had heard that he was a young man of property, anxious to be married.
Their recent adventure was not mentioned by any of the party, and Auguste required Miss Rosalind's assistance to help him in his conversation, which was rather laboured. He knew Castelle, and could not find words to express his great admiration of the chemist's merits.

"He is a wonderful man," said Baillet, "and I was glad lately to renew the acquaintance of our school-days."

"Does he mesmerize you?" said Lady Mary, who was not a victim to Castelle's charms.

"He did once," replied Baillet, "and I never played the flute so well as immediately afterwards."

"I daresay," said Rosalind, "the mesmeric fluid would make your tones flow smoothly liquid."

"I never thought of that," exclaimed Baillet, very much animated; "no doubt it would give great effect to my accompaniment of Beethoven's rivière, in the Pastoral
symphony. Do you know it, my lady?" and Auguste, pulling his flute out of his pocket, began screwing it together, till he was told that urgent business obliged the ladies to go out.

"I will bring it to-morrow," he said, "with some variations of my own composition, which I mean to dedicate to Castelle."
CHAPTER V.

"Oh, sacred sorrow! by whom souls are tried,
Sent not to punish mortals, but to guide;
If thou art mine (and who shall proudly dare
To tell his Maker he has had a share!)
Still let me feel for what thy pangs are sent,
And be my guide, and not my punishment!"

At the expiration of a week after having read the terrible letter, Vivian departed for his seat in Cornwall, accompanied by Castelle, from whom he could not bear to be a moment separated. He declined seeing any of his friends in Paris, but sent them kind messages by Madame D'Albremont, acknowledging their sympathy, the expression of which had been equally transmitted through her.

Most of them heard of Clelia's death with intense sorrow: Agnes's, proportioned to the
warm affection which she felt for this dear friend; Leonora's, aggravated by other feelings, that she dared scarcely avow to herself. Of these saying but little, she still wept in silence at the sad fate of the beautiful girl who, but a year before, had revived the fierce passion of jealousy in her heart, which heretofore so often embittered all intercourse with Castelle.

After her nocturnal visit to his house, the old tenderness gave way for a time to other impressions of a very different character; and now, since Clelia's death, she dreaded the chemist's presence as much as she had heretofore desired it. Even when he was kindest to her cousin, she felt an apprehension in his company, which sometimes amounted to panic. With the superstitious feelings that he had fostered, she ascribed to him the supernatural powers of the Prince of Evil, and, although not daring to dwell long on the circumstances which suggested the conviction, she watched him
incessantly, and resolved, if possible, to counteract the mischief he might be even now premeditating.

That Clelia's death should have been immediately accelerated by the mysterious accident to which it was ascribed, relieved her in some measure from compunction that her interference had not been more prompt. Still it was in vain that she tried to divert her mind from self-reproach, by helping her cousin in the mechanical parts of his pictures, when he had lately been successful in producing some inimitable works, by which to improve the finances of his beloved relations.

These successes enabled him, in the hope of restoring Villabella's health, to engage lodgings near Fontainebleau, and thither Leonora had proceeded with her father, just before Clelia's death. After remaining a fortnight in seclusion, they returned again to Paris.

Ashworth, whose admiration of Leonora
was always very gallantly expressed, and whose grief at the loss of Clelia did not long depress him, soon called on the Villabellas, and gave them his own version of the late melancholy event. "Some miscreant," he said, "started up suddenly before the window—some loathsome beggar, who had before threatened her, and at this second appearance inspired her with such terror, that in her debilitated condition she had fallen into a syncope, from which revival was impossible." This was a story generally believed, and rumour enhanced it with the numerous variations with which it amplifies the fables of public gossip. Annesley, recently arrived at Paris from Passy, was of course favoured with these details, which surprised and shocked him, on Agnes's account.

All his efforts to discover any traces of Marie were still ineffectual, and, in reply to his last letter, Captain Benson wrote a very cavalier answer from India, again assuring
him that the clergyman who had officiated at Nevres was dead, that he had known him as Cecil Howard—a name which he now believed to have been assumed; for his conduct was such as to justify a suspicion that it had been the cause of a long residence abroad, voluntary or involuntary. Such an apprehension was further justified by the absence of any name like his from the Clergy List of the time.

Vainly did Ashworth try to persuade Agnes that she was free to select whom she chose for a future husband, while she assured him that experience had taught her how agreeably independent is a single life, and that she would not now, even if released from her engagement, change it for the cares of wifehood. Her advocacy of the latter condition, when listening to Miss Williams's invectives against matrimony, must have been suggested by the spirit of feminine contradiction. What did she really think? Perhaps, like more of her
sex, feelings prompted opinions; interest dictates them to the stronger division of humanity; egotism is a permanent quality, essentially masculine; sentiment a varying one, inherently feminine.

Annesley did not soon recover from Castelle's medical treatment; but his sufferings, no longer local, now arose from general weakness, which, the Paris doctor assured him, was occasioned by the confinement necessary to recover from his accident. Still unpleasant symptoms sorely troubled him, for which he could detect no possible cause; there was a numbness in one side that gave him much uneasiness, and a difficulty of walking which increased the constitutional debility. Sir Harry had taken him to see Leonora's and Ernest's paintings, not without a hope that the beautiful artist might captivate and divert him from his other pursuits. He was now rich, and did not want to marry for money, or perhaps Sir Harry thought that Leonora
might be accessible to proposals for a less permanent engagement, for, like all weak bad men, he entertained a mean opinion of female virtue. Lady readers, always estimate a man's character by his respect for your sex. A noble heart will appreciate your unselfishness, a superior intellect will prize your ready penetration and intuitive tact.

It was no wonder that such an ordinary worldling as Sir Harry should class Leonora with the women of whom he saw most; for of course men model their opinions of the sex upon the specimens with which they are best acquainted.

During the interview between Leonora and Annesley, she recommended him to rusticate for some weeks at the Maison de Santé, near Fontainebleau; he was not previously aware that such an asylum afforded a pretext for passing some time in Agnes's neighbourhood, and gladly accepted Leonora's welcome advice to instal himself in
the vicinity of Clairville immediately. Should he ever see Agnes? might he even venture to watch her, as she passed before the house, near which he heard that she always drove? Their proximity brought about strange events.

Annesley had not been long settled in his rural lodgings, when an unexpected arrival of three ladies from Paris startled the establishment from its propriety. One of them, he heard, had long light dancing ringlets, that jumped up and down on her cheeks, and ran over her chest like creepers with very irritating restlessness; the other, trained her dark hair into perpendicular rolls, that stood at each side of her forehead in regular mathematical proportions, according to the fashion of the day. The eldest of the trio looked old and tired, her complexion, eyes, and hair being of one pale drab colour. Poor thing! it was no wonder that she should seem worn out, subjected as she was to the perpetual
attrition of daughters like Mirabel and Rosalind Mantonford.

Lady Mary and her companions were objects of ridicule to many, and of commiseration to a few in Paris, after the affair at Prince Dolgorozky's, and since then Rosalind's laugh grew fainter, and Mirabel languished more listlessly. As for Lady Mary, she possessed that inherent power of self-reliance which seems to reject sympathy, repel friendly advances, negative the unpleasant, and sit itself down upon its own pedestal of bronze, placed upon a rock of adamant.

Morally she might defy all aggression, but physically nature was too much for her, so she even found herself obliged to yield to that imperious goddess who commanded her ladyship's digestion to stand still, her nerves to work instead, and her muscles to subside into flabby disability.

In this dilemma, the Maison de Santé was accidentally mentioned before her; it was
cheap, it was not far from Paris, and it was close to Miss Somerton. Preliminaries arranged, the three ladies proceeded to take possession of apartments there.

Do not imagine that Lady Mary Mantonford meant to herd with the motley rabble who frequented this rural establishment. Oh, no; noble humanity would not stoop to associate with plebeian humanity; they were differently constituted; there was a registered patent for the one, while the other might be fabricated anywhere of the usual common material. It was therefore arranged that the Lady Mary and her daughters should breakfast and dine with each other, and all three would sit alone in their glory, in a very cheap small room, upon the ground-floor.

They had not been long at this country place before the ladies espied in the garden a very handsome young man walking with crutches, and all three admired his appearance, but classed him with the other male
bipeds of the place, whose acquaintance they carefully eschewed. "He is probably some counter-jumper from London," said Rosalind, "and perhaps maimed by the business." While he took off his hat as the ladies passed him, they turned their eyes away, and never acknowledged the civility.

One day, not long after their arrival, a young relation came from Paris to see them, who, on perceiving Annesley pass the window, exclaimed, "Good gracious, Lady Mary, you never mentioned in your letter that Mr. Danvers, whom I see there, was an inmate of your house; don't you know him?"

"No," said Lady Mary, "I never saw the man before, and fancied that he was one of the many adventurers who flock to Paris for concealment or gain. Who is he?"

"Lord Courtville's son," said the youth; "the family name is Annesley, as you know, for they actually are relations of yours. A very rich cousin died only six weeks since,
leaving this man an immense property, and requiring that he should take the name of Danvers, which he has just assumed."

"There now, mamma," said Miss Rosa, "I always told you that I saw something distinguished in that man's air, and you laughed at my bad taste for admiring such a fellow."

"Can you introduce us, Henry?" said Lady Mary. "I dare not present myself; but it will be pleasant to know a countryman living so near us."

"The very contrary reason did you give me for avoiding him yesterday," said pert Miss Rosalind.

The young cousin did not know Danvers, so Lady Mary was obliged to write to a friend in England, who was also connected with the Annesleys, and had not quarrelled with them, for a letter of introduction. In the meantime, Danvers felt much surprised at the change in Lady Mary's manner, for she smiled graciously when he passed, and
hearing that he was one day confined to his room, actually sent to inquire after his health.

Never was there a more repentant sinner than this poor invalid, or one who made a better use of an unexpected inheritance. He, of course, had compromised with his creditors at the time of his release by Mr. Simpson; but lately he indemnified them to the uttermost farthing, and even advanced money to some worthy tradesmen who did not press him in his difficulties, and now were in want of capital. On those of his sisters who had married poorly, he settled annuities, and paid the debts of a younger brother. In fact, his charities and bounties were the admiration of all whose connexion with the family gave them an opportunity of knowing how admirably he applied a very considerable income.

The letter arrived, the acquaintance announced, Lady Mary introduced herself to
her relative, Danvers, who now became the object of her schemes and hopes. The young ladies, primed for conquest, laid siege to his heart, one trying to undermine it by insinuating devotion, the other attacking it by assault, firing brilliant glances at it, sending off rockets of wit at it, prepared at the favourable moment, when the breach was made, to personate herself the forlorn hope that was to conquer or die.

Poor Danvers began to feel that riches had to pay many penalties for the advantages which they secured. One of them he found very irksome now, when quiet was desirable, and when his thoughts were incessantly occupied by the possibility of a reconciliation with Agnes.

The Mantonfords went frequently to dine with her, and once she called on them; but never did they name the handsome neighbour, who was so much the object of their assiduities.

Miss Somerton, as a rival, they always
dreaded, imagining that her fortune would assuredly prove an attraction superior to their less weighty merits. They therefore determined on keeping Mr. Danvers entirely to themselves, although he was always questioning them about the inhabitants of Clairville.

One day, Mirabel felt confident that he preferred her; another, Rosalind declared that he had implied an attachment to her in some speech which the poor man never meant to have that import. Once he admired a clear blue sky, and Mirabel felt assured that he meant to compliment the tint of her eyes. At another time, when he noticed the bloom on a peach, Rosalind assumed that he was thinking of the down upon her own cheek.

Lady Mary watched anxiously for his selection. As soon as it was at all apparent, the happy favourite was to alter her tactics, and Lady Mary, as commander-in-chief of the attack, would summon the fortress to
surrender at discretion. Did he hesitate, the young lady should be invalided, and then pine and sicken, when a fashionable doctor would declare her life to be imperilled by that complaint so dangerous to young gentlemen of fortune when it attacks sentimental young ladies under such circumstances—blighted affections.

Danvers himself now required the physician's care, for he grew daily worse, and at last was entirely confined to the sofa. The medical man who attended Mrs. Jones visited the Maison de Santé, and was soon summoned to see Edward, who captivated him most expeditiously, for at his next interview with Agnes, the doctor expatiated in glowing terms on the agreeable conversation and manner of this new patient, Mr. Danvers; and, as Annesley's change of name was but recently announced, Agnes had never heard of it, and little thought that the amiable and accomplished invalid was her old adorer and temporary husband.
Every day she questioned the doctor about the charming young Englishman's progress, and every day heard that he grew worse. She was in the habit of sending little delicacies to the sick inmates of the Maison de Santé, and now Danvers became the recipient of the best fruits that the garden of Clairville supplied. How delicious was the flavour of those peaches which she had placed so tastefully around a bunch of luscious grapes! How sweet were the flowers with which she had covered them! Then the doctor brought English magazines; and when Danvers saw her name, written by herself, upon the covers, how his poor heart throbbed and bounded with emotion! Remember, good reader, that he was now enfeebled by illness, and nervously susceptible to all tender impressions.

Agnes little knew how her gifts were appreciated, and how eagerly Danvers listened to the doctor's encomiums of Miss
Somerton. To her he was equally communicative, extolling not only Danvers's manner and conversation, but equally commending his pious resignation and patience under severe sufferings. He had heard much, too, of the poor invalid's bounties and charities, and his liberality he could personally attest.

"Your friend is such a paragon," said Miss Somerton, "that I shall be most anxious to see him, when he is well enough to accompany you here. It is a pity that we did not know him before this illness, for I might then have gone with you occasionally to visit him."

"He has female society already," said the doctor; "and Lady Mary Mantonford's eldest daughter seems to take charge of him so openly, that I think there must be some understanding that she has a right to nurse him."

"How odd it is," said Agnes, "that the Mantonfords never mentioned him to me
till you did; and yet their intimacy cannot be very recent!"

"You are too open and single-minded to understand manoeuvring mothers," said the doctor; "of course they feared that your superior attractions might divert Mr. Danvers from his present favourite, the languid Mirabel."

"I suppose that she is the passive recipient of them," said Agnes, "for I cannot fancy her active enough to make any advance."

"She smiles and casts loving glances on him, and then she dresses at him."

"Of course she does," said Miss Williams, who had come into the room, five minutes before, in the old loose cover of grey linen; "most women dress for some man or other. I would see them far enough before I condescended to deck myself out to please any one of them."

"But, my dear lady," said the doctor, "you dress to please yourself; a natural
instinct of the sex leads you to like finery."

"I hate it," said Miss Williams; "why do we not leave it off, as you did, when you exchanged silk and velvet, and ribbon and lace, for broadcloth; sewed your legs up into two bags, tacked a tail to your back, and put a chimney-pot upon your head?"

"We made a good exchange," said the doctor; "in these active times, what could a fellow do in petticoats, or with three yards of lace hanging about his hands, and a curled horse's mane pendent from his head, dredged with flour?"

"So you have a fine young man shut up with you, and never mentioned him to us!" said Miss Williams, the next day, to Lady Mary.

That matron, as we know, particularly disliked the candid spinster, and declared that she was intolerably vulgar. "How is he this morning, Miss Rosalind?" continued Miss Williams, sneeringly.
"I really don't know," replied Miss Mantonford; "he is always shut into his room."

"But you are a good deal with him there," persisted Miss Williams; "the rest of the party does not please you."

"No, indeed," said Rosalind, "they are vulgar, common sort of people; I never saw such an extraordinary collection of human specimens. We have an old woman, whose head shakes like a mandarin. There is an officer with St. Vitus' dance, jumping about like a grasshopper, and making faces at a deaf man who cannot be made to understand that they are not intended for him. Then comes a woman with a baby who never sleeps, but roars instead all night, while its three brothers are always riding races down the balusters, or tumbling together in an avalanche from the top of the stairs on some part of somebody, and frightening an hysterical lady into "fits and starts," and she shrieks, and kicks, and bites, till the rest of
the party think that she has the hydrophobia, and run away whenever she appears. Oh! I forget the semi-lunatic at the top of the house, who fancies himself a cock, and awakens us all at day-break, by crowing incessantly till it is quite light, when he is accompanied in the distance from the third floor by the French horn of an invalid amateur with but one lung. This poor weakly creature is blowing himself away into the other world with windy adagios, which he exhales all day, in plaintive gusts, a series of sighs dedicated, I believe, to Mirabel."

"How ill-natured you are, Rosalind!" murmured Mirabel; "but don't forget Snooks."

"To be sure I shan't," said Rosalind; "he is a dreadful man-somnambulist, who walks into our rooms about midnight, just before the cock begins to crow, and stands at our bed-sides in his night-dress, holding a candle, and muttering prayers in some
unknown tongue. I believe that he was originally a Turk, or a Hindoo, and has come to England as an expensive sample of missionary enterprise."

"You seem to have a nice party," said Agnes.

"And they all fight from morning till night," said Rosalind. "The cock nearly killed the somnambulist last week, and St. Vitus jumped against a rheumatic old lady and threw her down, upon which her husband, a dyspeptic Hercules, gave the shaky poor man a tremendous beating."

Danvers progressed slowly, but could not yet leave his sofa. There Miss Mantonfords sat beside him, very laconic in their reports of Agnes; indeed, Lady Mary tried to disparage her, and thus to counteract the encomiums of the good doctor, which she feared might induce Mr. Danvers to seek an acquaintance that perhaps would be detrimental to her daughters' prospects. Lady Mary assured Danvers that Agnes
must be a nobody, that the doctor was no judge of manners, and, for her part, she did not admire Miss Somerton. Danvers heard all these criticisms with much amusement, and Lady Mary little thought that her companion knew so much more of Agnes than she did.

Sir Harry, with great annoyance, soon heard of Danvers's stay at the Maison de Santé, and he arrived there one morning with the pretense of inquiring for his friend, but in reality to ascertain if there was any likelihood of a meeting being promoted by Danvers's vicinity to his momentary bride.

Sir Harry was delighted to find that Mrs. Jones's very serious illness entirely engrossed her niece, so that the probability of her coming again to the Maison de Santé now, to visit the Mantonfords, need not disturb him.

"Well," said he to Danvers, when they
SHATTERED IDOLS.

were alone, "what progress have you made with the charming Agnes?"

"None," replied Danvers. "She does not know that I am here. As Mr. Danvers, she inquires for me, and sends me fruit, but little suspects who he is."

"To be sure," said Sir Harry, "I never heard till yesterday that you were rechristened. You have not, however, taken a name for nothing. Do you mean to present yourself at Clairville?"

"Certainly not," replied Danvers.

His momentary appearance at the villa, which caused such fatal consequences, he had never mentioned to any one. On that occasion he distinguished nothing in the house, and never connected the story of the beggar with his visit, which was a most rapid one, to the garden, from whence he looked into Clelia's room, in which, being very near-sighted, he never perceived that miserable little group occupying one end of it. He had driven to

vol. III.
the villa to look at a place which Agnes so often visited, not daring to approach Clairville.

"I am not likely to see any of my neighbours," said Edward, "for, if the doctor permits me, I shall leave this place next week."

Sir Harry was well pleased to hear the announcement.

"Do you receive more satisfactory accounts from the lawyer?" said he.

"Quite the reverse," answered Danvers, "things seem more complicated every day. Mine is a strange position."

"A very strange one indeed, my good friend," said Sir Harry; "it would supply the plot for a novel. You are a widower with two wives alive, and now Miss Mirabel Mantonford is trying to induce you to commit bigamy a second time."

"It is no laughing matter to me," said Danvers; "I would give half that I possess to learn what the lawyers are trying to
discover. However culpably heretofore I may have acted, my repentance has equalled my crime, and I am still ready to make every reparation in my power, any sacrifice of my own property or happiness, to atone, if possible, in part, for my past villany."

"What a husband you will make to either Mrs. Danvers!" said Sir Harry; "a reformed rake, they say, is the most docile Benedict. Should you discover this foreign princess, who, I believe, is the sleeping beauty in the wood, recommend me, *en secondes noces*, to the fair Agnes. That rascal Castelle is out of the way just now; how I hate the fellow!"

"He was very kind to me at Lieusford," said Danvers, "but he certainly misunderstood my case, and would have killed me, if I had not decamped in time."

"I don't know what to think of him," said Sir Harry. "Leonora turns pale, shakes her head when I speak of him, and changes the subject; Charles Breton and
Ernest d'Arval are equally unwilling to discuss him; and he seems to have bewitched Miss Somerton, my poor niece, and Vivian, at Clairville. The only one of the party insensible to his spells there was Clelia's maid, Louise, who cannot conceal her dislike to the clever scoundrel."

"You are severe," said Danvers; "the man is less of an impostor than a visionary believing in some occult powers of nature which it is his mission to reveal with results that will benefit mankind to the end of time."

"Perhaps he may remodel creation," replied Sir Harry; "make it up according to a fresh pattern, and take out a patent for the invention."
CHAPTER VI.

"And now I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick-conceiving discontent,
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous."

The next day Danvers heard that Mrs. Jones was better, and the doctor brought him flowers from Agnes, and with them an album of hers, in which was a landscape that he wished Danvers to see; he was, indeed, to copy it, by the owner's permission.

The doctor departed, after showing it to him, and Danvers turned over the leaves of the album, amusing himself with its contents. What does he see? Can it be possible, or do his eyes deceive him?

There—there is a portrait of the long-lost Marie! He gazed on it with astonish-
ment: he looked at it again and again; there were the large child-like blue eyes; the golden hair, with its silvery ripples; there was the delicately-cut mouth, with its sweet expression and dimpled corners; there was the peculiar tint throughout, which a skilled artist must have copied: "C. B." and the date of the previous year were subjoined.

Danvers looked in vain for any other name; but what is this in the next page but one?—another portrait of the same head, alike, but oh, how different! The eye half closed, the colour faded, the lips attenuated, and a little cap replacing the glorious golden hair. Can this, too, be Marie? The signature is still "C. B.," dated only a month since. How came these portraits in Agnes’s book? Who could tell him now? He was too much perplexed to ask the question, had any one been near to answer.

Lady Mary just called to wish him good night. He pushed the album under the sofa as she entered, and listened to her
gossip with an abstracted manner, which she described to her daughters as a symptom of his diffidence in broaching that avowal which they expected every day to hear. Danvers did not sleep all night, and when the doctor came next morning, he found his patient excited and feverish! for the interval since his visit had been spent in conjectures and apprehensions, which aggravated the remorse that ever distracted him.

"Whose portrait is this?" said he, with a trembling voice and eager eyes, to the doctor—"whose portrait is this?"

"That is the likeness of Mrs. Vivian, who, you know, died lately at a villa near Fontainebleau."

"Mrs. Vivian!" said Danvers, slowly; "and what was her name before she married?"

"D’Albremont," said the doctor.

"This is Madlle. D’Albremont, then, Ashworth’s niece?" said Danvers, doubtfully.
"Exactly. She was a most beautiful creature, as you see by this drawing; and here she is represented again, in a sketch executed the very day of her death."

"How strange!" said Danvers; "and what was her Christian name?"

"Clelia. Did you look at the drawings in the other book?" said the doctor.

"No," answered Danvers; "I only saw these after you went."

"Well," said Dr. Courbonne "you will find there two sketches of hers, with her signature, which, I remember well, is Clelia;" and he opened the larger album, and showed Danvers the name in a hand too well remembered, for three or four little notes had been dropped over the convent-wall before that last, in which she bade him adieu for ever; and these were still treasured as records of happy hours amongst his other relics of past times.

"This is most extraordinary," said Danvers. "To you, doctor, who are the
depositary of secrets that are never to be revealed, I may express my astonishment at seeing these drawings here. They may, however, have been the likenesses of some one resembling the person to whom I allude,” he added, musingly; “but here is her writing—her signature of a name which I know belonged to the niece of a friend of mine, and which was not hers! How can all this be accounted for?”

Danvers now checked himself, feeling that it was his duty to withhold the circumstance of his acquaintance with Marie from the doctor. His lips were sealed by delicacy; and yet how could he learn more, without entering into particulars with those who could give him the information for which he pined? Debilitated as he was, the emotion occasioned by the sight of Clelia’s portrait, and the perplexity which followed, were most prejudicial to his recovery, and for several days he suffered so severely, that the doctor would not permit
any conversation that might further agitate him. When recovered from this nervous commotion, he again questioned Dr. Courbonne on the all-absorbing subject; and heard how that gentleman had mentioned to Miss Somerton his perplexity about Mrs. Vivian's likeness, and how much it had agitated him. With her usual kindness, Agnes offered to accompany the doctor next day to communicate any information that might set his patient's mind at rest respecting a matter which engrossed him so prejudicially.

Next day Danvers rose earlier than usual, and was placed on his sofa, attired in his most becoming silk dressing-gown by a French valet, who knew that a handsome lady visitor was expected. Danvers awaited her with great impatience, till at last a carriage drove to the door, a light step accompanied the doctor's heavy tread along the passage, the door opened, and Agnes saw in the invalid Danvers her old friend,
Edward Annesley. There was no retreating. Danvers, pallid and helpless, cast an imploring look at her as she stood undecided at the door.

"Have pity upon me, Miss Somerton," he said, holding out his hand to her; "you are too good not to forgive a repentant sinner."

The doctor's astonished look warned them to check any further evidence of an earlier acquaintance. She sat down beside Edward, and the good physician, guessing that a stranger should not hear the questions which Danvers wished to ask, and seeing, too, that there must have been a previous acquaintance between his companions, which had been kept secret from him, pretexted another visit in the house, and left the room as soon as Agnes was seated. You may guess that she felt confused, and that Danvers's embarrassment was not likely to reassure her; they sat awkwardly silent for some time.

At last, the album recalled Danvers to
himself, and he began to make the same inquiries as those to which the doctor could give no satisfactory answers; now, of course, as before, avoiding the circumstances which would have rendered his queries more explicit. Agnes, still stupefied by surprise, gave, at first, short and incoherent answers; but, warmed with the subject of Clelia's excellence and beauty, she described her unvarying goodness, her childlike tenderness, and confiding reliance on those she loved; her patient endurance of a painful illness; and then she told him how the shadow of death seemed to have clouded her life; how some secret dread, some superstitious terror, ever checked the joyousness that belonged to youth, which but rarely sparkled through the gloom, darkening her young existence.

To all this he listened attentively, while Agnes, receiving a new impression from his manner, attended more eagerly to his questions, and appeared to search her own
memory for forgotten facts, connected with poor Clelia.

At last, drying her tearful eyes, and again accepting the hand which Danvers held out to her, they parted with different impressions. Agnes was convinced that he suspected Clelia to be the partner of his early folly, but felt certain that they had never met. Edward decided that some mystery concealed this poor girl's participation in an incident which was unknown to her best friends; but attested to his senses by the portraits and the writing, that were incontrovertible evidences of her identification with Marie St. Augustin.

Agnes returned home, greatly impressed with the change in Danvers's manner and appearance. He had said much that implied self-reproach and repentance; he had spoken humbly of himself, and addressed her with such tenderness, that the kindliness of her nature was awakened, and she thought of the pious, gentle invalid with
very different feelings from those which had recalled the dashing Annesley.

Miss Williams heard with the utmost surprise of Danvers's vicinity, and, on learning all particulars of the interview, she said, "How you are imposed on, Agnes! of course Annesley or Danvers came here on purpose to meet you. All that nonsense about Clelia's picture is humbug; a pretty plot, got up to entrap you into revived affection for this charming invalid. I don't believe a word of his story about Clelia."

"Could you see him as I did," said Agnes, "he would appear to you dying; there never was any one so altered."

"All put on," said Miss Williams; "you are really too simple, Agnes. But with all his cleverness he will not take you in, if I can help it. You cannot visit him again under the circumstances; it would be most indelicate to associate with a man who, I daresay, would persuade the world that he is your husband."
Agnes looked distressed. "May I not go to him, ill and helpless as he is? Will it not be cruel to desert one now, to whom I was once sacredly plighted?"

"My dear Agnes," said Miss Williams, "you will drive me mad with your strange ideas about that ceremony which was all a sham, for the man has a wife somewhere. Don't let us talk any more of it now; remember, as your oldest friend, I advise you not to see Danvers, if that is his new name, till something final is ascertained about the first marriage."

"It will never be cleared up," sighed Agnes, as she retired to her room, to think of the lonely Edward.

After his interview with Agnes, Danvers sent off to Paris for the lawyer, by whom he had hitherto been counselled, and to him he detailed the occurrences described in the preceding chapter. The identification of Marie St. Clair with Clelia D'Albremont was to be sought for directly;
and the best means of doing so were debated by the attorney and Danvers. He felt averse to any queries that might distress Madame D’Albremont, by implying suspicions derogatory to her daughter; and yet to whom could they apply for the desired information? Aware of Miss Williams’ penetrating intelligence, when, during his courtship at Sandon, she had often evinced an insight into his conduct and motives, that a person of less experience and acuteness could not have acquired, he determined on appealing to her in his present dilemma. She was, he knew, a person of high principles, who would act conscientiously, irrespective of her own feelings or interest.

After a long conversation, he convinced her of the truth of his assertions, and it was with more judgment than delicacy that she wrote directly to Vivian for information respecting Clelia’s early life, determining not to depend on Madame D’Albremont’s
questionable veracity for the desired details. She had heard, in some indirect way, of papers and letters, that engrossed Vivian and his mother-in-law, after Clelia's death, and now, with a rapid inference, concluded that they referred to the mystery which it was so important to penetrate.

The letter to Vivian received no answer; it was repeated, with as little effect, and the lawyer's semi-official appeal to Castelle remained equally unnoticed, except by a few lines, written to recommend the discontinuance of applications prejudicial to Mr. Vivian's health, which rendered him unequal to canvass them. Very much annoyed at such delay, and suspecting that Castelle influenced his friend's silence, it was settled that Charles Breton should proceed at once to England, to seek an interview with Vivian, for the purpose of identifying Marie St. Clair with Clelia D'Albremont.

Danvers did not come to this decision,
however, without first urging Miss Williams to gather whatever it was possible to extract from Madame D'Albremont. That clever lady did not assuredly elucidate the mystery by her candour, for more reserved than ever, when perceiving that Miss Williams wished to question her, she seemed determined to conceal whatever she knew.

All other means failing, Charles Breton was at last despatched to England by Danvers with a paper of queries, suggested by the lawyer, and sanctioned by Agnes, who even induced Madame D'Albremont to urge, in a letter to Vivian, the solution of a supposed mystery, of which she pretended to be ignorant. The evening before his departure Charles spent with Leonora and Ernest, and during their conversation, which naturally referred to every circumstance connected with the all-engrossing perplexity, Leonora let fall insinuations that confirmed Breton's suspicions of the chemist. These had lately been justified
by some communications from a person to whom Castelle was known in Italy. This man had bound Breton to secrecy before detailing facts that were very condemnatory, and excited Breton's astonishment that any one suspected as was Castelle should hitherto have escaped public denouncement.
CHAPTER VII.

"Thou paragon of elemental power,
Mystery of waters—never slumbering sea;
Impassioned orator with lips sublime,
Whose waves are arguments which prove a God!"

Montgomery.

The summer heats had passed away, and the September gales were blowing on the Cornwall coast, winnowing the atmosphere from the impurities which it had contracted during the hot season, with a fierce south-west wind, that penetrated every cranny from whence miasma was to be dislodged.

The equinoctial gales commenced early, and ships, hastening for shelter towards the neighbouring ports, were scudding past under all sail. Sea-gulls flew wildly in shore, scared on their own element by the preliminary turmoil, announcing a still
fiercer contest between the two elements, that raged and roared with a defiant challenge. The waves, lashed into fury by the resistance of an uneven shore, dashed on the shingle and broke upon the rock with vengeful force. They had met with no opposition in their course through the Atlantic, but rolled across the great expanse, chasing many an iron-bound ship from billow to billow over the terrible watery mountains, and down again into the dark green depths, that look like the valley of death where man pays an exacted toll to the ocean empire. There vessels that sink silently, ingulphed within the black abyss, deposit below their dead, sacrifices to the ocean of corpses that know no quiet, but suspended in the great vortex of waters, float hither and thither in all their currents, and sink or surge with the interminable movement of elementary unrest.

Vivian, averse to the sight of a human face, had shut himself up with Castelle in a
tower that stood upon a rock hanging over the sea, two miles distant from the house in Cornwall. There he had remained in meditative grief since his sudden departure from Paris the week after reading Clelia's letter, never leaving his room till evening, when he would descend to the beach, and sit at the foot of the rock on which the tower was built.

This structure of great antiquity must have been erected as a defence to the broad lands below the eminence, from which it commanded the sea. The tower was divided into three stories, with a room on each, and a narrow staircase connecting them also leading to a low oblong building, added subsequently to the tower's construction, and supplying three small rooms and an entrance-passage to the building. In one of them an old man lived who had charge of the place; in the other he cooked Vivian's frugal meal; and the third was now uninhabited.
Whatever wonderful control the chemist had over his countenance, it did not avail him now; for at the young painter's appearance he betrayed very evident dissatisfaction. Breton arrived when Castelle was shut up in his room, from which, when summoned to receive the new guest, he did not greet him with the usual cordiality.

"I am come," said Breton, "deputed by Miss Somerton, and authorized by Madame D'Albremont, to make some enquiries of Mr. Vivian, respecting the documents which Mrs. Vivian gave to him before her death. You have not answered Mr. Danvers's questions satisfactorily, although sufficiently informed on the subject to enlighten us, and to obviate the necessity for applying on such a distressing subject to your friend. Here is a list, supplied by Miss Somerton, of the queries which I am to submit to Mr. Vivian. Read them, and tell me if you can furnish replies to all, or any of them."
Castelle took the paper, and held it for a few moments in his hand; he well knew to what the questions referred, and the answers he could have readily supplied, having been informed of Breton’s intended departure from Paris through the Jesuits. Had not the electric wires of that telegraph which they spread all over Europe, brought him intelligence, even from Father Jerome, of what might be apprehended from future revelations, even in the south; for did not old Annette confess to her spiritual and temporal director a culpable connivance at Castelle’s proceedings, when awed by his imposing presence, and restrained by a lingering affection for the nursling of her youth?

Castelle handed Breton the paper. “I cannot satisfy any of these queries,” said he. “Then it is necessary that I should have a personal communication with Mr. Vivian. Will you ascertain when he can afford me a few moments’ conversation?”
"I dare not make the proposal," replied Castelle; "for in his desponding state he will assuredly see no one. Not even the old keeper of this building, who has served him for years, dares enter the room where he sits, shut up all day. But," continued the chemist, "although I cannot now broach the subject, still, as the inquiry is one of great importance to his friend, Miss Somerton, perhaps in a few days I may venture to ask Vivian for some explanatory notes, or documents, to forward at once to Paris."

Breton tried to appear satisfied with this promise.

"You will excuse me now," said Castelle, whose great object was to get rid of Charles Breton as soon as possible. "I must return to poor Vivian, who is in such a deplorable condition, that I seldom leave him for more than a few minutes, being too well aware of what one may apprehend in such cases, to trust him long to himself. Is your carriage waiting?"
"No," said Breton; "I walked four miles here, from the village where the coach stopped; it was a tolerable evening, though very windy, when I started; but now the storm seems to increase every moment, and unless you can lend me a carriage I must ask you for a night's shelter here."

The winds did indeed rage, and the rain did indeed pour in torrents, and the old tower clattered and shook, so that the speakers could scarcely hear each other's words. There were no horses near, nor was it possible to send the lame old man a distance of four miles on such a night to procure a conveyance. Castelle was therefore obliged to consent to Breton's stay. A very scanty, solitary supper did not materially cheer the young artist, who sat in the small dismal room listening to the turmoil without, and endeavouring to understand a book on chemistry, which Castelle put into his hands. He tried to make the old man talk, but soon tired of that
attempt, after having with much difficulty learnt from him that Mr. Vivian looked very ill, and seemed weak when he walked on the strand below the castle with Castelle; that they seldom appeared to converse; that Vivian went to bed at ten; and that Castelle sat up in his study till near morning, and did not rise till nine o'clock.

At ten o'clock Breton lay upon his bed; he was too much agitated to sleep, even had the howling wind exhausted its hoarse voice, which now seemed to the painter supernaturally ominous. Was that the banshee screaming above the tower, making wings of her long hair, to dart round and round it, and to shriek into every window? Were these the demons of retribution now roaring vengeance without, as if they would tear down the edifice, and hurl it with the traitor and his victim into the depths below? Were these evil spirits riding on the crest of the foaming waves, to dash them fiercely against the
edifice with a force which shook it to the very foundation?

All Breton's suspicions of Castelle seemed to be enhanced by the circumstances which surrounded him. The elements appeared to arraign him, and to clamour with an outcry of nature for the punishment to which he was doomed. Breton's artistic superstition suggested this conclusion, when all other sounds were lost in the boom of a thunder peal, rolling over the sky, and hurling down in the direction of the tower a missive bolt, that may have spared the guilty there in mercy for the innocent.

It was indeed a fearful night, even for those used to the coast; but to Breton, who had never seen the sea till a few days previously, the scene was threateningly awful. There he lay listening to the resounding clangor, trembling with awe, when a terrible chorus, vociferated by the three voices of thunder and torrent and hurricane, seemed to cry vengeance!—vengeance for her who lies in the
churchyard yonder! Help for him through whose veins death is now stealthily creeping onward to the heart, with silent progress, sped by the hand of the poisoner!

Fevered and excited, the night had nearly passed away before Breton slept; then just towards dawn he dozed for an hour, and awoke unrefreshed, and further troubled with horrid dreams. Through the early night he had tried to decide on the course which he should pursue, his mind too unsettled to come to a very rational conclusion, or to control his feelings, that only urged immediate action, with an impatient anxiety to accuse and defeat the delinquent.

As he looked from the window the sea was sinking away from the shore; its creamy waves slowly receded, while the wind still beat them into spray upon the shingle. The rain had ceased, and a leaden roof of dense clouds seemed suspended above, weighing down upon the earth from a superincumbent pressure.
Breton arose, and found that it was just seven o'clock. How to proceed he knew not. No message—no note of warning—would Castelle allow to reach his prisoner; and a door between the building and the tower was always locked. Fully determined, if possible, to defeat this vigilance, a sudden impulse was followed by a sudden action, when he jumped from his window on a narrow terrace that passed along the building, and extended fifty yards beyond it. A low parapet enclosed all, and on this Breton rested for a few moments, looking at the tower above, into which he was determined to penetrate.

On examining the building he saw the shutters of Castelle's bed-room at the top closed, the window of the middle floor open. Within there was the chemist's study. What strange stories had he heard of the proceedings of Castelle in the house which they both occupied; how solemnly did Leonora entreat him not to question her about the
mysteries of which she admitted that she knew more than others!

In his present excited state, Breton pictured to himself the unholy practices enacted in that bleak tower, away from human scrutiny. Would it, if reached, reveal the secrets which he ought to discover? Were there indescribable things, unseen beings, within there that might betray their master to a bold and authorized intruder?

As he looked up again, he saw how uneven stones and small crevices in the wall, and broken ornaments, might enable an expert climber to reach that window. A clever gymnast, such aids were sufficient to secure his ascent; so with a resolve, in which courage, curiosity, and resentment took each its part, Breton stepped on the low wall that surrounded the building.

He stood now on a projecting stone, holding by another that seemed uncertain in its place, and only kept there by the
dexterity of an expert climber; then he clung to the coping of Vivian's windows, then he rested on its ledge, with a cat-like tread, sure and noiseless. Now he looked aloft, there is nothing to hold by further up; must he abandon the ascent and creep down again? Just at that moment one of the stones by which he had mounted fell, loosened by his weight, but luckily with little noise; to return was now impossible, and how ascend further? With a spring that amazed himself, and a rest that was more imaginary than real, now he reached an upper height, from whence, with another feat of agility equally wonderful, he rested upon Castelle's window-sill. The room was soon entered; he saw nothing there but a table covered with books, a bottle containing some white liquid, and upon its label directions that a fourth part was to be taken twice daily; in a glass beside it he found dregs of the same colour; but again near this lay a paper, labelled Acetate of Morphine!
Breton, shuddering, sat on the student's chair. What does this mean—this medicine and this poison? The suscitation of recent emotions had sharpened his perception: he saw at once how this poison was to be mixed with the drug by Castelle, if some of it had not already been added to each draught; and the portion placed in Vivian's room was intended to appear as the surplus of a dose with which in desperation of grief he had poisoned himself.

Breton looked all round the room, and opened the presses with the view of discovering some other noxious substance there. In a drawer he found two bottles of other poisonous drugs. A book lay open filled with cabalistic figures; it was too cumbersome to carry away, but a smaller one, which appeared to be a journal, still written in some cipher of the chemist's invention, he put in his breast; the poisons, with the bottle, were secured, and into a small phial he poured the small amount of mix-
ture left in the glass; then hoping to steal down stairs while the two inmates of the tower slept, he tried to open the door. Of course it was locked; Castelle would not leave such testimonies of his guilt for accident to reveal; there was even another door beyond equally secured. Breton must return the way he came, and now, looking down from the tower, it seemed quite miraculous that he should have ascended by that perpendicular wall, with such insecure footing.

His courage failed on a closer inspection; he could never descend that wall, although he might have climbed it upwards. What was to be done? Detected and desperate, Castelle, who was a most powerful man, might hurl him from the tower to the lonely beach below: what would he not do to escape the detection, which he had hitherto so ably evaded?

Breton sought for some means of effecting his descent. Books lay everywhere—
there was a box half-filled with them in one corner; Breton looked into it and saw a piece of rope at the bottom, which he drew out; there was a coil of it that had been used to tie up the chest. How his heart bounded when he opened it and unrolled a sufficient length to reach that part of the wall on which he could find a footing! The cord was next well fastened to the casement inside, and Breton, clambering over the window-sill, hung by it above the depth which he wished to reach; a few springs beneath. Then, as he feared that it might be decayed in parts, his heart failed him for a moment, but resolving to risk even this danger, he cleverly descended to the place and bounds and he was without the enclosure, hurrying onwards to the village from which he walked yesterday.

He ran madly forward as if even then pursued by those who would defeat his purpose, only resting when so far from the tower as to render it unlikely that he could
now be overtaken. In vain he looked round for some vehicle which would carry him to his destination; none appeared, and only a few foot-passengers travelled the same road along his path. At last, tired and heated, he reached the market town, and proceeding to the inn where he left his luggage, he learnt from the proprietor there what was the proper course to pursue in England for the apprehension of a criminal. Accompanied by him to the magistrate, Breton procured a warrant and the services of proper officers for putting it into execution.

They all proceeded in a carriage to the tower. At first the deaf porter refused them admittance, but the officials passed by him, and, directed by Breton, ascended to the chemist's room; the doors were now all open, and the party entered unmolested, for Castelle had flown.

Every part of the tower was searched in vain; videttes at the upper window saw no
fugitive in any direction. Castelle must have been awakened by some noise made by Breton, and on hastening to see that his room had not been invaded and the poison detected, found it gone! Of course, dreading the result of Breton's discovery, Castelle must have absconded. And now all efforts were directed to trace his flight; scouts from the magistrate's office scoured the country. Breton took his part in the search; and, discarding all intention of returning to France with the object of his mission unaccomplished, he merely wrote to Miss Somerton an account of his failure, and narrated the extraordinary events that rendered his stay in England imperative.

A man posted at Vivian's door had entered it, summoned by the poor invalid, who was there alone, lying in his bed pale and affrighted by the unusual commotion, and soon trembling and aghast on hearing of its object. He would not see Charles Breton, but left the tower towards night-
fall to return to his house, harassed by the search after Castelle, and the visits of the inquisitive, who thronged the place to gaze at the scene of incidents which rumour had magnified into a horrible story, enhanced by those details of the impossible for which country neighbourhoods are peculiarly remarkable.

When the magistrate asked for his deposition to the facts bearing on Castelle's presumed guilt, he would scarcely answer; and, suffering from an unhealthy stupor, persisted in declaring that the chemist was entirely innocent of any attempt to poison his best friend. He would scarcely answer the doctor accompanying the magistrate, who was notwithstanding convinced that some deleterious drug had produced the prostration which was so apparent.
CHAPTER VIII.

"Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world
But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them?
There are who in the path of social life,
Do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun,
And sting the soul."

Breton's letters were most anxiously looked for in Paris, where Agnes and her two companions waited restlessly for the result of his mission. Agnes did not avow the agitation with which she expected it, but Danvers's impatience was not so easily repressed; he communicated it to Leonora and Ernest, and both looked nervously for the anticipated revelation.

Breton's letter was a thunderbolt to the party. Castelle convicted, Castelle pursued!—even now perhaps in the hands of justice,
arraigned to expiate crimes that had been perpetrated amongst them all! The splendid Castelle, the renowned chemist, the learned philosopher, their friend, their oracle, their councillor, was he accused of murder? Were the bloodhounds of Nemesis now on his track, chasing him through the by-paths of a strange land?

Agnes could not realize the guilt of a friend whom she had so long esteemed—one who seemed so good, so merciful—one who appeared to possess that tolerant humanity, that kindly desire to please, so rare in those who are endowed with the highest intellectual gifts. She could not believe in the criminality of him who, with eloquent fervour, had so often expatiated on the virtues which humanity can now compass, and on others which hope assigns to the future. In the innocence of her heart she did not detect the object of the poisoner’s guilt, for she had not measured Castelle’s boundless ambition, nor discovered the strange
delusion with which he thirsted for gold, believing that immortal renown would crown the man of science who could project his fame into futurity through a golden trumpet—he who might enrich his panegyrist, and present to history the jewelled pen with which to record his success.

Nothing could equal Ernest D'Arval’s and Madame D’Albremont’s amazement on hearing the contents of Breton’s letter but Leonora’s astonishment; she seemed stunned by the unexpected news, and never appeared for the day after reading it; indeed, the excitement of the whole party occasioned by Clelia’s sudden death was now intensified into horror at this question of Castelle’s guilt. Agnes, more agitated than could be expected from her calm temperament, became so nervous that Danvers was even glad to encourage the Mantonfords’ visits with the hope of diverting her thoughts from the painful subject that engrossed them. The Mantonfords were just the people to supply
with their oddities a change that might alleviate the suspense which must now last till Breton's expected letter could arrive.

Lady Mary and her daughters had left the country soon after Danvers's departure, relinquishing all hope of succeeding with him since he had grown rebellious as soon as the languor of weakness was superseded by the firmness of improving health. Although still far from well, he did not seem to be so patiently submissive as heretofore, and Lady Mary perceived that he would not long be even as yielding as at present, after fully recovering that healthy moral courage which, with resolute enunciation, can say "No."

Mother and daughters again settled themselves in the house with Madame D'Albremont, but now occupying rooms above hers, where Miss Rosalind commenced taking dancing-lessons to complete her attractions by the last new steps. Dancing at that time was neither sliding, nor trotting, nor
crawling; but attempted opera bounds, patted one of its heels with the other to execute the requisite *battement*, and by a *chassez croisez*, or *pas du chat*, or *pas de basque*, charged its *vis-à-vis* with resolute agility. Rosalind being no sylph, Madame D’Albremont complained bitterly of the thumping and shaking of her ceiling, and of the unmusical chimes of the drops of her glass chandelier. But Sir Harry Ashworth admired fine dancing; and the spectators it attracted in the ball-room appeared to him to enhance its recommendations.

Now, Rosalind had lately discovered that Ashworth was a most gentlemanly person, and lost no time in giving him very evident proofs of her approval. "How superior he is to all these boys we meet," said she to Mirabel, "so complaisant and attentive!"

"I thought that you did not like old men," remarked Mirabel, spitefully.

"You don’t call him an old man," replied Rosalind; "he has beautiful white teeth
and lovely black hair, and the neatest whiskers I ever saw. They are trimmed, I daresay, like a box-bordering every day, and the grey weeds pulled up.” Rosalind would make fun of the ghost of a grandmother, so her mature lover did not escape the usual jokes.

“He had a wife years ago who died of old age, I believe,” said Mirabel.

“I like him the better for being broken in,” answered Rosalind; “it is too troublesome to tame them. I wonder what sort of a temper my predecessor had—a good one, I should think, for he is so very well satisfied with himself.”

“What do you mean?” said Mirabel, who required everything to be explained exactly.

“I mean, of course,” said Rosalind, “that a man who has married a bad temper, is always cowed and humble; all his rough edges are ground off with the wear and tear of his wife’s irritability. Apropos de bottes, Mirabel, you have no chance of Danvers,
for he can only think and talk of Miss Somerton."

"That was love at first sight," said the gentler sister. "You don't believe in its sudden attacks."

"I believe in neither first nor second sight, nor that you catch love like the scarlatina or the whooping-cough, nor that it lasts long; an attack of rheumatism is far more permanent."

To the great delight of Lady Mary, Ashworth grew every day more assiduous. Piqued by want of success in another quarter, he now paraded his devotion to the new flame, with all the airs and graces of a senile cupid, escorting her to the theatres and other public places, and making parties to the bals champêtres around Paris. Agnes declined all these amusements, still feeling deeply the death of her beloved Clelia.

Lady Mary and her daughters, accompanied by Ashworth, were preparing to enjoy an evening at Tivoli, where a luminous balloon
was to ascend after dusk. They entreated Agnes to accompany them, and, determined not to enter into the gayer entertainments of the evening and persuaded by Miss Williams, she consented. The crowd assembled was considerable; but her party secured good places on benches at a distance from the throng, where they sat till the balloon ascended, and then, as it took a particular direction, the spectators rose hastily and hurried across the garden. Agnes, whose thoughts were not fixed upon the machine, did not follow her friends directly, and as the crowd rushed on and separated them, she found herself quite alone, till a well-known voice pronounced her name, and turning round, she saw Danvers beside her.

"Can I be of use, Miss Somerton? I see you are alone? Will you take my arm?"

What could Agnes do but assent? They were here again hemmed in by the thronging crowd, and stood very patiently, making no effort to escape from it.
"You were very unkind, Miss Somerton," said Danvers, "never to return after that first kind visit, which, although so short, still hastened my recovery. Daily and hourly I looked for you, till when at last Clairville was deserted, I determined not to remain there any longer.

Agnes seemed not to accept the compliment implied in this speech, but said, kindly, "I hope that you are now quite convalescent."

"Better, but still suffering. The doctors think that I have been poisoned, and at another time I wish to speak privately to you upon that subject. Can you see me to-morrow?"

Agnes knew to what he alluded, although Castelle's crime and flight had not yet been noticed in the French papers, and English ones at that time reached France but slowly. She ought to hear whatever was known of this man, and therefore consented that
Danvers should call early the next morning at her hotel.

"You will soon get better, I trust," she said. "Are you prudent to venture out at night?"

"It is so warm," he answered, "that I cannot catch cold; but I am here solely to meet you, for this morning hearing that you were coming, in defiance of my doctor I crawled through the garden to discover you."

"Pray sit down," said Agnes, bringing him a chair. "I see how you totter, and are so feeble that you should not stand longer."

"Don't leave me," he said, piteously. "Pray stay near me, Agnes; in a few minutes I shall be able to accompany you in search of your friends."

She sat beside him, under the shelter of a branching tree, which screened them from the glare of the many lamps illuminating the gardens.
The air was like the breeze of a summer's evening, and moving only sufficiently to bring them the delicious odours from some orange-trees in full flower, that bordered a walk near them, where they sat beneath the dark shadow of the large elm.

Danvers, flurried and breathless, was silent for a few minutes, until his agitation subsided; then, laying his hand gently upon that of Agnes, he said—

"How can I express my happiness at this meeting? for it so completely overcomes me, debilitated as I am, that I find no words to speak what I feel."

"You can understand my motive for not allowing you to visit me," said Agnes, tremulously.

"I understand and respect it," replied Danvers; but in a few days more there will be no obstacle to our meeting; all will be cleared up when Vivian entirely confirms, by poor Clelia's own testimony, the
identity that seems scarcely question-able."

Danvers knew not how to proceed with a subject so delicate; he and Agnes had never met since their interview at the Maison de Santé, where she did not appear to perceive the object of his anxiety to learn all particulars of Clelia's early life. Now, any allusions to it might betray a knowledge of his culpability, which she was unwilling to recal, and therefore, much embarrassed, and anxious to change the subject, she said, "You expect letters daily from Breton?"

"I await them most anxiously," he answered; and then, after a pause, he continued, "if the intelligence he supplies confirms our engagement—if no legal tie previously bound me to another, then do not suppose for a moment that I shall ever urge my right to claim your companionship, if you still wish to live apart from one who is so unworthy of it; under all circumstances
the misery of separation will be somewhat mitigated for me by the proved validity of a ceremony which may avert from you some of the evil consequences of my villany."

Agnes looked down, confused and distressed, her face pale with emotion. Danvers continued: "If the identity of Marie St. Clair and Clelia D'Albremont is established, and I was legally bound to her by a religious rite, then, released through her death from the consequences of that unfortunate marriage—then, dear Agnes, may I venture to hope—may I dare entreat you to save from a life of misery and remorse one whose repentance and gratitude will be as boundless as his devotion? I do not ask you to return my affection yet; I do not urge my love as a claim to such a requital, but, knowing your kind and generous nature, I appeal to it for pity and pardon, and I will wait patiently till these kind feelings warm later into one more tender."
Danvers uttered all he felt; his repentance he described with touching humility; he besought her to pardon him, were they to be parted for ever, and should the supposition on which he founded his hope for the future prove a delusion. Still, without her forgiveness he could never be at peace; happiness away from her was impossible.

She tried to check him; she told him that it was wrong for her to listen to such protestations. He replied that, in describing his repentance he was obliged to allude to the causes that rendered it doubly retributive. Must he not tell her how much love now aggravated his misery at having wronged her?

Tears stood in Danvers's eyes as he again said, "Forgive me, Agnes; say that you pardon me." Agnes hesitated for a moment, and then, holding out her hand, she allowed him to press it with tenderness, and to hold it to his lips while he whispered "God bless you, Agnes!"
He saw that any further allusion to the subject which engrossed him would be painful to Agnes, and therefore talked of indifferent matters as they walked slowly through the garden. But what is indifferent that a loved voice utters? Do the ears receive her words? do the eyes perceive her appearance? do the nerves vibrate at her touch as if the mere senses received these impressions in the ordinary way? During this interview, from feelings of delicacy natural to both parties, Castelle's name was never mentioned.

Perhaps Lady Mary affected not to see them, piqued with Danvers, now that he was so engrossed by Agnes; perhaps he also did not choose to discover her friends. However this may have been, for an hour the enamoured pair walked about the garden, resting from time to time in its pleasant places.

The crowd began to disperse; Danvers could not now leave Agnes alone, so they
proceeded to the gate, and there really sought Lady Mary. Nowhere was she to be seen, and Agnes pushed by the crowd, and, almost supporting Danvers, preceded him into his carriage, in which he conveyed her home. Messages had arrived from Lady Mary. Agnes's carriage had waited for her at the gardens. Miss Williams seemed provokingly inquisitive. All was confusion for Agnes, who went to rest that night with the feelings of former times revived, and breathing a mental prayer for the release of Danvers from his first unfortunate engagement.

The early caprice which Agnes called love little resembled the matured attachment that now bound her to Danvers, justified by the sincerity of his repentance, the improvement in his character, and, above all, by his tried devotion to herself, now when his affluence rendered the acquisition of her fortune almost a matter of indifference. Next morning, at the time
specified, he arrived. Miss Williams presided at the interview, when Breton’s letter, which was to have been otherwise forwarded to him, was read. Nothing could equal his surprise but Agnes’s astonishment when she was told of the suspicions excited by the chemist’s treatment of Danvers’s wound, first suggested to himself by an observation of the Avignon doctor at the time. Then Leonora’s mysterious words recurred to them both; and with a sorrowing heart Agnes described Clelia’s symptoms, that now appeared to her in a new light, and the result of which she might have averted, had Leonora given an earlier warning of her own misgivings. Danvers proposed sending for her and Ernest to join in their conference, and despatched his carriage to bring both to Agnes’s apartment, detailing in the meantime circumstances which recurred to his memory now when he was convinced that they had an import overlooked before.

Leonora and Ernest soon appeared, and
to them the letter was again read, and the particulars detailed which had already been discussed. Leonora could not now command her feelings on hearing of Castelle's probable arrest. She walked about the room in violent excitement, pressing her temples with both hands, and almost incapable of realizing all she heard. Ernest was calm while he described his early confidence in Castelle, before Leonora's illness, never having entertained a doubt of one who had saved his own life and nursed him with brotherly tenderness. Even then the suspicions which forced themselves upon him seemed so unworthy a return for past kindness, that he could not bear to avow them to himself. His recollection, so lately revived, did not recal the time when he watched opposite the chemist's house, so that Leonora had not to endure the unjust suspicion that a night spent there might have aroused in her cousin's mind. Even now she did not allude to mysteries wit-
nessed in the laboratory, remembering that jealousy of Agnes took her there to spend those dreadful hours, of which the remembrance had ever since seemed an incubus upon her mind by day and night, when she was still haunted by spectres, such as those she saw in that dark room, holding their unholy vigils with the terrible chemist.

Miss Williams, after having listened attentively to all that her friends related, recapitulated the different incidents calmly and distinctly. She alone of the party retained sufficient self-possession to detect the probable motives for the chemist’s conduct, and as well as Leonora discovered one of them which was not apparent to the rest of the party. Knowing that a desire to propitiate Agnes had estranged him from the young Italian, and feeling that before all there assembled she could not explain herself farther, she made no more comments than were necessary, but merely requested Danvers and Leonora and Ernest
to state in writing the incidents which they had just detailed.

The evening after this conference, when Agnes and Miss Williams were alone, the latter asked her friend if she could ascribe a motive to Castelle's iniquity.

"Do you not see his aim all through this sequence of wickedness, Agnes?" said Miss Williams.

"Devoted as he was to Vivian," observed Agnes, "I cannot understand why he made him so unhappy by destroying the health, if not the life of the being to whom he was so tenderly attached."

"My dear Agnes, Castelle had no real friendship for anyone; his feelings all concentrated in a love for science and a passion for distinction. We have heard of poisoners who, from a desire to test their skill and from the pride of holding human life at their disposal, essayed their noxious drugs by experiments that often involved the chances of death; then, fascinated by the
success of their experiments, and overstepping the limits which prudence prescribed, they have, like Castelle, sacrificed their best friends to their own interest and to the gratification of exercising a demoniacal power over their fellow-creatures."

"I have read of such horrors," said Agnes; "surely these people must have been insane!"

"Castelle, tempted by that foolish testamentary arrangement which Vivian made before his marriage, and also encouraged by Clelia's delicate health and her reliance on his skill, availed himself of the knowledge of poisons which he has been long acquiring to secure the wealth that would promote his scientific projects and elevate him besides to the eminence which he ambitioned. Then you were exactly the person with whom he would wish to embellish it; he understood your character at once, and speedily formed of it the correct estimate. Leonora's wild, passionate
jealousy excited his resentment; it might mar his fortunes, for she had much to reveal that should not be known. Danvers he followed, no doubt, to the south of France, as it was important to get rid of one to whom, with scrupulous persistence, you still fancied yourself bound for ever; and perhaps jealousy, too, prompted his attempts there."

"How strange it is," said Agnes, "that, while he tampered with the lives of these people, they should have suspected and yet never have denounced him."

"That," said Miss Williams, "is a peculiarity of the case which seems inexplicable, and can only be accounted for by the power which this strange man acquired over all his associates. He infatuated them by some indescribable fascination, and I cannot help thinking that the superstitious feeling which he knew so well how to foster, gave him a hold upon their fears which silenced some of them. They dared
not brave the vengeance of one whom they believed to possess superhuman powers.

Miss Williams was here interrupted by a servant coming to tell Agnes that a lady waited in the anteroom who wished to see her in private. It was ten o'clock, and she could not guess who had called so late to ask for an interview, but proceeding with the servant to the outer room to dismiss, as she supposed, some untimely applicant for charity, perceived a lady in black, who, catching her hand and drawing her into an adjoining room, whispered, "I am Leonora; hear me for one moment."

Agnes could not help smiling at all this mystery, being well aware how her friend liked secret meetings and unexpected incidents. The young artist was, as usual, very much excited, and, on closing the door, seated herself near Agnes, and taking her hand, said—"Miss Somerton, I could not sleep till I told you all I know about Castelle; to-day I dared not speak before
those gentlemen, and yet they ought to hear much that I have to tell. She then began her narrative, with the early history of Castelle's love for her. She told of an old astrologer who at Padua calculated their horoscopes and assured her that one star ruled the destiny of both, and that no evil could befall the one, which would not equally harm the other.

She told of their arrival in Paris, of his coolness and of her jealousy, then confessing how at one time she believed Clelia to be the object of his new passion, and describing the incident which undeceived her.

Next she detailed the events of that dreadful night, when she had been the unseen confidante of Castelle's self-communing; and so vivid was her description, so impressive her manner, that Agnes shuddered at the recital.

They both wept when poor Clelia's fate was the subject of Leonora's communication, and with regret and self-reproach did she
now revert to a deception which she had practised on the gentle girl. She told Agnes, that one night, having accidentally heard a dialogue between Clelia and her maid in the summer-house, when the former declared that she could never marry till assured of the death of a person named Benson in order to promote this union with Vivian, which would, as she believed, separate Clelia from Castelle, she had left an anonymous letter on Mdlle. D'Albremont's able, proposing a meeting the next night, in order to give the poor girl some fabricated assurance of this Benson's death. That evening, Leonora added, dressed in a suit of her cousin's clothes, and accompanied by him, she met Clelia again in the summer-house, where, after obliging her to take an oath of secrecy, she began to make this communication which was to forward her own views on Castelle.

Startled by a noise in the wood, Clelia flew from the summer-house just as the assurance of Benson's death had been pronounced.
Leonora assured Agnes that she never heard of Benson till Clelia mentioned the name in her secret conference with Louise.

Miss Somerton listened attentively; then asking Leonora to repeat the latter part of her story, and entreating the warm-hearted girl to oblige her further by describing that scene, and relating Clelia's conversation to her friend Miss Williams.

Leonora at first refused, declaring that she was ashamed of the deception, and unwilling that any stranger should hear of it; but, overcome by Agnes's assurances, that it was most important to her that Miss Williams should learn all these particulars, Leonora consented.

"All is now clear, dear Agnes," said Miss Williams, when Leonora left them; "there can be no doubt that Clelia D'Albremont and Marie St. Clair were identical."

"Poor Clelia!" said Agnes; "what sorrow she must have endured through life! Of course
she supposed that Benson had abandoned her."

"She was right there, poor thing," said Miss Williams, smiling.

"Will you see Edward in the morning, and tell him all we have heard to-night?" asked Agnes.

"You may see him now yourself, Agnes, for he is, I am sure, as free as air; and ere long we may look for a real performance of what was before but a rehearsal, of the ceremony in the little church of Santon."

"From all Leonora has told us," added Miss Williams, "of the conversation which she heard in the summer-house, it is evident that Louise, Clelia's maid, knows more of that poor child's history than any of us."

"How strange that we should not have questioned her privately," said Agnes.

"I had a feeling of delicacy about doing so," said Miss Williams; "but really Madame..."
D'Albremont is so cold, and seems to feel her daughter's death so little, that I begin to think such forbearance unnecessary."

"It is quite time now to interrogate this Frenchwoman, and to-morrow I will send for her at an early hour."

"I never could bear that creature," said Miss Williams, "for I always knew that she governed poor Clelia, and that to Madame D'Albremont she cringed with the most deceitful submission. It was believed that Castelle used to meet her at unseemly hours in the woods at Clairville; such was the gossip of the house, which I never repeated to you before."
CHAPTER IX.

"Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him; for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more than from himself can fly
By change of place."

The next day Danvers, informed of Leonora's important communications by a note from Miss Williams, hastened to Agnes, who this time received him with much less embarrassment than heretofore. He was in the highest spirits, and looked to Louise's confirmation of Leonora's story with joyful expectation.

The femme de chambre could not appear till mid-day, and then Danvers sat in a room adjoining that in which the astute Miss Williams was to question her. She seemed
very much embarrassed on first arriving, and when Miss Williams communicated to her the circumstances of Castelle's guilt, was even more overcome than Leonora. Very unlike that candid, impulsive creature, Louise seemed determined to be as cautious as the other was open.

It was evident that, well aware of Castelle's proceeding, she resolved not to betray him and yet it was equally clear that she did not like him. Of course Miss Williams's object was to ascertain how much she knew of Clelia's history, and accordingly she informed Louise of Leonora's discovery, and led her to imagine that she was thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances of the early marriage.

"How long did Clelia remain in the south of France?" said Miss Williams.

"I don't know indeed," was the reply.

"She was in a convent there?"

"Yes, she was," answered Louise.
"What was the name of the convent?" said Miss Williams.

"St. Augustin," replied Louise.

"And the abbess, how was she called?"

"Madame de St. Clair."

"A relative of poor Clelia?"

"Yes; her aunt."

"Sister to Madame D'Albremont's first husband?" said Miss Williams.

"Yes, to Clelia's father."

"Why was she not lately called St. Clair?"

"Because, when Madame de St. Clair sent her away from the convent, Madame D'Albremont received an order from the Jesuit confessor of St. Augustin that she should be called D'Albremont in future, and that her visit to the convent should never be mentioned. Madame D'Albremont dared not disobey him for reasons too long to trouble you with; she was, besides, glad to relinquish the name of a
worthless adventurer whose pedigree and exploits were anything but creditable to the family."

"Thank you, Louise," said Miss Williams. The door of the adjoining room now opened, and Agnes rushed out to embrace Miss Williams, while Danvers followed, exclaiming—

"No lawyer could have done better. We are free!"

Miss Williams wrote to report the result of her conference with Leonora and Ernest, and of the successful questioning of Louise, to Breton by the next post. Before her letter could have reached Cornwall, he despatched one to her, detailing the measures taken to secure the capture of Castelle.

Just as Miss Williams had concluded this report, a young lawyer and humble suitor of Agnes was announced. With breathless eagerness this person rushed into her room, to inform her how Castelle was now accused of another crime, the condemnatory circum-
stances of which would be more convincing than any adduced in the charge of Clelia's death or Vivian's projected murder.

It appeared that, with his usual diabolical persuasive power, he had induced Auguste Baillet, an old schoolfellow, with whom he had but lately renewed an intimacy of former times, to make a will, bequeathing to himself a sum of money amounting to twenty thousand pounds. Five or six months after this transaction, during the week when he pretended business in Paris as an excuse for not accompanying Vivian to Cornwall for Clelia's funeral, he met this Auguste Baillet in Paris, and accompanied him to St. Cloud, where, in three days, the young man died, under circumstances that at first excited great surprise amongst his attendants and relatives, which soon changed to suspicion when they investigated them further. It was then ascertained that Castelle had presented to a druggist an order with his own signature for a poisonous sub-
stance which was known in the trade to be compounded by himself. It was of course readily supplied to the unrecognised applicant bringing such a credential.

Castelle had proceeded with Vivianto Cornwall before the suspicions of Baillet's relatives were substantiated; and while Breton's accusations, for the corroboration of which the evidence was not fully convincing, were stated to the English magistrate, another pursuit had been instituted by the authorities in France.

"At that moment," the lawyer said, "detectives were on the road to dislodge Castelle from his concealment in England, or to intercept his progress through France."

This startling intelligence, as you may imagine, overwhelmed the hearers with amazement. Agnes, bewildered by it, could not even find words or power to express her feelings.

While she was thus overcome, Sir Harry Ashworth, to her great annoyance, was an-
nounced. He came with the hope of bringing the earliest intelligence of Castelle's new crime, and seemed much disappointed at hearing that she was already apprised of this unexampled iniquity of her friend. Sir Harry began to dilate on his own penetration when suspecting Castelle, and warning her against the advances of such a miscreant.

Agnes, not at all in a humour to appreciate his boasted foresight, did not give him much encouragement to expatiate on it; but still, nothing daunted, and rather pleased at annoying a lady who had so openly rejected his addresses, he continued—

"I told you long ago, Miss Somerton, that the reprobate was a dangerous acquaintance. It is clear now that he poisoned poor Clelia, and, had it not been for this timely detection, Vivian would have equally fallen a victim to his own unaccountable folly. Lucky for you that the fellow was captivated by your beauty and your fortune,
and deferred his proceedings against your life till later."

Agnes looked very much annoyed, and made no answer to these observations.

Sir Harry went on—

"I don't feel very comfortable myself, Miss Somerton, since these disclosures; for I have sat next to the scoundrel at your dinner-table, and he might then have dropped something into my soup that may ultimately undermine my constitution, although its effects are not yet apparent. Do you ever feel queer, Miss Williams? have you sometimes what ladies call 'all-overishness'?

Miss Williams, not at all pleased with Sir Harry's ill-timed flippancy, now changed the subject by asking—

"If he had heard of this Auguste Baillet before; it is very strange," she added, "that Castelle never mentioned him to us."

"I daresay not," said Sir Harry; "he wished to keep that friendship close for
his own especial benefit. Castelle knew Baillet when they were both boys, and only renewed the acquaintance soon after his return from Lieuford, when I had the honour of making the inimitable chemist's desirable acquaintance."

"That was before we had met him," interrupted Miss Williams.

"I believe so," continued Sir Harry.

"Well, at that time Auguste Baillet was slightly ill; Castelle prescribed for him, and, under the influence of the spell which even enthralled beautiful ladies, this young man made a will bequeathing all he possessed to the poisoner."

"It seems that he had a peculiar talent for influencing testators," said Miss Williams.

"Indeed, one must suppose so," continued Sir Harry. "We never saw or heard anything of this wretched victim, and yet Castelle must have kept up some intercourse with him till the time when
poor Clelia died; for when Vivian proceeded to Cornwall for her funeral, Castelle made some excuse for not accompanying him; and during that very week Baillet was poisoned. Was there ever a more cold-blooded crime?"

"No words can express a just horror of it," said Agnes.

"They have waited a long time before accusing Castelle," remarked Miss Williams.

"Some difficulties as to the evidence, I believe," replied Sir Harry; "but now, fair ladies, your amiable, fascinating friend and ardent admirer will soon be in the hands of justice, tracked as he is by detectives of both countries."

"Who was this unfortunate Baillet? Was he a gentleman?" asked Miss Williams.

"He was the son of a notary," said Ashworth, "who had realized large sums of money, and, although intended for the bar, the unfortunate fellow preferred an
idle, dissipated life, which he spent with disreputable associates. I find that he was a friend of your admirable uncle, Monsieur de Belleville, Miss Somerton, and was graciously presented by him at that famous Dolgorozky party, of which we have heard so much, to the Mantonfords."

"Was Lady Mary speculating on him?" said Miss Williams, spitefully.

"I don't know," replied Sir Harry, "but I heard him once accompany Rosalind on the flute in a most extraordinary style; he played what they called Beethoven's River, which threw cold water on the hearers. I would abuse the poor wretch's performance, if your friend Castelle had not rescued us from it now for ever."

Agnes was in no mood to listen to Sir Harry's nonsense, and rejoiced when he dismissed himself with a graceful bow.

Notwithstanding the unremitting exertions of the police, Castelle was not to be found. Poor Clelia's body had been ex-
humed at once after Breton's application to the magistrates. Although no traces of the poison were found—Castelle was too skilful for such a mistake—still the medical men declared that very recognisable appearances indicated the use of deleterious substances. A verdict to this effect was pronounced.

Medical opinions and juries' verdicts were strangely expressed at that time.

Vivian still persisted in his seclusion, and never seemed to do anything but meditate; not even noticing the newspapers, of which Breton took care that those referring to the exhumation should not reach him. He had invited Breton to his house, but declined seeing him; indeed, it would appear that he disliked a visitor of any kind, from the irritation of his nerves and his other ailments; and two days after the inquest he returned to the tower, walking there unattended at nightfall.

Ten days had elapsed since Castelle's flight,
and no traces of him had yet been discovered. The October winds were colder than usual on the coast, and Vivian kept within the tower, never having left it since his last return there the previous week. His dinner rapidly dismissed, he sat before a large wood fire, gazing at the changing pictures which he formed in it, and recalling painful thoughts of past happiness, and dreading future misery that might be only intensified by time.

The sun had set opposite his window, and the twilight was fading into darkness, rendering the bright flames from the wood fire more brilliant, while their shadows danced upon the opposite wall. The monotonous plash of the waves along the shore, as they seemed to measure the evening's silence, sounded soothingly from the beach, and were lulling Vivian to sleep, when a slight sound attracted his attention to the door. There, closing it carefully and turning the key inside, he
saw the figure of a man in tattered garments, and with a countenance pallid and emaciated, from which the lustrous eyes looked forth restless and prominent.

"Castelle!" said Vivian, rising, "you here! Where have you come from? What a plight you are in!"

"Oh, Vivian," said the chemist, seating himself exhausted in a chair which Vivian had left, "I am come here for shelter; starved, and frozen, and tired. Give me some food for mercy sake.

Vivian ran downstairs, where bread and meat had remained since his dinner, and bringing them to Castelle, he sat by his side while the chemist devoured what was placed before him. Wine he drank eagerly; and when his hunger was appeased, he looked at Vivian, and seeing in his smile the faith with which he believed in his friend, he held out his hand to receive Vivian's in it, while he said—"Frederick, you have never thought me guilty?"
"Oh, why did you fly, Castelle? why not have stopped to face, and defeat your enemies? Now, happily, you are come back to defy them, and I will boldly defend you, with my testimony and my fortune, against them all. Where have you been to escape the blood-hounds?"

"I have lived under the rocks beneath this castle," said Castelle. "You know how the peasantry avoid the neighbourhood; and feeling confident that there was no securer retreat, I returned here after the first pursuit was over. But what a life has been mine for the last eight days! In the cold and in the wet, crouching in the corners of dark chasms!—sitting upon a projecting ledge to escape the rising waters that poured in with the high tide!—sleeping on the wet sand, which the sun never dries!—stealing out of my rocky prison at night to look for food!—listening to the rustle of the wind amidst the trees, or through the briars, and fancying that it was the tramp of horses,
or the tread of a pursuing crowd!—each sense so excited by apprehension, and watching, and hunger, that the movements of my own life within, sounded ominously to my ears, and the throb of my own heart, as I started from fear, felt like the blow that might fell me to the earth.

"Entering at nightfall the neighbouring village, to purchase bread, I fancied that the children knew me, that the dogs tracked me, that the men only waited till I started on my road here, to have the pleasure of hunting me to my lair. Then how, panic-stricken, I have flown with frantic speed—on, on, rushing against the wind, through the dark, over the rocks, even into the sea, where I have fallen helpless upon the waves that, with cruel pity, washed me again upon the earth—where a prison awaits me; where a grave opens for me!"

Terrified at the retrospect of his misery, Castelle gasped exhausted, and looked wildly around him.
"You are too desponding," said Vivian; "you are too dejected. Fatigue and want of food depress you; to-morrow things will appear in a different light. Then I shall summon the best advisers here to give us counsel. Oh, Castelle, I have been so ill and so weak, that the past seems to me like a dream. But now, quite miraculously recovered from my recent illness, I shall understand better what I hear. Do tell me how was the poison found? and with what are you really charged? I would not listen to their absurd accusations. How was it all?"

"They merely found in my room a label marked 'poison,' upon a substance the product of my untiring experiments, the discovery of which will lead to unlooked-for results that no one now anticipates. I had placed it near your medicine-bottle by accident."

"A very natural coincidence," said Vivian; "the magistrates must be fools to accept
such an accusation. But we shall soon show them how precipitate is their conclusion; and you may not only establish your innocence, but bring an action for defamation against these imbeciles."

"For the present," said the crafty schemer, "I had best keep quiet. The magistrates, after acting with such blind rashness, will do everything in their power to justify themselves by criminating me. It is, therefore, expedient that I return to France, and there procure certificates from the persons to whom I am best known of my good character heretofore. I find that Breton has been making charges against me in Paris, with a view perhaps of inducing Leonora to prosecute me for breach of promise of marriage. I do not know what other motive he can have."

Castelle had managed, by some stratagem, to obtain a letter forwarded to him at the neighbouring village.
"That will be a difficult matter to arrange with the impetuous Leonora," said Vivian, smiling.

"I daresay it may," answered Castelle; "but with your support I fear nothing. My grand object now is to escape out of England till this excitement is over, and the sooner I start the better."

"How is your journey to be managed?" said Vivian.

"You must procure a passport for yourself and a servant; leave this at nightfall in a postchaise, and I will precede you a little on the road, where you can pick me up, and we may proceed together to France. Your servant will never be suspected; and I have such chemical means of altering the colour of my hair and eyebrows, and otherwise disguising myself, that the few persons in England who formerly saw me will never recognise me now."

Castelle, when he proposed this means of
escape, had other plans in view which he did not state. He knew that a person appointed by others would meet him at a specified place, and conceal him effectually until means were found for his flight beyond the frontiers of France.
CHAPTER X.

"False friend, wilt thou smile or weep
When my life is laid asleep?
Little cares for a smile or a tear
The clay cold corpse upon the bier,
Farewell! Heigh ho!
What is this whispers low?
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;
And bitter poison within thy tear."

Shelley.

While Agnes and Danvers were speculating on Castelle's escape, Vivian made him tolerably comfortable for the night in his late room; and as the old lodge-keeper only ascended to the tower at particular hours, and as the chemist's apartments were shut up since his flight, there was little fear of his being discovered in a place to which no one else had access. Vivian sent next day to the neighbouring town for the substances
which Castelle required to dye his hair. He then repaired some of his tattered garments, and Vivian supplied other articles of clothing which altered Castelle's appearance materially. Everything belonging to him, not excepting clothes, had been carried away by the officers of justice at the time of his escape, lest they should harbour poisonous substances.

When Vivian visited him later in the day, the transformation was complete, for Castelle had a shock head of grey hair, with eyebrows as white, the Hyperion jet-black curls and glossy whiskers being reduced to cinders in the grate. A great redness of the skin over the nose, discoloured by some irritant, changed the handsome Adonis into an ugly man.

Towards night every arrangement was complete, and Castelle left the tower over the wall, as he had entered by it, without attracting the notice of the old servant, and then walked on a short distance to conceal
himself behind a tree described by Vivian, where he waited till the postchaise arrived, when jumping into it alertly, the friends posted with four horses after the first stage, night and day, until they reached Dover.

The packet—for in those days one, or at most two, sailed daily—was to start next morning, and Vivian and Castelle went early on board with the other passengers. The sea growing rough, Vivian took shelter below, while Castelle remained on deck, where a few gentlemen braved the accidents of the water, rescued by fresh air from its greatest evil. A fat, square-built person, evidently a Frenchman, came and sat opposite to the chemist, who did not like the man's countenance, for there was a piercing look in his eyes that seemed to pin you like a specimen butterfly to the spot for convenient scrutiny; but Castelle would not stand such unpleasant curiosity, so moving to the other side of the vessel, he sat for a little while there, and then
went down to the cabin. As he lay on a sofa below, he saw the little man looking at him through the skylight. Provoked at this impertinence, Castelle shut his eyes, and pretended to sleep; but in half an hour, tired of rest, he sat up again, and saw the square man still peeping into the cabin from above.

Arrived at Calais, Vivian and Castelle went to the hotel till their luggage passed the custom-house; Castelle's was labelled Alfred Chalon, the name under which he passed as Vivian's servant. It was arranged that the friends should part at Amiens: Vivian was to proceed to Paris, to consult there with Castelle's friends; Castelle would stop at some retired village till he heard the result of their consultation; but the chemist knew full well what that would be, and intended, as soon as he parted from Vivian, to proceed towards Germany, and cross the frontier, before any pursuit tracked him in France.
The gentlemen got into the diligence, after partaking of a hurried supper. The evening had grown dark as they entered it after the other passengers, when the door was shut hurriedly, and the huge vehicle rolled onward through the town, and as it passed a well-lighted coffee-house, the glare of a brilliant lamp fell momentarily upon the opposite side of the carriage, where Castelle saw his obtrusive tormentor of the packet-boat. "Why does he stare at me so?" thought Castelle; "I never saw him before to-day. I'll speak to the fellow, and hear what he has to say for himself." The little man, on being addressed, was certainly not agreeable, for his fixed eye seemed his most efficient mode of communication. He listened very attentively to the dialogue between the two friends acting master and man, hearing how they were to separate at Amiens, Vivian's bad health being the pretext for his servant sitting beside him.
They arrived in due time at Amiens, where the diligence was to wait till its passengers took refreshment; and Vivian asked for a private room and some tea. There he could hear Castelle’s last instructions, and there he was to hand him a sum sufficient for his present emergencies. The friends sat down at a comfortable and well-supplied tea-table, and began to avail themselves of what it offered, when the door opened, and the little square man appeared there, followed by two officials, and showing his warrant, arrested Castelle for a criminal offence in the name of the king. Vivian looked at the paper, and with an agitated voice, said, imagining that Castelle was now captured for the crime of which he heard him charged—

"This is all a mistake; there is some extraordinary misconception here; there is even, I believe, a conspiracy against this gentleman. I would bail him to any amount in England, and will now proceed
to Paris, that the accusation may be met by proofs of his innocence, and the discovery of the real culprit, if a crime has been committed, which I doubt."

The officer, not deigning to inform Vivian, who seemed to know very little of law, that his prisoner was arrested for a crime committed in France, unconnected with other accusations, left Vivian overwhelmed with amazement at this pursuit, which he never anticipated, and could not understand.

The French authorities had been informed of the suspicions entertained by Ernest and Danvers, just at the same time that Castelle was accused of this crime for which he was now arrested. A French detective was starting for Cornwall when Castelle arrived at Dover, and with the professional skill which seems to the uninitiated like the art of another professor equally conversant with iniquity, he detected Castelle through his apparently impene-
trable disguise, warned, too, previously by some wonderful police agency, of Vivian's intended departure from Cornwall.

The poor invalid Vivian, shocked as he was by this sudden commotion, still rallied before long, inspired by his anxiety to help Castelle with all his influence in Paris. He went downstairs, and reached the door just as a carriage left it, and rolled down the street, conveying, as he heard, the prisoner and his captors to the metropolis. Vivian ordered another conveyance at once, for the diligence was gone, and sorrowful and ill, he travelled night and day, overtaking the heavier carriage, which had preceded him; and seeing, as he passed it, Castelle's pale face, a police officer at each side of him, and another on the box. Vivian sank back in the carriage, weak and tired, and scarcely recovered from the recently administered poisoner's drugs, he covered his face with his hands, and wept like a child.
Such painful emotion was too much for his feeble frame and tender heart; and on arriving at Paris, faint and unable to stand, he was carried to his bed by the servants of the hotel where he stopped. His own domestics had orders from Dover to follow him to Paris, and they arrived next evening, while Madame d'Albremont, apprized of his arrival in the morning, sat beside him, as useless as are all hard women in a sick-room.

Agnes, hearing of Vivian's arrival, desired Ernest D'Arval to acquaint him of the new charge against Castelle, who it was believed had recently poisoned his friend Auguste Baillet, the young man whose flute performance Lady Mary Montonford tolerated for the sake of the fortune, which it appeared he had been induced to will to the arch-hypocrite Castelle. Vivian protested against all these accusations, declaring that his friends were mistaken, and maliciously prejudiced against a man
who had not only served them individually, but was the universal benefactor of society. Not merely by his active personal exertions did he serve them, but as the discoverer of secrets in science which would yet avail mankind to the end of time, was he to be revered.

As Vivian mentioned his intention of applying to the authorities in favour of Castelle, and as he seemed quite ignorant of the verdict issued at the coroner's inquest in England, Ernest was obliged to communicate, kindly and gently, the facts which led to this decision. It was hard to do this; it was cruel to open afresh the wounds which time might heal; to hint at the dreadful scene where his beloved Clelia was lifted from her grave, and exposed to the gaze of those who looked on with no other feeling than that of curiosity.

He was gently apprized of the other details, too dreadful to dwell upon, and yet retain his senses; the result no less terrible. His friend, whom he loved nearly as much
as his Clelia, to attempt her life that was more precious to him than his own, to grasp his hand with the pressure of friendship, to hold in his own the loving cup of hospitality, to receive in it the gifts of his bounty; and then to drop from it, into the potion which he offered as the restorative of life, the deadly essence that entailed death instead! It was all hard to bear.

Was his beloved laid again tenderly in the coffin, where he had placed her with such loving care? Where was the bridal veil in which he shrouded her?—where the roses which he gathered to place in her hand, as she desired?—who could tell? His uncertainty was too terrible to endure, he could not bear doubt here; he would start at once to see himself if strange hands had not desecrated the grave, over which a stately mausoleum was shortly to rise, proclaiming her virtues, and the love which embalmed in a husband’s heart the memory of them.
Charles Breton arrived from England most opportunely the next day, and Vivian, persisting still in his determination to return to Cornwall, was induced by Agnes to take Charles back there as a stay and companion. Vivian's impatience would allow of no delay, and his friend being obliged to consent that their journey should commence the day after his return, he left Vivian with a promise to be ready next morning at twelve o'clock. Vivian counted the hours till the time of their departure, and was preparing to retire very early, in the hope of sleeping through the tedious interval, when a tall figure glided rather than walked into the room, and stood beside him.

"I am come unannounced," said this man; "for my name is as unknown to you as my person."

Vivian stared helplessly, and with his habitual kind manner offered a chair, which the stranger accepted.
"I am here," said he, "to reveal some particulars respecting Mrs. Vivian's sojourn at the convent in the south of France, which, I feel assured, will interest you so much that I venture to appear thus unceremoniously before you."

This was a preamble which immediately excited Vivian's interest. He assured his visitor that every incident which he could relate of that time would be listened to with the greatest attention.

"I knew Mademoiselle St. Clair," said the stranger, "immediately after she arrived at the convent of St. Augustin, of which I am the director. I was the person who informed the Superior of her intended flight with the Englishman, after an adventure that was nothing but a girlish frolic, the probable evil results of which I averted. No one ever heard of the circumstance in the neighbourhood; and Mademoiselle St. Clair was sent off to another religious house to prevent all further meetings, and
obliged to assume the name which her mother bore. When she arrived in Paris, and settled there with Madame d'Albremont, a person from one of our institutions was placed in the family, by the Abbess's desire, as lady's-maid. At the time when you expressed your intention of marrying Mademoiselle D'Albremont, this girl, Louise Lavile, was supplied with information which overcame Clelia's objections to the union, from the dread of having made an earlier engagement."

"And was it correct?" interrupted Vivian, hurriedly. "Oh, tell me that she was not married to this Danvers!"

"I can assure you," said the priest, "that the marriage was but a wicked farce."

"Thanks—thanks," said Vivian, clasping the priest's hand; "the certainty that she was wholly mine—in law as well as in love—is a balm to my wounded heart, tortured by mistrust as well as by grief."
"I have heard of your sorrows," said the priest, kindly, "and sympathize with every feeling inspired by our heavenly child, the good Marie, for whose sake I come to offer you religious consolation in this time of trial."

They talked long together. Vivian informed him of his departure, fixed for the following day, at which Jerome appeared surprised, as if he had not known of it an hour before!

"I will accompany you," said the priest; "who can better support you in the sacred duty which you are about to perform than one to whom the simple secrets of her young heart were confided? We will decorate her grave together, and I can bless the flowers which you plant upon it."

The next morning, when Breton brought his luggage to the hotel ready to depart, he heard with amazement that Vivian had left Paris two hours before, accompanied by a stranger. A note was put into his hand to this effect:—
"Dear Breton,—An early friend of my beloved Clelia, Father Jerome, has come to console and support me. He travels with me to England, and thus relieves you from a troublesome journey. I will write to you on my arrival.

"Yours very sincerely,

"F. Vivian."

It was with great distress that all his friends heard of Vivian's newly-adopted companion, for they had hoped that Breton's judicious friendship and warm religious feelings might restore him to comparative tranquillity; while Danvers entertained a very unfavourable opinion of Father Jerome and believed that for his own purposes alone he had sought the gentle, unhappy Frederick.
CHAPTER XI.

"I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance and calm hate,
And such despair as works itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak—oh speak!"

Agnes and Danvers now settled themselves in Paris, intending to remain there till Castelle's trial was over. Vivian was equally summoned to attend it; and Ernest and Leonora, in their usual abode, looked anxiously for its termination on many accounts.

All of them occasionally saw Madame D'Albremont, who had resumed her usual course of life, and appeared to take much less interest than her friends in the pending event. Her present annoyance, although connected with it, was of another cha-
racter; for Louise, whom she had trained to be a most useful personage, and engaged to live with her since Clelia's death, was not to be heard of, having suddenly disappeared a day or two after her interview with Miss Williams; and, although subpoenaed for the trial, was nowhere to be found.

The Paris winter season, with its wonted gaieties, commenced as brilliantly as ever: pleasure danced and music sang, hypocrisy acted and manœuvre schemed, at all the parties. Agnes only heard of what was going on, and declined most invitations, except to the houses of her intimate acquaintances. But the little party of friends met constantly, for Agnes's hospitable kindness to Leonora and her father was unremitting; and Mr. Villabella, with his two children, spent many quiet evenings with her, when the strange occurrences of the past year were recalled, and the progress of the pending trial anticipated. It had been twice postponed, till five months
elapsed between Castelle's apprehension and its commencement.

Meanwhile, Leonora grew daily more nervous, infecting Ernest with her dread of something indescribable which was to happen to both if Castelle was condemned. This man with the rattlesnake's power had fascinated and appalled her; and even now, while abominating his crimes, she still believed with childish superstition that he perpetrated them for an important end, and that, from his transcendent nature, his superhuman powers, and exceptional human beauty, he was born to effect some great purpose, and to rule the destinies of inferior mortals. Agnes found that she avoided all direct allusion to him, but talked of life as blighted by the unhappy circumstances of her youth. Agnes often reasoning with her on the folly of yielding to such vagaries, soon discovered that one strong feeling should always replace another in that active imaginative mind.
Ambition to excel in art might soon, if adroitly fostered, become now her ruling passion; and this Agnes tried to excite.

After a long conversation one day, Leonora gratified Agnes much by promising to devote herself to study, with the hope of showing the world how a woman can work and excel upon a higher level than that assigned in their time to grovelling female industry.

"I will be independent henceforward," she added; "the bread that we earn ourselves is always sweet; but the laudable exertions by which a woman overcomes the obstacles always impeding her from earning a livelihood, except by household drudgery and ill-paid needlework, must flavour a crust with the 'savour of ambrosia.'"

Much pleased with this decision, Agnes promised Leonora help and encouragement, and then listened with some amusement to an abjuration of female servility, uttered
with vehemence by the young artist, who ended it by saying—

"I never will consent, like others of my sex, to be the maid-of-all-work to nature and society, who both exact too much from their poor female servants, and cannot forget the bad character which the first of us deserved long ago in that early situation."

Notwithstanding her boasted courage, Leonora grew daily more nervous as the time for Castelle's trial approached, while Ernest, nearly as impressionable, appeared to share in her apprehensions, seeming to feel and think only as she did, just as if his existence had merged in hers, with an abnegation of self, that probably resulted from a long dependence on her will during the period of his mental incapacity.

They both looked unhappy, and had lost the power of cheering their aged companion, who deplored incessantly the unworthiness of his countryman; but still would not believe that all the charges brought against
him could be proved. Leonora, anxious to spare her father unnecessary pain, had never communicated the verdict at the coroner’s inquest in Cornwall, nor yet the accusation of poisoning Auguste Baillet at Saint Cloud. Still the poor old man thought constantly of the pending trial, and tried to enlighten Mrs. De Belleville, when, very much bewildered at all that was going on, she asked him privately to explain to her what she did not understand. This was difficult to do, with his bad English and her obtuse hearing and dull perception; but the effort kept them mauldering cosily together whenever they met.

Few judiciary proceedings had ever excited more interest than the coming trial; for to the public the history of Castelle’s life supplied a romance, of which they looked for the dénouement, expecting anxiously the defence of its hero, of whose strange power they had heard so much. Men of science, to whom Castelle’s name
was familiar, lamented the loss of his genius while they abhorred the criminal ambition by which he hoped to utilize it, considering his mental power as an aggravation rather than an extenuation of his crime.

The medical profession, however, defended him by declaring that no vestige of poison was apparent after either autopsy, and that the drugs purchased were such as he often used in experiments testing the effect of narcotic substances on animal life. Little was it anticipated then, how, in our time, the temporary death which adynamic agents command, would annihilate the most terrible pains of nature, and release mankind from one of the penalties of existence.

Dr. Laennec, the inventor of the stethoscope, would be examined at the trial; Orfila, the great chemist, was summoned as a witness; and Berryer would defend the prisoner. Danvers, who had once studied the law, well knew how it would be conducted in France, where judiciary proceed-
ings in criminal cases are often managed with a view to dramatic effect which astonishes Englishmen. The Procureur-Général there commences the trial with a romantic narrative, in which the statement of facts is varied by the expression of his own opinions, inferences, and suppositions concerning them, frequently surprising to the prisoner, and too often influencing the jury in their verdict.

The trial commenced on the 10th of November, 1823.

The court was thronged, and curiosity and aversion and terror grew apparent on the anxious countenances that watched the prisoner as he entered it.

Castelle came on slowly and unmoved; his bearing more like that of an accuser than the accused. Erect and defiant, such splendid manhood and remarkable beauty of a peculiar type, might have personated the angel of evil. All effects of the transmutation in Cornwall had disappeared, and
now his hair was as black as ever, his cheek as pallid; the slight emaciation resulting from long confinement rendering his large dark eyes more prominent, while the earnestness which concentrated their glance into a piercing intensity seemed supernatural.

A greffier read l'Acte d'Accusation, which had been prepared by Procureur-Général Bellart: the perusal occupied two hours.

The accusation commenced with a specification of the poisonings attributed to Castelle in early life, which might have been experiments to test the noxious substances that he discovered or compounded. As soon as these were detailed, the Procureur-Général continued thus:—“After having made poison his study in Italy—after having tested it, as you will hear, on various persons, who suffered more or less from his experiments, Castelle returned to his native place, Lieusford, near Avignon. A reputation for great chemical knowledge
had preceded him there, and, on his arrival, he was invited by some early colleagues to attend the lectures and to visit the sick at the public hospital, where he also communicated some valuable medical experiences stored during his own practice at Padua.

"While thus engaged, an exhausted wayfarer, who had been found tottering along the streets, nearly unconscious from the effects of incipient disease, was brought to the hospital. It was reported there that a man had been plundered and ill-treated in the neighbourhood, and this poor creature, without shoes, or hat, or coat, seemed to have been the victim of an outrage which was never traced to its perpetrators. Castelle consulted upon his case, proposed trying a new method of treating it, and whether this was successful, or whether he secretly administered the deleterious drugs which he was so fond of testing, for the purpose of experiment, no one can say; but this patient, to all appearance, died, and
Castelle removed his body, surreptitiously, to his own house, intending, it is supposed, to subject it to the galvanic experiments which now excite such general interest throughout France.

"Greatly to the chemist's surprise, before these were attempted, his inanimate guest revived, and at the same time Castelle heard, through a Jesuit priest with whom he was in communication, that the wayworn traveller was an English gentleman, Mr. Frederick Spencer Vivian, possessed of vast estates both in Great Britain and in France.

"At this period Castelle intended to settle in Paris, and even meditated a visit to England: here was an acquaintance who might be valuably utilized in both places. With clever forethought he therefore artfully led Vivian to believe that a skilful revival had rescued him from imminent death; and it was not long before the affectionate gratitude by which this benefit
was acknowledged, became available, when the young men proceeded together to Paris, where further intercourse enhanced the Englishman's attachment to his false friend.

"After its continuance for some months, Vivian, yielding to the extraordinary influence which it appears Castelle exercised over all his associates, made a will bequeathing to him large estates in France, at the death of a Mademoiselle Clelia D'Albremont, to whom Vivian had lately become warmly attached. This young lady hitherto declined his suit, from apprehensions that a secret marriage, which she had contracted in France three years previously, might have been, as she then supposed, performed by an ordained clergyman, although often assured to the contrary by her aunt, the abbess of a convent, from whence she was to escape the night of the ceremony. Obliged, through an accident, to return to the convent, her
elopement was prevented, and she was at once secretly transferred to a religious house in Italy, where the supposed Captain Benson could not discover her, while she was assured that the ceremony was a mere hoax, and that the bridegroom never sought her, but had definitively left the neighbourhood.

"Castelle succeeded in making Vivian believe that his mesmeric influence might prove salutary to Mademoiselle D'Albremont, who before and after her marriage with Vivian, fancied herself much benefitted by it. With the extraordinary power which he seemed to exercise over all who knew him, and that in some cases he enhanced by his own belief in the possession of supernatural power, he fascinated this poor girl, who, as well as Vivian, relied entirely on him for her restoration to health.

"For the better accomplishment of this object, Castelle was invited to Vivian's
country house near Paris, and soon after his establishment there, Mrs. Vivian gradually sank into the grave, which he had prepared for her. Day by day she grew weaker, till at last, rescued from his merciless treatment through an incident which only accelerated her death by a few hours, she died the victim of his thirst for gold, and his morbid desire to witness the dramatic circumstances of pain and death. With the venom of the serpent he had destroyed one victim; with its voice he consoled the other, cheering him onwards to the time when he, too, already enlaced in the reptile's coils, should perish by the venomed sting.

"In Vivian's society at Paris Castelle became acquainted with an English heiress, a Miss Somerton, whose large fortune attracted the student's cupidity; it would be the means of reaching that social eminence from which his genius was to enlighten mankind."
"Miss Somerton, shortly before her arrival in Paris, had married a Mr. Edward Annesley in England, with whom her bridal journey was interrupted by the intervention of a gentleman who had hastened to bring the recently-acquired intelligence to Annesley that a ceremony in France, at which he believed a pretended clergyman had officiated, was performed by a real divine, substituted in joke for the pretender by a wild friend, who made this change for his own entertainment rather than from any proper moral or religious scruple.

"Annesley had assumed this man's name to conceal his identity, and was actually the person, under the name of Benson, whose elopement with Clelia St. Clair D'Albremont I just noticed. On receiving this startling intelligence, Miss Somerton proceeded at once to Paris, while her crestfallen companion, Annesley, returned immediately to London, where he was soon
arrested, and imprisoned for a lengthened period by a multitude of creditors, to whom he owed considerable sums of money.

"Lawyers, employed by both parties, vainly endeavoured to ascertain the authenticity of Annesley's first marriage; but Captain Benson, whose name he had assumed, and who had encouraged his treachery, is still in India, and unable or unwilling to prove the ordination of the supposed clergyman, now deceased, who performed the ceremony.

"One of the most curious circumstances of this case is the friendship which united, in Paris, the two persons whom Annesley had deceived.

"Miss Somerton and Clelia D'Albremont were totally ignorant of each other's adventures, for the relatives of the latter were unaware of her supposed marriage, and the relinquishment of her first name and assumption of the second, with the disuse of the
saint's name, Marie, borne by her at the convent, prevented recognition; while Miss Somerton's wedding had not been published in England—a hint having been given to Annesley's family that it was advisable to keep his proceedings secret.

"With a hope that Miss Somerton might be released from her first engagement, Castelle projected his own union with her, and hearing that Annesley, now released from his pecuniary difficulties by the generosity of a relative, had proceeded to the south of France to make further attempts at the convent to discover Marie St. Clair, he immediately followed him there, and arrived in time to be summoned professionally to heal wounds which had been inflicted by three ruffians, who waylaid Annesley, and left him, as they hoped, dead under the walls of the building.

"Contrary to their expectations, he soon revived, and crawled back, after nightfall, unmolested to his inn, from whence persons
were despatched in all directions to secure the assassins, who, however, escaped pursuit, protected, no doubt, by powerful friends. Under Castelle's treatment Annesley made no progress towards convalescence; on the contrary, his local ailment was much aggravated by a general debility which it could not occasion. At this time, no suspicion occurred to him of Castelle's intentions, which, however, have been recently revealed by his perpetration of other delinquencies, and by the motive, now apparent, in his anxiety to be released from the dangerous rivalry of Annesley.

"Castelle, failing in his attempts to secure Miss Somerton's fortune—for he soon ascertained that Annesley's sincere repentance and reformed character were likely to reconcile her to him under any circumstance—now turned his attention to another object.

"He had recently renewed a former intimacy with an old schoolfellow, Auguste
Baillet, whose ill health he appeared very anxious to improve. This young man, grateful for his gratuitous attendance, and probably ensnared, like Vivian, by his subtle treachery, made a will constituting Castelle his sole legatee. Impatient to secure the wealth which he so eagerly desired, Castelle precipitated this Baillet's fate by inducing him to go to St. Cloud for a few days' pleasure. There this unfortunate victim quickly sickened and died, under circumstances which surprised his family, and the physicians Castelle artfully summoned to sanction his apparent treatment.

"Even now Castelle was not inculpated, and he departed with his friend Vivian for Cornwall, relying on the usual immunity which hitherto favoured him. It had latterly made him rash, for the police discovered that on the day of Baillet's death, he had purchased from a druggist in Paris a certain preparation of Morphia, compounded and named by himself. An order, signed
with his name, procured this drug, for it was well known in the trade, although his person was strange to the shopman where he purchased it.

“Of all the accusations which I have enumerated,” continued the Procureur-Général, “this murder of Baillet’s is the best attested by numerous witnesses, whose evidence you will find conclusive; still the autopsy has not corroborated them, for this adept in his art made no chemical blunders that would betray him.

“Castelle, criminated by incontestable evidence, was followed to England, and captured just as he returned to France, at Amiens, after having escaped the pursuit of English detectives, armed with a warrant for his apprehension, on the charge which I first noticed, of poisoning Clelia Vivian. Castelle had immediately after Baillet’s death accompanied his friend Vivian to England, where, shut up in a castle on the coast of Cornwall, he would not
allow anyone to approach the ostensible recluse, but the virtual prisoner, whose fortune he hoped so soon to enjoy.

"Not even a young man, Charles Breton, deputed on business by his friends in Paris to see Vivian, was admitted by Castelle to his presence. This Charles Breton, suspecting that the accused had some sinister object in withdrawing Vivian from his friends, and hearing that he was ill and mostly confined to his room, effected a secret entrance into the castle, and in Castelle's room found close to a medicine, poison prepared for Vivian. Aware of Castelle's suspicious conduct in Paris, and of the rumours whispered there before his own departure, relative to Baillet's death, he proceeded at once to secure at a neighbouring town a warrant for Castelle's apprehension, and returning with the proper officers to put it in execution, found that the culprit had flown. After evading pursuit for several days, Castelle, relying on
the amiable credulity with which to the last Vivian believed in his innocence, returned to the castle at night, and the following day, disguised as a servant, accompanied Vivian to France, where he was apprehended by our agents."

The President next interrogated the accused, as is usual in France, with leading questions, which often make him criminate himself.

In answer to these opening interrogatories Castelle declared that he had been for years investigating the nature and effects of poisons, and that this study was prosecuted with the hope of discovering their antidotes, as well as of testing the benumbing influences of some narcotic substances which might yet be employed to deaden, if not to annihilate, the pain incidental to our physical nature, or that resulting from accidental causes. He was then questioned as to his purchase of poison just before Baillet's decease, and endeavoured to account for it
plausibly. In answer to the observations of the President on the circumstances of that young man's illness and death, Castelle attributed them to natural causes, and protested that he had never administered any deleterious substance to Baillet, either at St. Cloud, or previous to his journey there.

The jury were next requested to question the prisoner, and other queries put by the President finished his prolonged examination.

When it was terminated, the general witnesses were called, and amongst those whose suspicions had been aroused by the prisoner's conduct his own friends appeared in Court.

Leonora came there accompanied by her aged father, but in a few moments she entrusted him to the care of an official, with whom he left the hall. All eyes were attracted to her peculiar beauty, which was now brightened by the wild fiery brilliancy
of her eyes, lighted up with the fever of intense excitement.

Still her evidence was falteringingly given, her eyes carefully averted from the prisoner, and when the questions, which she seemed to answer mechanically, were, by the expert cross-examination of the querist, made to converge to the point which established Castelle’s guilt, then only did she appear to estimate the purport of her words; and then turning her face towards him, and giving a shriek of horror as she first perceived his eyes fixed upon hers, she rushed wildly out of the court. Castelle smiled; here was the last proof of that power which he exercised over others, as well as over this poor girl, whose devotion and constancy he had requited with such heartless cruelty.

But who advances into the court now? Who is this poor invalid supported by a tall dark priest, without whose help he could not walk or stand? His hair is blanched prematurely by sorrow and sick-
ness, which have traced furrows in his cheek, that, notwithstanding, still retains the unbroken outlines of youth. He trembles from head to foot, and dares not lift his eyes to where that miscreant stands, looking down unmoved upon this victim of his base treachery.

Vivian in a faint voice answered questions which seemed to harrow his soul, and to send back the life blood to congeal in his stricken heart; palsied now by the shock of hearing those full deep tones which had so often expressed to him the lying assurances of truth and affection.

On the third day of the trial was commenced the inquiry into Auguste Baillet's death.

The physician who attended him at St. Cloud, and those summoned from Paris to see him, were examined. And then the celebrated Dr. Laennec detailed the circumstances of his illness, and finished his evidence with these words: "I can affirm nothing as a
physician; but as a man I must say that if I had witnessed Auguste Baillet's death as it is described, I should have said that he was poisoned, and I would then have recommended the autopsy, which did not however detect the suspected drug, for being vegetable it left no trace in the body."

Referred to regarding this deposition, Castelle said—

"I have not committed this crime. I can look at that crucifix behind you, and swear that I am innocent!"

Eight physicians were subsequently questioned; amongst them Monsieur Chaussier, of the Faculté de Médecine, who declared that there was no vestige of poison or evidence of its action to be discovered in the body. Messieurs Barruel and Magendie deposed to the same effect, from a determination on the part of the profession to defend, for its own honour, a member accused of so black a crime.

The medical evidence concluded, it was
next proved that Castelle had induced his friend, Auguste Baillet, to make a will in his favour; and Monsieur Malassis, a notary's clerk, deposed to having been asked by Castelle if a physician could receive a legacy willed by a patient.

"In answer," said the witness, "I read to him the law relative to testamentary bequests."

"A few days afterwards he called again, and told me that the will was executed, and in his favour; and to my question respecting the testator's health, he said, 'that attacked with a serious malady, he spat blood, but was not under his own professional treatment.'"

Monsieur de Broe, Avocat-Général, after a speech from M. Persie, who was acting for the *parties civiles* in the case, terminated his own clever oration by alluding to the evidence which described Castelle's grief at the bed-side of Auguste.

"He may well have wept," said the
advocate-general, "he may well have wept for his own crimes,—he may well have trembled at that scene where the crucifix was held near him, when the last moans of his victim must have sounded like a voice from above, calling him to a far different tribunal from this before which he now stands. Castelle at once violated what is most sacred on earth,—religion and friendship. At eight o'clock that evening, at Saint Cloud, all was over! The universal legatee was invested with his victim's fortune."

Monsieur Roussel, for the defence, commenced his speech by asking the jury, "Is the accused culpable? This is a complex question subdivided into two principal queries. Has the crime been committed? and has it been perpetrated by the accused?"

Monsieur Roussel next protested that there was no proof of poisoning either by its symptoms or by chemical investigation. He then went through all the charges of
accusation against the prisoner, and finished by a warm appeal to the jury.

"Do not allow yourselves," he said, "to be led astray by the supposed alarm of society. Society would be more startled by a condemnation based on supposititious charges."

Monsieur Berryer spoke next, and terminated a very brilliant oration with these words:—"You have no doubt heard with religious care all that has been urged in defence of the accused, but now at this eventful crisis, when the debate is to be closed—now, when no other justificatory word will reach you—now, when you are about to exercise the most terrible power that society can exercise over its members, perhaps something more may be alleged for the defence of this unfortunate. Society is alarmed, security is questionable, grave suspicions accumulate, a conscientious magistrate has communicated to you his conviction—has even dictated to you your verdict;
yet if a new crime is perpetrated, it is on you that he will throw its responsibility!

"Allow me for a moment to enter into your deliberations, let me try to investigate with you the problem which you will so soon solve with one word. The law does not insist on questioning your conviction; the law asks but this: 'Are you convinced?' The juryman should say to himself, 'I am not required to particularize my judgment to others, but should I not scrutinize it myself? Should there be a question of innocence in my mind while I pronounce the fatal sentence?' Before you utter it, let me remind you of the words which a justly-celebrated French king addressed to the magistrates of his kingdom:—'Toutefois et quand Dieu ne leur a point donné le parfait éclaircissement d'un crime, c'est une marque qu'il ne veut pas les en faire juges et qu'il en reserve la décision à son suprême tribunal.'"

The jury entered the salle des délibérations at nine o'clock; two hours afterwards
they returned, bringing a verdict of guilty on the two last charges. As seven out of the twelve condemned the prisoner, the decision of the majority was adopted by the court, to the great astonishment of some English lawyers present.

At the direction of the President, Castelle, who had been previously removed, was now brought back to the court. He advanced with a firm step, and heard the verdict with composure, as well as the decision of the Avocat-Général, who recommended the punishment ordained by the law.

The President then put the usual question:

"Accused! have you anything to say as to the application of this punishment?"

Castelle rose, and in a clear, loud voice, said, "Non, Monsieur le Président. I know how to die, although unfortunate circumstances precipitate me into the tomb." Then, turning to the crucifix, he exclaimed, "I ask for no mercy here on earth; I invoke it
elsewhere. Meanwhile, I will walk joyfully to the scaffold, and death shall consummate the sacrifice which I have ever made of my mind, my life, and my soul to science."

Then, with able sophistry, he commenced his defence, deducing unexpected inferences from accredited assertions, referring acknowledged facts to unlooked-for causes. He declared that devotion to science was the sole motive for all his acts through life. With the air of offended dignity which would become an impeached hero, he asked, "Are not the suspicions which condemn me ever concurrent with the life of a studious recluse? Does not ignorance always mistrust the man whom it cannot understand? And were not the experiments of philosophy before now supposed to be the rites of sorcery in times when Roger Bacon was arraigned as the associate of demons; Galileo condemned as the champion of Atheism? Have not good and wise men expiated a foresight into futurity
by the loss of character and of life? To the ignorant, the improbable is ever the supernatural; genius is madness; faith in man's future omnipotence is sin. Still it was the magician's cauldron that generated the vapour which will yet give man the power to stem the tempest, and to breast the mountain-wave, like a mighty spirit ruling his native element. And in the alchemist's closet, too, another force was equally evolved that rivals light in swiftness, and mind in mystery, and will soon speed thought around the world with a flash.

"But while the supposed magician of old startled the superstitious with things beyond their conception, he was yet descrying through the lucid crystal, or in the vapoury exhalation, a vista into the future, which, though still obscured by the mist of prejudice and ignorance, is pervious to man's intellect, that, like another sun, will yet shine upon a new world of mind.

"Does not the chemist's, like the magi-
cian's wand, obliterate colour, odour, texture? They disappear and dissolve at his command. We know not but that, with some untried power, he may yet create as he destroys, and evolve from the refuse of the earth the necessaries of life, which nature, like an overtaxed mother, now supplies too scantily. For centuries yet her human progeny must strive, and toil, and pine, exhausting life that they may live, and paying with their strength to-day the price of food to-morrow.

"But life will yet be prolonged, and death postponed, and suffering annihilated by human intellect. The same drug with which you think that I destroyed life, the same substance with which you believe that I excited pain, will yet benumb it, when the quivering muscle may be steadied and the torturing consciousness obscured by the chemist's art. Then will man be dead to pain and still alive to pleasure.

"Now, even had I tested on others the
means of securing these great results, what would have been the cost? Two feeble lives you think I wished to sacrifice; and what were they? She, a drooping, fragile flower, nearly withered in the bud; he, the spendthrift of fortune's and of nature's gifts—ephemera both, born to live their little day, floating in the sunlight of a happy life. What had they done to earn this blessed existence on the pleasant surface of things, while so much below is dark, and turbid, and noisome? Perfume replaces on his brow that sweat which is ever the price we all should pay for life, while he basks listlessly in its sunshine, but purchases this leisured liberty with the tedium of a purposeless existence.

"On such terms do most men live; toil struggles for bread, with his strong muscle and horny hand; prosperity endures it, and seeks in pleasure for an escape from self, at once the idol and the spectre of the rich man's thoughts, the monster whom, like Franken-
stein, he has fashioned, pampered, fostered, and then flies from with a frantic speed that hurries him onward headlong to death. But this sad state of things may not last long.

"We bear its burdens now, during a transition period. But I see into a distant era, when, wearied with the struggles of life, man will rest again, just as of old, upon the maternal bosom of nature, where he will find peace and rest from exhausting toil and wearying pleasure, where he will abandon all that is not conservative of peaceful life and natural happiness. Then will commence the pastoral golden age, to last till the world sinks to sleep, in the stillness of lulled passions and exhausted life, tired, yet becalmed, by the wearisome experience of past ages."

With what a voice, with what a mien, he uttered this! They enthralled the audience more than his words, and that power which he seemed to exercise over all within its influ-
ence, checked the remonstrances with which the President would otherwise have objected to what was irrelevant in his harangue.

For some moments a breathless silence prevailed in the court; all were amazed at Castelle's speech, which neither repelled nor extenuated the charges brought against him. It seemed as if he believed his crimes to be a justifiable offering to science. When the lawyers recovered their surprise, the advocate of Baillet's relations read a document promulgating the nullity of his will. Castelle then turned abruptly to him, and with a thrilling voice, cried—

"You sought my death: you have compassed it!"

The effect of this cry was startling; the jury and the public seemed equally excited. At that moment its effect was enhanced by surrounding circumstances, for the clock had just struck twelve with slow and resounding strokes, and the lamps, nearly burnt out,
threw a flickering and lurid light over the upturned countenances of all assembled, which were now haggard and colourless, altered by fatigue, suspense, and awe.

Roussel, Castelle's advocate, was just then seated alone upon the bench from which the accused was defended, his colleagues having previously withdrawn with the court. Castelle advanced, and seizing his hand, said, in a firm voice—

"Do not fear for me, my friend; I am calm, I am innocent."

Then, turning to the junior lawyers and some young men who were standing near, he added—

"You, my contemporaries—you, my fellow-students, who have assisted at my trial, follow me to my execution, and see how I can die! A speedy death is the only boon I ask for now."

The bell that chimed to announce the return of the court interrupted Castelle.
He turned to the door at which they entered. All eyes took the same direction, and fixed on the President's countenance; while, in the profound silence that pervaded the court, in which you could hear the hurried gaspings of emotion, the spasm of fear, awe, and revenge, he pronounced with a deep and solemn voice these words:

"The court, according to the declaration of the jury, and complying with the Articles 48 and 302 of the Penal Code, condemn Castelle to the punishment of death."

When, during that pause, every eye was fixed upon the prisoner—whose countenance alone betrayed no emotion, while a mixed feeling of surprise and doubt was evident on all others—he stood resolute and unmoved, turning with an inquisitive glance to that part of the hall where his friends were placed, as if looking for the effect of the sentence upon them.

Danvers and Breton alone remained; the
others had returned home as soon as their examination was over. But Villabella was fixed near the spot, and sat in an outer hall, still disbelieving the extent of his friend's guilt, and uninformed as to the unquestionable evidence convicting him.
CHAPTER XII.

"Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temp'rance, over appetite to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly."

Milton.

Danvers saw Vivian that night. Exhausted by the day's emotion, he lay upon his bed, while Jerome sat beside him, and announced their intention of proceeding next day to the South. They were to visit the beach where Clelia had wandered at the time when the confessor was so well acquainted with the hopes and thoughts of her early unclouded life, the details of which Frederick now listened to with mournful enjoyment. Frederick would then commence his novitiate in a monastery directed by the
pious father, near the convent where she had resided.

Agnes saw Vivian the next day; their farewell was distressing to both. When bidding her adieu for the last time, he placed in her hand a paper assigning to her his fine house in Paris.

"She lived there a few happy months," he said. "It is filled with relics of that time; preserve them carefully, dear Agnes, for her sake; to no one else would I confide them. Danvers once loved her; he will prize these mementos of one the loss of whose affection would have blighted him for life, had a longer interval ripened his early prepossession to the maturity of passion, such as that which was once the joy, and will now be the extinction, of my life."

To Leonora he sent a sum of money, and settled on Madame D’Albremont a considerable annuity.

Miss Somerton and Leonora were advised by their physician to leave Paris imme-
diately after the trial, and with the hope of diverting their thoughts as much as possible from the impending catastrophe, they therefore proceeded to England, accompanied by Villabella, Ernest, and Danvers; intending to remain at Dover till all was over.

Breton did not delay long before he joined them, bringing the latest intelligence which they could receive of the miserable Castelle; when all heard with surprise that Vivian had visited his wretched friend before leaving Paris, and succeeded in persuading him to listen to spiritual consolation.

On no account would the culprit receive Father Jerome; but an able and excellent priest, who attended the prison, had latterly awakened his torpid conscience, and inspired him with the desire to supplicate for that mercy which he had denied to others. The day after Breton's arrival was to be the last that would dawn upon the prisoner; and his old associates commenced it with mournful thoughtfulness.
When the terrible hour struck, they heard it in pensive silence; each had avoided the painful subject that morning, from a dread of distressing the rest.

Old Villabella alone neglected this precaution, when, after listening from the first until the eleventh stroke sounded, he prayed aloud; falling on his knees, he cried for mercy on the sinner, who at last relaxed from the firmness with which he had hitherto resisted all spiritual consolation. Leonora knelt beside him, sobbing a response to his petition.

The others meekly bent their heads, and mentally joined in supplicating pardon for the terrible culprit; while Danvers, with a trembling voice, bewailed aloud the perversion of such transcendent abilities.

"Let this example prove to us," said he, "the insufficiency of mere human intelligence for the conduct of human life. Let it teach us that while the pride of intellect lures man along a brilliant path, which leads only
to the temple of worldly fame, the meekness of humility keeps him in the obscure byways that reach the sanctuary of Christian wisdom.

"Castelle has proved how unavailing is the genius which takes a wrong direction, and how the simplest mind, defiant of itself, and resting solely on the sacred words that have been transmitted to us unchanged through centuries, by the divine will, can show the philosopher how all the secrets which science pretends to reveal, elucidate but the semblance of things, the essence of which his senses cannot compass, while he looks through the dark glass of our restricted perceptions, beyond which no mortal eye can penetrate."

After the expiration of some days Agnes and Leonora improved in health and spirits.

The astonishment and distress of the last months diverted Agnes and Danvers from their own immediate concerns, but now it was time to attend to them, and an early
day was fixed for the marriage ceremony, which was performed quietly in the parish church at Dover; the bridal pair starting afterwards to spend a fortnight at Avignon.

Miss Williams remained in Paris, with Madame de Belleville, to be occasionally favoured by visits from Madame D'Albre-mont, who preferred even the company of two ladies whom she disliked, to remaining at home in her own society; although, she was not quite callous enough to accompany the Mantonfords and Sir Harry on their pleasure excursions to restaurants, and to theatres, and other public places which they frequented.

Mr. and Mrs. Danvers performed their journey happily to Avignon, from thence proceeding to visit the scene of Danvers's accident, and locating themselves with the musical philosopher.

They strolled along the shore on the evening of their arrival, and Edward showed Agnes the timeworn root, seated on which he
had first seen Clelia. It was a penance he longed to perform, to look again upon that spot, where he had so often whispered his fatal admiration, where he had so fervently offered his withering love to the poor victim of his iniquity. He sat now, beside Agnes, near the old root, dejected and silent.

She walked away, along the beach, leaving him alone with his retributive thoughts, to offer a supplication for forgiveness, which Clelia never heard on earth, but which she might now accept, where his more earnest prayers for pardon would also be conceded, enhanced as they were by solemn promises of repentance.

Every evening while they remained in the neighbourhood, towards sunset, he returned to the strand alone; it seemed to him that Clelia's spirit hovered over the spot, to compassionate his sorrow, and to inspire his prayers.

After a tour along the coast towards Nice, the bridal pair returned to Paris, and
found Madame de Belleville under Miss Williams's care, improved in looks and intelligence. She informed Agnes, with much animation, that her military lord was now shut up fast in a prison, from which she did not mean to extricate him.

He had but lately returned from an elopement with some new flame when he was imprisoned, and now his entreaties for pardon, and assurances that the lady deposited in Italy was never to trouble him more, were accompanied by a modest request that Madame would discharge his pecuniary liabilities.

It was supposed that he wished to proceed to America, where Mr. O'Rourk had already arrived, and from whence he wrote flourishing letters to assure M. de Belleville that they might both realize something handsome in the matrimonial market at New York, where aristocracy is purchased at any price. A wife or two in Europe were no impediments to other connubial engagements there,
when the Atlantic was a formidable barrier between the past and the present, and not bridged over, as it now is, with steam, that brings intelligence from that land of promise of what is past before it occurs.

Mr. O'Rourk had engaged himself to various ladies in all directions, and managed to make a couple of wives in Ireland believe themselves widows, by writing anonymous letters purporting to come from some friend who had witnessed his last moments, and sending a lock of somebody's red hair—his own being now dyed raven black—accompanied by tender messages from the moribund that nearly broke the soft hearts of the two poor Irishwomen, inconsolable for the loss of their "exile of Erin," deceased in a foreign land, and buried there amongst the heathen.

An account of O'Rourk's exploits had been sent by an acquaintance to Sir Harry Ashworth.

His own prospects were equally about to change, for, having ascertained that the old
lady from whom Rosalind Mantonford expected a fortune was in very bad health, his tender assiduities redoubled immediately, and became very irritating to Mirabel, who, although she would under any circumstance have accepted Danvers and his large income, still professed the most disinterested contempt for money, and the most sentimental susceptibility to mere personal recommendations. She therefore carped at her sister's choice whenever there was an opportunity, but was too languid to express herself in general forcibly, having no great command of language, and finding words of one syllable better suited to the state of her health, and the character of her refinement, than others that required a more troublesome enunciation. In the midst of the Mantonfords' gaieties the old aunt really did die suddenly, and almost the first intimation of the event which reached Rosalind was the invitation to her funeral, which is supposed by lawyers to be the most con-
clusive assurance of heirship that they can offer to the happy expectant and their own anticipated client.

Rosalind, shadowed by merinos and black crape, almost offered herself and forty thousand pounds to Sir Harry. He did not require much persuasion to accept them, to his cost, for even his careless temperament could not rescue him from the annoyances with which the young Lady Ashworth's flighty conduct ultimately disturbed his latter days. She flirted generally and particularly, and, like many silly women who imagine that the admiration which is always at the command of those who court it, bespeaks peculiar charms, gloried in the adulation of men who laughed in their sleeves at her vanity, or boasted aloud of her facility. And when their glances and innuendos had published her folly and indiscretion—when sensible women openly discouraged her acquaintance with their daughters—when prudent husbands drew their
wives away from her companionship—when her female dependents held up their heads with a conscious sense of their own superior virtue; it was but a poor compensation for these slights and indignities, to feel assured that Captain Black, of the Invincibles, and Major White, of the Irregulars, were helplessly in love with her. These military heroes, however, had not fallen victims to female charms alone, but rather succumbed to her second-class *batterie de cuisine*—a powerful instrument, generally very efficient in ensuring the victories of female charms.

Lady Mary was even satisfied with Rosalind's marriage, and settled herself in Paris near Madame D'Albremont. Fortunately the finances of both ladies were now much improved, and each appeared far happier than she had ever been before. The faint Mirabel did not want for suitors, and Madame D'Albremont resolved on investing
that young lady's very inferior legacy so as to insure from a grateful husband a good percentage in dinners and other pleasant payments to herself of that debt of gratitude on which, alas! so little interest is ever received. Mirabel, however, chose for her partner a German count who possessed a "castle in the air" near Bavaria, and as many sparkling orders on his breast as if he had conquered Europe instead of Mirabel's affections, for which exploit alone I believe he merited distinction.

Miss Williams and Madame de Belleville remained in Paris to terminate some lawsuit with which Belleville had entangled his wife's property. There several military men of the old army tried to persuade Madame de Belleville that she was a widow and open to a fresh engagement, till Miss Williams at last deemed it advisable to bring the poor woman back to England rather than risk the perpetration of bigamy, which
might have crowned the success of a seductive adventurer whose charms Madame de Belleville found irresistible.

Even Miss Williams did not escape the French invasion of British hearts with which some of her acquaintances wished to display their military ardour. Averse to holy alliances with Gaul, deprecating the annexations of English fortunes that occurred around her, Miss Williams, like a British lion rampant, spurned the *entente cordiale*. She preferred other duties to those of matrimony, cherished Mrs. Jones, educated Agnes’s children, benefited her own relatives, relieved the poor, nursed the sick, and did not supply the State with a dozen superfluous substitutes for the wretched emigrants who are obliged to abandon house and home in order to make room for encroaching juvenile interlopers.

Belleville, Agnes heard, was comfortably settled in America, having married a rich black woman, who, in a turban and scarlet
dress, was called the Duchess de Belleville. His ally, O'Rourk, preferred polygamy to a monotonous solitary engagement, and, furnished with the pension which his wife supplied, fluttered over the United States, culling pecuniary sweets in every district.

Of Vivian, Agnes heard cheering accounts. His gentle, reliant nature, which had required a human support through this world, now rested in his religious seclusion upon a higher stay.
CHAPTER XIII.

"What is the World to them,
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all?
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High Fancy forms, and lavish Hearts can wish,
Or on the mind, or mind-illumined face;
Truth, Goodness, Honour, Harmony, and Love,
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven."

Thomson.

Leonora often came to visit her old friends in England, accompanied by Ernest D’Arval, recently the husband of Clara Breton, who watched him during his abstracted moods with patient care, never interrupting his reveries when he sat gazing on the portrait of Eulalie. Charles Breton happened always to arrive in England while Leonora was there; but neither this attention, nor other warmer proofs of regard, could divert the resolute artist from her purpose. She soon became a celebrated painter, and was one of the early pioneers on the road to progress who
have shown their weaker sisters how to earn an honourable independence. However mistrustful of married happiness, she was obliged to allow that Agnes enjoyed it to a great extent, and that her beautiful children were not purchased too dearly at the cost of trouble and anxiety.

Clelia, the elder, was the most engaging, and resembled her namesake both in gentleness and beauty. For the sake of her health the Danverses, three years after their marriage, accompanied by Leonora, proceeded to spend a winter in Italy. To give Made- moiselle Villabella an opportunity of seeing some old relatives, and revisiting the scenes of her early life, the travellers halted for a month at Padua. There the history of Castelle's fearful crimes, and their public expiation, had naturally excited great interest amongst those who had once been his fellow-students and preceptors. Signor B——, the most distinguished Professor of the college at Padua, questioned Danvers
eagerly on the subject of the poisoner's enormities, and expressed his own disappointment at the termination of a career which was expected to have been so brilliant. Still, although Castelle's early successes had warranted this anticipation, it was materially qualified by the apprehension that his visionary speculations would detract from the value of discoveries which might otherwise have startled the world by their bold achievements.

"Castelle," said the professor, "was an exceptional example of that incompleteness in the human mind by which the most transcendent abilities are marred for want of the counterpoise of complementary qualities that should balance them. The mystery," he continued, "with which Castelle's experiments were prosecuted deprives us now of the advantages which would accrue from their promulgation, for the records of his experience are noted in a secret cipher. Several volumes written in cabalistic cha-
acters have been at the request of his early colleagues forwarded from Paris to Padua, but neither skill nor industry can discover a key to elucidate them. It is now ascertained that Castelle had invented a language applicable to science, as well as written characters in which to indite it.

"Amongst the reports circulated at Padua concerning the chemist’s antecedents was one ascribing to him a high parentage, at the cost of his mother’s reputation, as the son of a potentate reigning at the time; it was even said that an attachment, known to have subsisted between this personage and Madame Castelle, justified the supposition that her son inherited the abilities of one who once ruled the destinies of Europe."

Agnes heard strange stories of his student life at Padua, where, like Faust, he was supposed to derive his powers from
unholy patrons, and to associate with some mysterious being, the delegate of a very questionable principal. Agnes smiled at these reports; but Leonora listened to them with trembling awe, declaring that she remembered having seen Castelle occasionally in company with a strange-looking individual whom she now believed to have been the evil genius that equally inspired his genius and instigated his crimes. Although never clearly distinguishing this person's face, she stated that some strange feeling crept over her whenever he was near, which alone warned her of his proximity, for his step was noiseless, and his movements gliding and flitting, unlike those of a substantial being. Of course Castelle's late neighbours at Padua readily confirmed her suspicions, asserting that the dark face of this man was often seen in the twilight looking out of Castelle's windows, where behind the blinds at night his shadow was equally observed intercepting the light of the student's lamp,
while together they held unholy vigils in his laboratory:

This follower, whom they believed to be Castelle's familiar spirit, was never far off when the student appeared, and had been met not only in the woods near Padua at nightfall, but was frequently seen looking in at the open windows of rooms with solitary occupants, while no casement, however elevated above the ground, was secure from his peering scrutiny, which seemed to pursue some unlucky persons in every direction.

Once, soon after the Danvers's arrival at Padua, Leonora returned very late in the evening from visiting a friend, and rushing into Agnes's room, which was on the ground floor, and covering her face with her hands, she in an agitated voice besought Danvers to save her from Castelle's phantom associate, who she declared had just appeared, and followed her home. Danvers rushed to the
door in the hope of discovering some tangible representative of the spiritual world; but neither man nor apparition was near.

Leonora next saw the dreaded intruder at midnight, seated in her bed-room; and the following evening, towards dusk, she again perceived him gazing at her in the looking-glass, while no one stood in the place from whence he appeared to be reflected. Quite tired of her delusions, the Danverses determined on proceeding to Florence, where they soon diverted her attention from phantom images to the realities of the splendid museums, where her artistic tastes were readily captivated by the masterpieces of painting and sculpture which they enclosed.

Agnes was not long at Florence before receiving a visit from Sir Harry and Lady Ashworth, who had been some time in Italy to relieve the baronet’s gout, for which purpose his wife declared that Florentine air was infallible. He was so much altered
that Danvers looked amazed at his changed aspect. The dark whiskers, once jet black, had now become piebald, the jaunty gait had collapsed to a sauntering lounge, and the well-fitting clothes were succeeded by very loose apparel, the gloss of which had long disappeared. Altogether the poor baronet’s plight seemed to be a warning moral to the follies of his former life. Regardless of this change, his wife flirted, and danced, and rode, and walked incessantly, was everywhere, and did everything, almost equalling our own fast female contemporaries in the active idleness that startled her associates, who at that period took their time to enjoy whatever was agreeable, instead of hunting pleasure on fashionable galloping hobby-horses, as we do, and often coming in at the death.

Lady Ashworth frightened the languid Italians by her velocity when she pranced past their crawling equipages, or paced over the ground with the ability and
earnestness of a professional pedestrian. In all her exploits she was accompanied by a rakish-looking, middle-aged Englishman, who was said to be the conquering hero of all the fair ladies within the range of his destructive charms.

It appeared that as Lady Ashworth's fortune was settled on herself, this Lothario hoped to derive some pecuniary advantage from the connexion, and induced the foolish woman to elope.

Florence was startled a few days after the Danverses' arrival by hearing that the handsome Lady Ashworth had abandoned her old husband to decamp the previous evening with the ci-devant Adonis, Mr. Byren. Danvers had scarcely recovered from his share of the surprise, before Sir Harry appeared, agitated and irate, to require his companionship in pursuit of the guilty fugitives. He had resolved on obliging the treacherous Byren to give him satisfaction; directing at that gentle-
man, as well as at the partner of his flight, a volley of invectives, occasionally diverted from them to the pain in his left foot, which he recklessly provoked by stamping as if beneath it were prostrated the bodies of both traitors.

Danvers consented to accompany his old friend with the view of preventing the threatened duel, and of inducing Lady Ashworth to abandon her worthless paramour. Danvers had twice seen this man riding with her at Florence, but, being as we know very short-sighted, he could not distinguish his features, nor was there any other opportunity afforded of doing so, for Byren was prevented dining at Sir Harry's when invited to meet Danvers.

On overtaking the guilty pair, and demanding an interview with the seducer, great was Danvers's amazement on discovering the seductive Byren to be no other than that reverend gentleman who had performed the marriage ceremony at Nèvres
under the name of Howard. It was not long before Danvers discovered that his old acquaintance was neither a clergyman nor a very reputable layman; when he most impudently and indignantly disclaimed all participation in the transaction, protesting that he had never seen Danvers before, who from a likeness between him and some other person must have made one of those mistakes which are so common and so frequently the subject of magisterial interference in England.

It was now quite clear that the marriage between Danvers and Clelia had been but a farce, in which this worthless Byren, under the name of Howard, was one of the chief actors. Clelia had never been Danvers's wife, while she was legally united to Vivian. Well aware of the misery which a doubt on this subject had occasioned poor Frederick, Danvers determined on communicating the fact to him with the least possible delay. He would first endeavour to appease Sir
Harry, whose feelings of honour continued to trouble him, as much as the twinges of his gout, and if it were possible, he hoped also to persuade Lady Ashworth to abandon at once her unworthy seducer. On informing Sir Harry of Byren's alias, and the part he took in the transaction at Nèvres, and on convincing him that such an adventurer was quite unworthy of the honour intended for him, it was settled that the projected duel should be abandoned. Danvers was to inform Lady Ashworth of the character of her lover, and to persuade her to proceed to Milan, there to wait until Lady Mary Mantonford, apprized of her predicament by Danvers, should consent to receive her. He did not find it as easy to convince Lady Ashworth of Byren's worthlessness as Sir Harry, for while Danvers was engaged with the baronet, she had no doubt been listening to the protest of Byren against Danvers's assumption that he had ever acted the disgraceful part
ascribed to him; and when the proposal that she should return to her mother was made by Danvers, he found her decision to remain with Byren was irrevocable. Sir Harry might divorce her immediately, she said, as she preferred Byren to him, and did not anticipate any inconvenience from the change, for divorced wives were exceedingly fashionable in Italy. Any woman, she added, could not fail to be recommended by having two husbands alive where so many of the sex fail to secure one.

She soon departed with her intended from the village where they were overtaken, the gentleman, no doubt, very well pleased that any circumstance, however disgraceful to himself, should avert the threatened combat, which, at all hazards, he had determined to avoid, having heard that Sir Harry once maimed a belligerent, whom he had provoked to single combat by compromising attentions to the poor man's wife.
Ashworth was now not less pleased than Byren to retire peaceably from the field, as his valour had been much impaired by the irresistible attacks of gout and rheumatism; he therefore returned to Florence with Danvers, very anxious to learn from the lawyers what amount of his wife's personal property he could retain, in the event of a transfer of her person from himself to Byren.

Having deposited the appeased baronet at Rome, Danvers proceeded to Florence, previous to his departure for the neighbourhood of Nèvres. Being confirmed by Agnes in his desire to afford Vivian the consolation which he was now able to impart, he started on his mission of kindness a few days after his return to Florence. Forewarned by some person conversant with the practices of the Romish Church of the value of such a document, Danvers procured a recommendation from the Pope's Nuncio at Florence to the mon-
astery where he was proceeding; from this functionary he learnt that Vivian was lately elected the abbot.

For some time the passing incidents of Danvers's life had diverted him from the painful reminiscences so long suggestive of the remorse by which he had expiated his early follies. They had faded behind the stirring events of the present into a dim perspective, the background of his thoughts.

Now the sight of a participator in his worst misdeeds gave them greater intensity, and grouped around him the scenes of the past, which seemed consolidated to a present reality. As they crowded to his memory, he rejoiced at the resolve which had brought him away from home, on a long journey, to comfort the man whom he had involuntarily injured, one who had been so tenderly beloved by Clelia.

The route was long and tedious, and Danvers's thoughts darkened it, and depres-
sion aggravated the fatigue of uninterrupted travelling in gloomy wintry weather.

Very different from the Convent of St. Augustin was the monastery over which Vivian presided; the one, elevated above the adjacent country, lighted by the earliest sunbeams reflected from a glassy sea, and fanned by the perfumed winds that swept over the adjacent orange-groves; the other, sunk in a dark hollow, between sterile hills and overhanging rocks, looked like a premature grave, from whence the sun and sky were excluded.

Danvers was at once admitted to the presence of the abbot, who, pale and emaciated by penances and privation, looked the shadow of his former self. Two attendants never left the room, and Danvers supposing that the presence of associates at all times was required by the rules of the order, and unwilling to object to them, so expressed his communication as to make it intelligible to Vivian, while obscure to those who
were not quite cognisant of its subject. When Danvers announced the object of his visit, the hectic spot upon Vivian's emaciated cheek deepened, and the half-quenched light of his dimmed eyes rekindled, and the poor, fragile frame trembled. He looked as if spirit now nearly replaced the matter which had once invested it, and would soon cast off what remained to emerge from the mortal restraints of a temporary imprisonment.

"I little thought," said he, pressing Danvers's hand, "that any intelligence from the outer world could have such interest for me now; but you bring tidings that relate to one who has long left it, and found a home where I shall soon join her. Long convinced that she was wholly and solely mine, I did not require the assurances which you so kindly bring me; but to some of Clelia's friends it will be consolatory to know that she was bound to me by the sacred rites of our church, and that here,
where I can direct the performance of religious duties, masses are daily said to enhance her prayers by our own. A lamp burns incessantly before a shrine, where her effigy will yet be placed, when my appeal to Rome for her canonization is granted."

Danvers, after a prolonged interview with Vivian, left the monastery, proceeding immediately to Florence, where he passed the winter, and then returned with his family, to resume the active useful life in England lately interrupted by their visit to Italy. Leonora Villabella, who had left Florence, soon after their arrival there, to join her father, came accompanied by him and D'Arval to spend the autumn with Agnes. Miss Williams and Madame de Belleville, rescued from her foreign adorers, joined them, and entered into the rural pleasures of a happy country home.

Castelle's name was never mentioned.

His late associates wished to banish all recollection of their intercourse with that
guilty man, while Danvers and Agnes, by a life of Christian virtue, which fully proved how earnestly they had asked for the will and the power to do good, seemed anxious to atone for it.

Their benevolence extended to all classes: they loved to give pleasure to the prosperous as well as to afford comfort to the afflicted, never attempting to exalt their own virtues upon a hecatomb of the faults and foibles of others. Nor did they pretend that proclaimed piety or dramatic observances are the proofs of religious devotion, or equivalents for the practice of those charities of which the seeds are sown in the human heart by the hand of God, to be fertilized only by His grace.
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