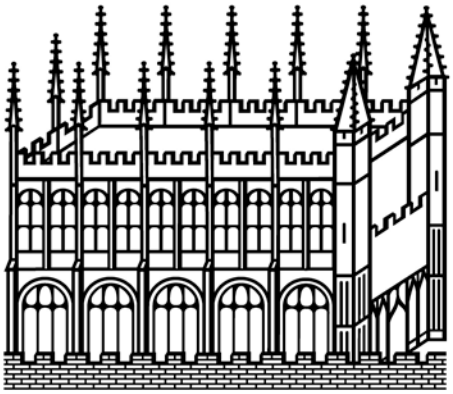


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CECILIA,

OR

MEMOIRS

OF AN

HEIRESS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF EVELINA.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed for T. PAYNE and SON at the Mews-Gate, and T. CADELL in the Strand.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE indulgence ſhewn by the Public to EVELINA, which, unpatronized, unaided, and unowned, paſt through Four Editions in one Year, has encouraged its Author to riſk this SECOND attempt. The animation of ſucceſs is too univerſally acknowledged, to make the writer of the following ſheets dread much cenſure of temerity; though the precarioufneſs of any power to give pleaſure, ſuppreſſes all vanity of confidence, and ſends CECILIA into the world with ſcarce more hope, though far more encouragement, than attended her highly-honoured predeceſſor, EVELINA.

JULY, 1782.

CECILIA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

A JOURNEY.

"PEACE to the ſpirits of my honoured parents, reſpected be their remains, and immortalized their virtues! may time, while it moulders their frail relicks to duſt, commit to tradition the record of their goodneſs; and Oh may their orphan-deſcendant be influenced through life by the remembrance of their purity, and be ſolaced in death, that by her it was unſullied!"

Such was the ſecret prayer with which the only ſurvivor of the Beverley family quitted the abode of her youth, and reſidence of her forefathers; while tears of recollecting ſorrow filled her eyes, and obſtructed

ſtructed the laſt view of her native town which had excited them.

Cecilia, this fair traveller, had lately entered into the one-and-twentieth year of her age. Her anceſtors had been rich farmers in the county of Suffolk, though her father, in whom a ſpirit of elegance had ſupplanted the rapacity of wealth, had ſpent his time as a private country gentleman, ſatisfied, without increaſing his ſtore, to live upon what he inherited from the labours of his predeceſſors. She had loſt him in her early youth, and her mother had not long ſurvived him. They had bequeathed to her 10,000 *l.* and conſigned her to the care of the Dean of ——, her uncle. With this gentleman, in whom, by various contingencies, the accumulated poſſeſſions of a riſing and proſperous family were centred, ſhe had paſſed the laſt four years of her life; and a few weeks only had yet elapſed ſince his death, which, by depriving her of her laſt relation, made her heireſs to an eſtate of 3000 *l.* per annum; with no other reſtriction than that of annexing her name, if ſhe married, to the diſpoſal of her hand and her riches.

But though thus largely indebted to fortune, to nature ſhe had yet greater obligations: her form was elegant, her heart was liberal; her countenance announced the intelligence

telligence of her mind, her complexion varied with every emotion of her ſoul, and her eyes, the heralds of her ſpeech, now beamed with underſtanding and now gliſtened with ſenſibility.

For the ſhort period of her minority, the management of her fortune and the care of her perſon, had by the Dean been entruſted to three guardians, among whom her own choice was to ſettle her reſidence: but her mind, ſaddened by the loſs of all her natural friends, coveted to regain its ſerenity in the quietneſs of the country, and in the boſom of an aged and maternal counſellor, whom ſhe loved as her mother, and to whom ſhe had been known from her childhood.

The Deanery, indeed, ſhe was obliged to relinquiſh, a long repining expectant being eager, by entering it, to bequeath to another the anxiety and ſuſpence he had ſuffered himſelf; though probably without much impatience to ſhorten their duration in favour of the next ſucceſſor; but the houſe of Mrs. Charlton, her benevolent friend, was open for her reception, and the alleviating tenderneſs of her converſation took from her all wiſh of changing it.

Here ſhe had dwelt ſince the interment of her uncle; and here, from the affectionate gratitude of her diſpoſition, ſhe had per-

haps been content to dwell till her own, had not her guardians interfered to remove her.

Reluctantly ſhe complied; ſhe quitted her early companions, the friend ſhe moſt revered, and the ſpot which contained the relicks of all ſhe had yet lived to lament; and, accompanied by one of her guardians, and attended by two ſervants, ſhe began her journey from Bury to London.

Mr. Harrel, this gentleman, though in the prime of his life, though gay, faſhionable and ſplendid, had been appointed by her uncle to be one of her truſtees; a choice which had for object the peculiar gratification of his niece, whoſe moſt favourite young friend Mr. Harrel had married, and in whoſe houſe he therefore knew ſhe would moſt wiſh to live.

Whatever good-nature could dictate or politeneſs ſuggeſt to diſpel her melancholy, Mr. Harrel failed not to urge; and Cecilia, in whoſe diſpoſition ſweetneſs was tempered with dignity, and gentleneſs with fortitude, ſuffered not his kind offices to ſeem ineffectual; ſhe kiſſed her hand at the laſt glimpſe a friendly hill afforded of her native town, and made an effort to forget the regret with which ſhe loſt ſight of it. She revived her ſpirits by plans of future happineſs, dwelt upon the delight with which ſhe ſhould meet

meet her young friend, and, by accepting his conſolation, amply rewarded his trouble.

Her ſerenity, however, had yet another, though milder trial to undergo, ſince another friend was yet to be met, and another farewel was yet to be taken.

At the diſtance of ſeven miles from Bury reſided Mr. Monckton, the richeſt and moſt powerful man in that neighbourhood, at whoſe houſe Cecilia and her guardian were invited to breakfaſt in their journey.

Mr. Monckton, who was the younger ſon of a noble family, was a man of parts, information and ſagacity; to great native ſtrength of mind he added a penetrating knowledge of the world, and to faculties the moſt ſkilful of inveſtigating the character of every other, a diſſimulation the moſt profound in concealing his own. In the bloom of his youth, impatient for wealth and ambitious of power, he had tied himſelf to a rich dowager of quality, whoſe age, though ſixty-ſeven, was but among the ſmaller ſpecies of her evil properties, her diſpoſition being far more repulſive than her wrinkles. An inequality of years ſo conſiderable, had led him to expect that the fortune he had thus acquired, would ſpeedily be releaſed from the burthen with which it was at preſent incumbered; but

his expectations proved as vain as they were mercenary, and his lady was not more the dupe of his proteſtations than he was himſelf of his own purpoſes. Ten years he had been married to her, yet her health was good, and her faculties were unimpaired; eagerly he had watched for her diſſolution, yet his eagerneſs had injured no health but his own! So ſhort-ſighted is ſelfiſh cunning, that in aiming no further than at the gratification of the preſent moment, it obſcures the evils of the future, while it impedes the perception of integrity and honour.

His ardour, however, to attain the bleſt period of returning liberty, deprived him neither of ſpirit nor inclination for intermediate enjoyment; he knew the world too well to incur it's cenſure by ill-treating the woman to whom he was indebted for the rank he held in it; he ſaw her, indeed, but ſeldom, yet he had the decency, alike in avoiding as in meeting her, to ſhew no abatement of civility and good breeding: but, having thus ſacrificed to ambition all poſſibility of happineſs in domeſtic life, he turned his thoughts to thoſe other methods of procuring it, which he had ſo dearly purchaſed the power of eſſaying.

The reſources of pleaſure to the poſſeſſors of wealth are only to be cut off by the ſa-

tiety

tiety of which they are productive: a ſatiety which the vigorous mind of Mr. Monckton had not yet ſuffered him to experience; his time, therefore, was either devoted to the expenſive amuſements of the metropolis, or ſpent in the country among the gayeſt of its diverſions.

The little knowledge of faſhionable manners and of the characters of the times of which Cecilia was yet miſtreſs, ſhe had gathered at the houſe of this gentleman, with whom the Dean her Uncle had been intimately connected: for as he preſerved to the world the ſame appearance of decency he ſupported to his wife, he was every where well received, and being but partially known, was extremely reſpected: the world, with its wonted facility, repaying his circumſpect attention to its laws, by ſilencing the voice of cenſure, guarding his character from impeachment, and his name from reproach.

Cecilia had been known to him half her life; ſhe had been careſſed in his houſe as a beautiful child, and her preſence was now ſolicited there as an amiable acquaintance. Her viſits, indeed, had by no means been frequent, as the ill-humour of Lady Margaret Monckton had rendered them painful to her; yet the opportunities they had afforded her of mixing with peo-

ple of faſhion, had ſerved to prepare her for the new ſcenes in which ſhe was ſoon to be a performer.

Mr. Monckton, in return, had always been a welcome gueſt at the Deanery; his converſation was to Cecilia a never-failing ſource of information, as his knowledge of life and manners enabled him to ſtart thoſe ſubjects of which ſhe was moſt ignorant; and her mind, copious for the admiſſion and intelligent for the arrangement of knowledge, received all new ideas with avidity.

Pleaſure given in ſociety, like money lent in uſury, returns with intereſt to thoſe who diſpenſe it: and the diſcourſe of Mr. Monckton conferred not a greater favour upon Cecilia than her attention to it repaid. And thus, the ſpeaker and the hearer being mutually gratified, they had always met with complacency, and commonly parted with regret.

This reciprocation of pleaſure had, however, produced different effects upon their minds; the ideas of Cecilia were enlarged, while the reflections of Mr. Monckton were embittered. He here ſaw an object who to all the advantages of that wealth he had ſo highly prized, added youth, beauty, and intelligence; though much her ſenior, he was by no means of an age to render his addreſ-

addreſſing her an impropriety, and the entertainment ſhe received from his converſation, perſuaded him that her good opinion might with eaſe be improved into a regard the moſt partial. He regretted the venal rapacity with which he had ſacrificed himſelf to a woman he abhorred, and his wiſhes for her final decay became daily more fervent. He knew that the acquaintance of Cecilia was confined to a circle of which he was himſelf the principal ornament, that ſhe had rejected all the propoſals of marriage which had hitherto been made to her, and, as he had ſedulouſly watched her from her earlieſt years, he had reaſon to believe that her heart had eſcaped any dangerous impreſſion. This being her ſituation, he had long looked upon her as his future property; as ſuch he had indulged his admiration, and as ſuch he had already appropriated her eſtate, though he had not more vigilantly inſpected into her ſentiments, than he had guarded his own from a ſimilar ſcrutiny.

The death of the Dean her Uncle had, indeed, much alarmed him; he grieved at her leaving Suffolk, where he conſidered himſelf the firſt man, alike in parts and in conſequence, and he dreaded her reſiding in London, where he foreſaw that numerous rivals, equal to himſelf in talents and

in riches, would ſpeedily ſurround her; rivals, too, youthful and ſanguine, not ſhackled by preſent ties, but at liberty to ſolicit her immediate acceptance. Beauty and independence, rarely found together, would attract a crowd of ſuitors at once brilliant and aſſiduous; and the houſe of Mr. Harrel was eminent for it's elegance and gaiety; but yet, undaunted by danger, and confiding in his own powers, he determined to purſue the project he had formed, not fearing by addreſs and perſeverance to enſure its ſucceſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

An Argument.

MR. Monckton had, at this time, a party of company aſſembled at his houſe for the purpoſe of ſpending the Chriſtmas holidays. He waited with anxiety the arrival of Cecilia, and flew to hand her from the chaiſe before Mr. Harrel could alight. He obſerved the melancholy of her countenance, and was much pleaſed to find that her London journey had ſo little power to charm her. He conducted her to the breakfaſt parlour, where Lady Margaret and his friends expected her.

Lady Margaret received her with a coldneſs that bordered upon incivility; iraſcible by nature and jealous by ſituation, the appearance of beauty alarmed, and of chearfulneſs diſguſted her. She regarded with watchful ſuſpicion whoever was addreſſed by her huſband, and having marked his frequent attendance at the Deanery, ſhe had ſingled out Cecilia for the object of her peculiar antipathy; while Cecilia, perceiving her averſion though ignorant of its cauſe, took care to avoid all intercourſe with her

but

but what ceremony exacted, and pitied in ſecret the unfortunate lot of her friend.

The company now preſent conſiſted of one lady and ſeveral gentlemen.

Miſs Bennet, the lady, was in every ſenſe of the phraſe, the humble companion of Lady Margaret; ſhe was low-born, meanly educated, and narrow-minded; a ſtranger alike to innate merit or acquired accompliſhments, yet ſkilful in the art of flattery, and an adept in every ſpecies of low cunning. With no other view in life than the attainment of affluence without labour, ſhe was not more the ſlave of the miſtreſs of the houſe, than the tool of it's maſter; receiving indignity without murmur, and ſubmitting to contempt as a thing of courſe.

Among the gentlemen, the moſt conſpicuous, by means of his dreſs, was Mr. Areſby, a captain in the militia; a young man who having frequently heard the words red-coat and gallantry put together, imagined the conjunction not merely cuſtomary, but honourable, and therefore, without even pretending to think of the ſervice of his country, he conſidered a cockade as a badge of politeneſs, and wore it but to mark his devotion to the ladies, whom he held himſelf equipped to conquer, and bound to adore.

The next who by forwardneſs the moſt officious

cious took care to be noticed, was Mr. Morrice, a young lawyer, who, though riſing in his profeſſion, owed his ſucceſs neither to diſtinguiſhed abilities, nor to ſkill-ſupplying induſtry, but to the art of uniting ſupplenefs to others with confidence in himſelf. To a reverence of rank, talents, and fortune the moſt profound, he joined an aſſurance in his own merit, which no ſuperiority could depreſs; and with a preſumption which encouraged him to aim at all things, he blended a good-humour that no mortification could leſſen. And while by the pliability of his diſpoſition he avoided making enemies, by his readineſs to oblige, he learned the ſureſt way of making friends by becoming uſeful to them.

There were alſo ſome neighbouring ſquires; and there was one old gentleman, who, without ſeeming to notice any of the company, ſat frowning in a corner.

But the principal figure in the circle was Mr. Belfield, a tall, thin young man, whoſe face was all animation, and whoſe eyes ſparkled with intelligence. He had been intended by his father for trade, but his ſpirit, ſoaring above the occupation for which he was deſigned, from repining led him to reſiſt, and from reſiſting, to rebel. He eloped from his friends, and contrived to enter the army. But, fond of the po-

lite

lite arts, and eager for the acquirement of knowledge, he found not this way of life much better adapted to his inclination than that from which he had eſcaped; he ſoon grew weary of it, was reconciled to his father, and entered at the Temple. But here, too volatile for ſerious ſtudy, and too gay for laborious application, he made little progreſs: and the ſame quickneſs of parts and vigour of imagination which united with prudence, or accompanied by judgment, might have raiſed him to the head of his profeſſion, being unhappily aſſociated with fickleneſs and caprice, ſerved only to impede his improvement, and obſtruct his preferment. And now, with little buſineſs, and that little neglected, a ſmall fortune, and that fortune daily becoming leſs, the admiration of the world, but that admiration ending ſimply in civility, he lived an unſettled and unprofitable life, generally careſſed, and univerſally ſought, yet careleſs of his intereſt and thoughtleſs of the future; devoting his time to company, his income to diſſipation, and his heart to the Muſes.

" I bring you," ſaid Mr. Monckton, as he attended Cecilia into the room, " a ſubject of ſorrow in a young lady who never gave diſturbance to her friends but in quitting them."

" If

"If ſorrow," cried Mr. Belfield, darting upon her his piercing eyes, "wears in your part of the world a form ſuch as this, who would wiſh to change it for a view of joy?"

"She's divinely handſome, indeed!" cried the captain, affecting an involuntary exclamation.

Mean time, Cecilia, who was placed next to the lady of the houſe, quietly began her breakfaſt; Mr. Morrice, the young lawyer, with the moſt eaſy freedom, ſeating himſelf at her ſide, while Mr. Monckton was elſewhere arranging the reſt of his gueſts, in order to ſecure that place for himſelf.

Mr. Morrice, without ceremony, attacked his fair neighbour; he talked of her journey, and the proſpects of gaiety which it opened to her view; but by theſe finding her unmoved, he changed his theme, and expatiated upon the delights of the ſpot ſhe was quitting. Studious to recommend himſelf to her notice, and indifferent by what means, one moment he flippantly extolled the entertainments of the town; and the next, rapturouſly deſcribed the charms of the country. A word, a look ſufficed to mark her approbation or diſſent, which he no ſooner diſcovered, than he ſlided into her opinion, with as much facility

cility and ſatisfaction as if it had originally been his own.

Mr. Monckton, ſuppreſſing his chagrin, waited ſome time in expectation that when this young man ſaw he was ſtanding, he would yield to him his chair: but the remark was not made, and the reſignation was not thought of. The captain, too, regarding the lady as his natural property for the morning, perceived with indignation by whom he was ſupplanted; while the company in general, ſaw with much ſurprize, the place they had ſeverally forborne to occupy from reſpect to their hoſt, thus familiarly ſeized upon by the man who, in the whole room, had the leaſt claim, either from age or rank, to conſult nothing but his own inclination.

Mr. Monckton, however, when he found that delicacy and good manners had no weight with his gueſt, thought it moſt expedient to allow them none with himſelf; and therefore, diſguiſing his diſpleaſure under an appearance of facetiouſneſs, he called out, "Come, Morrice, you that love Chriſtmas ſports, what ſay you to the game of move-all?"

"I like it of all things!" anſwered Morrice, and ſtarting from his chair, he ſkipped to another.

"So ſhould I too," cried Mr. Monck-

ton,

ton, inſtantly taking his place, "were I to remove from any ſeat but this."

Morrice, though he felt himſelf outwitted, was the firſt to laugh, and ſeemed as happy in the change as Mr. Monckton himſelf.

Mr. Monckton now, addreſſing himſelf to Cecilia, ſaid, "We are going to loſe you, and you ſeem concerned at leaving us; yet, in a very few months you will forget Bury, forget its inhabitants, and forget its environs."

"If you think ſo," anſwered Cecilia, "muſt I not thence infer that Bury, its inhabitants, and its environs, will in a very few months forget me?"

"Ay, ay, and ſo much the better!" ſaid Lady Margaret, muttering between her teeth, "ſo much the better!"

"I am ſorry you think ſo, madam," cried Cecilia, colouring at her ill-breeding.

"You will find," ſaid Mr. Monckton, affecting the ſame ignorance of her meaning that Cecilia really felt, "as you mix with the world, you will find that Lady Margaret has but expreſſed what by almoſt every body is thought: to neglect old friends, and to court new acquaintance, though perhaps not yet avowedly delivered as a precept from parents to children, is nevertheleſs ſo univerſally recommended

by

by example, that thoſe who act differently, incur general cenſure for affecting ſingularity."

"It is happy then, for me," anſwered Cecilia, "that neither my actions nor myſelf will be ſufficiently known to attract public obſervation."

"You intend, then, madam," ſaid Mr. Belfield, "in defiance of theſe maxims of the world, to be guided by the light of your own underſtanding."

"And ſuch," returned Mr. Monckton, "at firſt ſetting out in life, is the intention of every one. The cloſet reaſoner is always refined in his ſentiments, and always confident in his virtue; but when he mixes with the world, when he thinks leſs and acts more, he ſoon finds the neceſſity of accomodating himſelf to ſuch cuſtoms as are already received, and of purſuing quietly the track that is already marked out."

"But not," exclaimed Mr. Belfield, "if he has the leaſt grain of ſpirit! the beaten track will be the laſt that a man of parts will deign to tread,

For common rules were ne'er deſign'd
Directors of a noble mind."

"A pernicious maxim! a moſt pernicious maxim!" cried the old gentleman, who ſat frowning in a corner of the room.

"De-

"Deviations from common rules," ſaid Mr. Monckton, without taking any notice of this interruption, "when they proceed from genius, are not merely pardonable, but admirable; and you, Belfield, have a peculiar right to plead their merits; but ſo little genius as there is in the world, you muſt ſurely grant that pleas of this ſort are very rarely to be urged."

"And why rarely," cried Belfield, "but becauſe your general rules, your appropriated cuſtoms, your ſettled forms, are but ſo many abſurd arrangements to impede not merely the progreſs of genius, but the uſe of underſtanding? If man dared act for himſelf, if neither worldly views, contracted prejudices, eternal precepts, nor compulſive examples, ſwayed his better reaſon and impelled his conduct, how noble indeed would he be! *how infinite in faculties! in apprehenſion how like a God!*" (*a*)

"All this," anſwered Mr. Monckton, "is but the doctrine of a lively imagination, that looks upon impoſſibilities ſimply as difficulties, and upon difficulties as mere invitations to victory. But experience teaches another leſſon; experience ſhews that the oppoſition of an individual to a community is always dangerous in the operation, and ſeldom ſucceſsful in the

(*a*) Hamlet.

event;

event;—never, indeed, without a concurrence ſtrange as deſirable, of fortunate circumſtances with great abilities."

"And why is this," returned Belfield, "but becauſe the attempt is ſo ſeldom made? The pitiful prevalence of general conformity extirpates genius, and murders originality; man is brought up, not as if he were "the nobleſt work of God," but as a mere ductile machine of human formation: he is early taught that he muſt neither conſult his underſtanding, nor purſue his inclinations, leſt, unhappily for his commerce with the world, his underſtanding ſhould be averſe to fools, and provoke him to deſpiſe them; and his inclinations to the tyranny of perpetual reſtraint, and give him courage to abjure it."

"I am ready enough to allow," anſwered Mr. Monckton, "that an excentric genius, ſuch, for example, as yours, may murmur at the tediouſneſs of complying with the cuſtoms of the world, and wiſh, unconfined, and at large, to range through life without any ſettled plan or prudential reſtriction; but would you, therefore, grant the ſame licence to every one? would you wiſh to ſee the world peopled with defiers of order, and contemners of eſtabliſhed forms? and not merely excuſe the irregularities reſulting from uncommon parts, but encourage

thoſe, alſo, to lead, who without blundering cannot even follow?"

"I would have *all* men," replied Belfield, "whether philoſophers or ideots, act for themſelves. Every one would then appear what he is; enterprize would be encouraged, and imitation aboliſhed; genius would feel its ſuperiority, and folly its inſignificance; and then, and then only, ſhould we ceaſe to be ſurfeited with that eternal ſameneſs of manner and appearance which at preſent runs through all ranks of men."

"Petrifying dull work this, *mon ami!*" ſaid the captain, in a whiſper to Morrice, "*de grace*, ſtart ſome new game."

"With all my heart," anſwered he; and then, ſuddenly jumping up, exclaimed, "A hare! a hare!"

"Where?—where?—which way?" and all the gentlemen aroſe, and ran to different windows, except the maſter of the houſe, the object of whoſe purſuit was already near him.

Morrice, with much pretended earneſtneſs, flew from window to window, to trace footſteps upon the turf which he knew had not printed it: yet, never inattentive to his own intereſt, when he perceived in the midſt of the combuſtion he had raiſed, that Lady Margaret was incenſed at the noiſe it pro-

duced, he artfully gave over his ſearch, and ſeating himſelf in a chair next to her, eagerly offered to aſſiſt her with cakes, chocolate, or whatever the table afforded.

He had, however, effectually broken up the converſation; and breakfaſt being over, Mr. Harrel ordered his chaiſe, and Cecilia aroſe to take leave.

And now not without ſome difficulty could Mr. Monckton diſguiſe the uneaſy fears which her departure occaſioned him. Taking her hand, "I ſuppoſe," he ſaid, "you will not permit an old friend to viſit you in town, leſt the ſight of him ſhould prove a diſagreeable memorial of the time you will ſoon regret having waſted in the country?"

"Why will you ſay this, Mr. Monckton?" cried Cecilia; "I am ſure you cannot think it."

"Theſe profound ſtudiers of mankind, madam," ſaid Belfield, "are mighty ſorry champions for conſtancy or friendſhip. They wage war with all expectations but of depravity, and grant no quarter even to the pureſt deſigns, where they think there will be any temptation to deviate from them."

"Temptation," ſaid Mr. Monckton, "is very eaſy of reſiſtance in theory; but if you reflect upon the great change of ſituation Miſs Beverley will experience,

upon the new ſcenes ſhe will ſee, the new acquaintance ſhe muſt make, and the new connections ſhe may form, you will not wonder at the anxiety of a friend for her welfare."

"But I preſume," cried Belfield, with a laugh, "Miſs Beverly does not mean to convey her perſon to town, and leave her underſtanding locked up, with other natural curioſities, in the country? Why, therefore, may not the ſame diſcernment regulate her adoption of new acquaintance, and choice of new connections, that guided her ſelection of old ones? Do you ſuppoſe that becauſe ſhe is to take leave of you, ſhe is to take leave of herſelf?"

"Where fortune ſmiles upon youth and beauty," anſwered Mr. Monckton, "do you think it nothing that their fair poſſeſſor ſhould make a ſudden tranſition of ſituation from the quietneſs of a retired life in the country, to the gaiety of a ſplendid town reſidence?"

"Where fortune *frowns* upon youth and beauty," returned Belfield, "they may not irrationally excite commiſeration; but where nature and chance unite their forces to bleſs the ſame object, what room there may be for alarm or lamentation I confeſs I cannot divine."

"What!" cried Mr. Monckton, with

ſome emotion, " are there not ſharpers, fortune-hunters, ſycophants, wretches of all ſorts and denominations, who watch the approach of the rich and unwary, feed upon their inexperience, and prey upon their property?"

" Come, come," cried Mr. Harrel, " it is time I ſhould haſten my fair ward away, if this is your method of deſcribing the place ſhe is going to live in."

" Is it poſſible," cried the Captain, advancing to Cecilia, " that this lady has never yet tried the town?" and then, lowering his voice, and ſmiling languiſhingly in her face, he added " Can any thing ſo divinely handſome have been immured in the country? Ah! *quelle honte!* do you make it a principle to be ſo cruel?"

Cecilia, thinking ſuch a compliment merited not any other notice than a ſlight bow, turned to Lady Margaret, and ſaid " Should your ladyſhip be in town this winter, may I expect the honour of hearing where I may wait upon you?"

" I don't know whether I ſhall go or not;" anſwered the old lady, with her uſual ungraciouſneſs.

Cecilia would now have haſtened away, but Mr. Monckton, ſtopping her, again expreſſed his fears of the conſequences of her journey; " Be upon your guard," he cried,

" with

" with all new acquaintance; judge nobody from appearances; form no friendſhip raſhly; take time to look about you, and remember you can make no alteration in your way of life, without greater probability of faring worſe, than chance of faring better. Keep therefore as you are, and the more you ſee of others, the more you will rejoice that you neither reſemble nor are connected with them."

" This from you, Mr. Monckton!" cried Belfield, " what is become of your conformity ſyſtem? I thought all the world was to be alike, or only ſo much the worſe for any variation?"

" I ſpoke," ſaid Mr. Monckton, " of the world in general, not of this lady in particular; and who that knows, who that ſees her, would not wiſh it were poſſible ſhe might continue in every reſpect exactly and unalterably what ſhe is at preſent?"

" I find," ſaid Cecilia, " you are determined that flattery at leaſt, ſhould I meet with it, ſhall owe no pernicious effects to its novelty."

" Well, Miſs Beverley," cried Mr. Harrel, " will you now venture to accompany me to town? Or has Mr. Monckton frightened you from proceeding any farther?"

" If," replied Cecilia, " I felt no more

ſorrow in quitting my friends, than I feel terror in venturing to London, with how light a heart ſhould I make the journey!"

"Brava!" cried Belfield, "I am happy to find the diſcourſe of Mr. Monckton has not intimidated you, nor prevailed upon you to deplore your condition in having the accumulated miſery of being young, fair and affluent."

"Alas! poor thing!" exclaimed the old gentleman who ſat in the corner, fixing his eyes upon Cecilia with an expreſſion of mingled grief and pity.

Cecilia ſtarted, but no one elſe paid him any attention.

The uſual ceremonies of leave-taking now followed, and the Captain, with moſt obſequious reverence, advanced to conduct Cecilia to the carriage; but in the midſt of the dumb eloquence of his bows and ſmiles, Mr. Morrice, affecting not to perceive his deſign, ſkipped gaily between them, and, without any previous formality, ſeized the hand of Cecilia himſelf; failing not, however, to temper the freedom of his action by a look of reſpect the moſt profound.

The Captain ſhrugged and retired. But Mr. Monckton, enraged at his aſſurance, and determined it ſhould nothing avail him, exclaimed "Why how now, Morrice, do you take away the privilege of my houſe?"

"True,

"True, true;" anſwered Morrice, "you members of parliament have an undoubted right to be tenacious of your privileges." Then, bowing with a look of veneration to Cecilia, he reſigned her hand with an air of as much happineſs as he had taken it.

Mr. Monckton, in leading her to the chaiſe, again begged permiſſion to wait upon her in town: Mr. Harrel took the hint, and entreated him to conſider his houſe as his own; and Cecilia, gratefully thanking him for his ſolicitude in her welfare, added "And I hope, ſir, you will honour me with your counſel and admonitions with reſpect to my future conduct, whenever you have the goodneſs to let me ſee you."

This was preciſely his wiſh. He begged, in return, that ſhe would treat him with confidence, and then ſuffered the chaiſe to drive off.

CHAP. III.

An Arrival.

As ſoon as they loſt ſight of the houſe, Cecilia expreſſed her ſurpriſe at the behaviour of the old gentleman who ſat in the corner, whoſe general ſilence, ſecluſion from the company, and abſence of mind, had ſtrongly excited her curioſity.

Mr. Harrel could give her very little ſatisfaction: he told her that he had twice or thrice met him in public places, where every body remarked the ſingularity of his manners and appearance, but that he had never diſcourſed with any one to whom he ſeemed known; and that he was as much ſurpriſed as herſelf in ſeeing ſo ſtrange a character at the houſe of Mr. Monckton.

The converſation then turned upon the family they had juſt quitted, and Cecilia warmly declared the good opinion ſhe had of Mr. Monckton, the obligations ſhe owed to him for the intereſt which, from her childhood, he had always taken in her affairs; and her hopes of reaping much inſtruction from the friendſhip of a man who had ſo extenſive a knowledge of the world.

Mr.

Mr. Harrel profeſſed himſelf well ſatiſfied that ſhe ſhould have ſuch a counſellor; for though but little acquainted with him, he knew he was a man of fortune and faſhion, and well eſteemed in the world. They mutually compaſſionated his unhappy ſituation in domeſtic life, and Cecilia innocently expreſſed her concern at the diſlike Lady Margaret ſeemed to have taken to her; a diſlike which Mr. Harrel naturally enough imputed to her youth and beauty, yet without ſuſpecting any cauſe more cogent than a general jealouſy of attractions of which ſhe had herſelf ſo long outlived the poſſeſſion.

As their journey drew near to its concluſion, all the uneaſy and diſagreeable ſenſations which in the boſom of Cecilia had accompanied its commencement, gave way to the expectation of quick approaching happineſs in again meeting her favourite young friend.

Mrs. Harrel had in childhood been her playmate, and in youth her ſchool-fellow; a ſimilarity of diſpoſition with reſpect to ſweetneſs of temper, had early rendered them dear to each other, though the reſemblance extended no farther, Mrs. Harrel having no pretenſions to the wit or underſtanding of her friend; but ſhe was amiable and obliging, and therefore ſufficiently de-

ſerving affection, though neither blazing with attractions which laid claim to admiration, nor endowed with thoſe ſuperior qualities which mingle reſpect in the love they inſpire.

From the time of her marriage, which was near three years, ſhe had entirely quitted Suffolk, and had had no intercourſe with Cecilia but by letter. She was now juſt returned from Violet Bank, the name given by Mr. Harrel to a villa about twelve miles from London, where with a large party of company ſhe had ſpent the Chriſtmas holidays.

Their meeting was tender and affectionate; the ſenſibility of Cecilia's heart flowed from her eyes, and the gladneſs of Mrs. Harrel's dimpled her cheeks.

As ſoon as their mutual ſalutations, expreſſions of kindneſs, and general enquiries had been made, Mrs. Harrel begged to lead her to the drawing-room, "where," ſhe added, "you will ſee ſome of my friends, who are impatient to be preſented to you."

"I could have wiſhed," ſaid Cecilia, "after ſo long an abſence, to have paſſed this firſt evening alone with you."

"They are all people who particularly deſired to ſee you," ſhe anſwered, "and I had them by way of entertaining you, as I

was

was afraid you would be out of ſpirits at leaving Bury."

Cecilia, finding the kindneſs of her intentions, forbore any further expoſtulation, and quietly followed her to the drawing-room. But as the door was opened, ſhe was ſtruck with amazement upon finding that the apartment, which was ſpacious, lighted with brilliancy, and decorated with magnificence, was more than half filled with company, every one of which was dreſſed with gaiety and profuſion.

Cecilia, who from the word friends, expected to have ſeen a ſmall and private party, ſelected for the purpoſe of ſocial converſe, ſtarted involuntarily at the ſight before her, and had hardly courage to proceed.

Mrs. Harrel, however, took her hand and introduced her to the whole company, who were all ſeverally named to her; a ceremonial which though not merely agreeable but even neceſſary to thoſe who live in the gay world, in order to obviate diſtreſſing miſtakes, or unfortunate implications in diſcourſe, would by Cecilia have been willingly diſpenſed with, ſince to her their names were as new as their perſons, and ſince knowing nothing of their hiſtories, parties or connections, ſhe could to nothing allude: it therefore ſerved but to heighten her colour and increaſe her embarraſsment.

A native dignity of mind, however, which had early taught her to diſtinguiſh modeſty from baſhfulneſs, enabled her in a ſhort time to conquer her ſurpriſe, and recover her compoſure. She entreated Mrs. Harrel to apologize for her appearance, and being ſeated between two young ladies, endeavoured to ſeem reconciled to it herſelf.

Nor was this very difficult; for while her dreſs, which ſhe had not changed ſince her journey, joined to the novelty of her face, attracted general obſervation, the report of her fortune, which had preceded her entrance, ſecured to her general reſpect. She ſoon found, too, that a company was not neceſſarily formidable becauſe full dreſſed, that familiarity could be united with magnificence, and that though to her, every one ſeemed attired to walk in a proceſſion, or to grace a drawing-room, no formality was aſſumed, and no ſolemnity was affected: every one was without reſtraint, even rank obtained but little diſtinction; eaſe was the general plan, and entertainment the general purſuit.

Cecilia, though new to London, which city the ill health of her uncle had hitherto prevented her ſeeing, was yet no ſtranger to company; ſhe had paſſed her time in retirement, but not in obſcurity, ſince for ſome years paſt ſhe had preſided at the table

of

of the Dean, who was viſited by the firſt people of the county in which he lived: and notwithſtanding his parties, which were frequent, though ſmall, and elegant, though private, had not prepared her for the ſplendour or the diverſity of a London aſſembly, they yet, by initiating her in the practical rules of good breeding, had taught her to ſubdue the timid fears of total inexperience, and to repreſs the baſhful feelings of ſhame-faced awkwardneſs; fears and feelings which rather call for compaſſion than admiration, and which, except in extreme youth, ſerve but to degrade the modeſty they indicate.

She regarded, therefore, the two young ladies between whom ſhe was ſeated, rather with a wiſh of addreſſing, than a ſhyneſs of being attacked by them; but the elder, Miſs Larolles, was earneſtly engaged in diſcourſe with a gentleman, and the younger, Miſs Leeſon, totally diſcouraged her, by the invariable ſilence and gravity with which from time to time ſhe met her eyes.

Uninterrupted, therefore, except by occaſional ſpeeches from Mr. and Mrs. Harrel, ſhe ſpent the firſt part of the evening merely in ſurveying the company.

Nor was the company dilatory in returning her notice, ſince from the time of her

entrance into the room, ſhe had been the object of general regard.

The ladies took an exact inventory of her dreſs, and internally ſettled how differently they would have been attired if bleſt with equal affluence.

The men diſputed among themſelves whether or not ſhe was painted; and one of them aſſerting boldly that ſhe *rouged well*, a debate enſued, which ended in a bet, and the deciſion was mutually agreed to depend upon the colour of her cheeks by the beginning of April, when, if unfaded by bad hours and continual diſſipation, they wore the ſame bright bloom with which they were now glowing, her champion acknowledged that his wager would be loſt.

In about half an hour the gentleman with whom Miſs Larolles had been talking, left the room, and then that young lady, turning ſuddenly to Cecilia, exclaimed "How odd Mr. Meadows is! Do you know he ſays he ſhan't be well enough to go to Lady Nyland's aſſembly! How ridiculous! as if that could hurt him."

Cecilia, ſurpriſed at an attack ſo little ceremonious, lent her a civil, but ſilent attention.

"You ſhall be there, ſha'n't you?" She added.

"No,

"No, ma'am, I have not the honour of being at all known to her ladyſhip."

"O there's nothing in that," returned ſhe, "for Mrs. Harrel can acquaint her you are here, and then, you know, ſhe'll ſend you a ticket, and then you can go."

"A ticket?" repeated Cecilia, "does Lady Nyland only admit her company with tickets?"

"O lord," cried Miſs Larolles, laughing immoderately, "don't you know what I mean? Why a ticket is only a viſiting card, with a name upon it; but we all call them tickets now."

Cecilia thanked her for the information, and then Miſs Larolles enquired how many miles ſhe had travelled ſince morning?

"Seventy-three," anſwered Cecilia, "which I hope will plead my apology for being ſo little dreſſed."

"O, you're vaſtly well," returned the other, "and for my part, I never think about dreſs. But only conceive what happened to me laſt year! Do you know I came to town the twentieth of March! was not that horrid provoking?"

"Perhaps ſo," ſaid Cecilia, "but I am ſure I cannot tell why."

"Not tell why?" repeated Miſs Larolles, "why don't you know it was the very night of the grand private maſquerade

at

at Lord Dariens? I would not have miſſed it for the whole univerſe. I never travelled in ſuch an agony in my life: we did not get to town till monſtrous late, and then do you know I had neither a ticket nor a habit! Only conceive what a diſtreſs! well, I ſent to every creature I knew for a ticket, but they all ſaid there was not one to be had; ſo I was juſt like a mad creature——but about ten or eleven o'clock, a young lady of my particular acquaintance, by the greateſt good luck in the world happened to be taken ſuddenly ill; ſo ſhe ſent me her ticket,—was not that delightful?"

"For *her*, extremely!" ſaid Cecilia, laughing.

"Well," ſhe continued, "then I was almoſt out of my wits with joy; and I went about, and got one of the ſweeteſt dreſſes you ever ſaw. If you'll call upon me ſome morning, I'll ſhew it you."

Cecilia, not prepared for an invitation ſo abrupt, bowed without ſpeaking, and Miſs Larolles, too happy in talking herſelf to be offended at the ſilence of another, continued her narration.

"Well, but now comes the vileſt part of the buſineſs; do you know, when every thing elſe was ready, I could not get my hair-dreſſer! I ſent all over the town,—he was no where to be found; I thought I

ſhould

ſhould have died with vexation; I aſſure you I cried ſo that if I had not gone in a maſk, I ſhould have been aſhamed to be ſeen. And ſo, after all this monſtrous fatigue, I was forced to have my hair dreſſed by my own maid, quite in a common way; was not it cruelly mortifying?"

Why yes," anſwered Cecilia, "I ſhould think it was almoſt ſufficient to make you regret the illneſs of the young lady who ſent you her ticket."

They were now interrupted by Mrs. Harrel, who advanced to them followed by a young man of a ſerious aſpect and modeſt demeanour, and ſaid, "I am happy to ſee you both ſo well engaged; but my brother has been reproaching me with preſenting every body to Miſs Beverley but himſelf."

"I cannot hope," ſaid Mr. Arnott, that I have any place in the recollection of Miſs Beverley, but long as I have been abſent from Suffolk, and unfortunate as I was in not ſeeing her during my laſt viſit there, I am yet ſure, even at this diſtance of time, grown and formed as ſhe is, I ſhould inſtantly have known her."

"Amazing!" cried an elderly gentleman, in a tone of irony, who was ſtanding near them, "for the face is a very common one!"

"I remember well," ſaid Cecilia, "that when

when you left Suffolk I thought I had loſt my beſt friend."

"Is that poſſible?" cried Mr. Arnott, with a look of much delight.

"Yes, indeed, and not without reaſon, for in all diſputes you were my advocate; in all plays, my companion; and in all difficulties, my aſſiſtant."

"Madam," cried the ſame gentleman, "if you liked him becauſe he was your advocate, companion, and aſſiſtant, pray like me too, for I am ready to become all three at once."

"You are very good," ſaid Cecilia, laughing, "but at preſent I find no want of any defender."

"That's pity," he returned, "for Mr. Arnott ſeems to me very willing to act the ſame parts over again with you."

"But for that purpoſe he muſt return to the Days of his childhood."

"Ah, would to heaven it were poſſible!" cried Mr. Arnott, "for they were the happieſt of my life."

"After ſuch a confeſſion," ſaid his companion, "ſurely you will let him attempt to renew them? 'tis but taking a walk backwards; and though it is very early in life for Mr. Arnott to ſigh for that retrogade motion, which, in the regular courſe of things, we ſhall all in our turns deſire,

yet

yet with ſuch a motive as recovering Miſs Beverley for a playfellow, who can wonder that he anticipates in youth the hopeleſs wiſhes of age?"

Here Miſs Larolles, who was one of that numerous tribe of young ladies to whom all converſation is irkſome in which they are not themſelves engaged, quitted her place, of which Mr. Goſport, Cecilia's new acquaintance, immediately took poſſeſſion.

"Is it utterly impoſſible," continued this gentleman, "that I ſhould aſſiſt in procuring Mr. Arnott ſuch a renovation? Is there no ſubaltern part I can perform to facilitate the project? for I will either *hide* or *ſeek* with any boy in the Pariſh; and for a *Q in the corner*, there is none more celebrated."

"I have no doubt, Sir," anſwered Cecilia, "of your accompliſhments; and I ſhould be not a little entertained with the ſurprize of the company if you could perſuade yourſelf to diſplay them."

"And what," cried he, "could the company do half ſo well as to ariſe alſo, and join in the ſport? it would but interrupt ſome tale of ſcandal, or ſome deſcription of a *toûpée*. Active wit, however deſpicable when compared with intellectual, is yet ſurely better than the inſignificant

ficant click-clack of modiſh converſation," caſting his eyes towards Miſs Larolles, "or even the penſive dullneſs of affected ſilence," changing their direction towards Miſs Leeſon.

Cecilia, though ſurprized at an attack upon the ſociety her friend had ſelected, by one who was admitted to make a part of it, felt its juſtice too ſtrongly to be offended at its ſeverity.

"I have often wiſhed," he continued, "that when large parties are collected, as here, without any poſſible reaſon why they might not as well be ſeparated, ſomething could be propoſed in which each perſon might innocently take a ſhare: for ſurely after the firſt half hour, they can find little new to obſerve in the dreſs of their neighbours, or to diſplay in their own; and with whatever ſeeming gaiety they may contrive to fill up the middle and end of the evening, by wire-drawing the comments afforded by the beginning, they are yet ſo miſerably fatigued, that if they have not four or five places to run to every night, they ſuffer nearly as much from wearineſs of their friends in company, as they would do from wearineſs of themſelves in ſolitude."

Here, by the general breaking up of the party, the converſation was interrupted,

and

and Mr. Goſport was obliged to make his exit; not much to the regret of Cecilia, who was impatient to be alone with Mrs. Harrel.

The reſt of the evening, therefore, was ſpent much more to her ſatisfaction; it was devoted to friendſhip, to mutual enquiries, to kind congratulations, and endearing recollections; and though it was late when ſhe retired, ſhe retired with reluctance.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

A Sketch of High Life.

EAGER to renew a converſation which had afforded her ſo much pleaſure, Cecilia, neither ſenſible of fatigue from her change of hours nor her journey, aroſe with the light, and as ſoon as ſhe was dreſſed, haſtened to the breakfaſt apartment.

She had not, however, been more impatient to enter than ſhe ſoon became to quit it; for though not much ſurprized to find herſelf there before her friend, her ardour for waiting her arrival was ſomewhat chilled, upon finding the fire but juſt lighted, the room cold, and the ſervants ſtill employed in putting it in order.

At 10 o'clock ſhe made another attempt: the room was then better prepared for her reception, but ſtill it was empty. Again ſhe was retiring, when the appearance of Mr. Arnott ſtopt her.

He expreſſed his ſurprize at her early riſing, in a manner that marked the pleaſure it gave to him; and then, returning to the converſation of the preceding even-

ing,

ing, he expatiated with warmth and feeling upon the happineſs of his boyiſh days, remembered every circumſtance belonging to the plays in which they had formerly been companions, and dwelt upon every incident with a minuteneſs of delight that ſhewed his unwillingneſs ever to have done with the ſubject.

This diſcourſe detained her till they were joined by Mrs. Harrel, and then another, more gay and more general ſucceeded to it.

During their breakfaſt, Miſs Larolles was announced as a viſitor to Cecilia, to whom ſhe immediately advanced with the intimacy of an old acquaintance, taking her hand, and aſſuring her ſhe could no longer defer the honour of waiting upon her.

Cecilia, much amazed at this warmth of civility from one to whom ſhe was almoſt a ſtranger, received her compliment rather coldly; but Miſs Larolles, without conſulting her looks, or attending to her manner, proceeded to expreſs the earneſt deſire ſhe had long had to be known to her; to hope they ſhould meet very often; to declare nothing could make her ſo happy; and to beg leave to recommend to her notice her own milliner.

"I aſſure you," ſhe continued, "ſhe has all Paris in her diſpoſal; the ſweeteſt caps!

caps! the moſt beautiful trimmings! and her ribbons are quite divine! It is the moſt dangerous thing you can conceive to go near her; I never truſt myſelf in her room but I am ſure to be ruined. If you pleaſe, I'll take you to her this morning."

"If her acquaintance is ſo ruinous," ſaid Cecilia, "I think I had better avoid it."

"O impoſſible! there's no ſuch thing as living without her. To be ſure ſhe's ſhockingly dear, that I muſt own; but then who can wonder? She makes ſuch ſweet things, 'tis impoſſible to pay her too much for them."

Mrs. Harrel now joining in the recommendation, the party was agreed upon, and accompanied by Mr. Arnott, the ladies proceeded to the houſe of the milliner.

Here the raptures of Miſs Larolles were again excited: ſhe viewed the finery diſplayed with delight inexpreſſible, enquired who were the intended poſſeſſors, heard their names with envy, and ſighed with all the bitterneſs of mortification that ſhe was unable to order home almoſt every thing ſhe looked at.

Having finiſhed their buſineſs here, they proceeded to various other dreſs manufacturers, in whoſe praiſes Miſs Larolles was almoſt equally eloquent, and to appropriate whoſe

whoſe goods ſhe was almoſt equally earneſt: and then, after attending this loquacious young lady to her father's houſe, Mrs. Harrel and Cecilia returned to their own.

Cecilia rejoiced at the ſeparation, and congratulated herſelf that the reſt of the day might be ſpent alone with her friend.

"Why no," ſaid Mrs. Harrel, "not abſolutely alone, for I expect ſome company at night."

"Company again to-night?"

"Nay, don't be frightened, for it will be a very ſmall party; not more than fifteen or twenty in all."

"Is that ſo ſmall a party?" ſaid Cecilia, ſmiling; "and how ſhort a time ſince would you, as well as I, have reckoned it a large one!"

"O, you mean when I lived in the country," returned Mrs. Harrel; "but what in the world could I know of parties or company then?"

"Not much, indeed," ſaid Cecilia, "as my preſent ignorance ſhews."

They then parted to dreſs for dinner.

The company of this evening were again all ſtrangers to Cecilia, except Miſs Leeſon, who was ſeated next to her, and whoſe frigid looks again compelled her to obſerve the ſame ſilence ſhe ſo reſolutely practiſed herſelf. Yet not the leſs was her internal

ſurpriſe

ſurpriſe that a lady who ſeemed determined neither to give nor receive any entertainment, ſhould repeatedly chuſe to ſhew herſelf in a company with no part of which ſhe aſſociated.

Mr. Arnott, who contrived to occupy the ſeat on her other ſide, ſuffered not the ſilence with which her fair neighbour had infected her to ſpread any further: he talked, indeed, upon no new ſubject; and upon the old one, of their former ſports and amuſements, he had already exhauſted all that was worth being mentioned; but not yet had he exhauſted the pleaſure he received from the theme; it ſeemed always freſh and always enchanting to him; it employed his thoughts, regaled his imagination, and enlivened his diſcourſe. Cecilia in vain tried to change it for another; he quitted it only by compulſion, and returned to it with redoubled eagerneſs.

When the company was retired, and Mr. Arnott only remained with the ladies, Cecilia, with no little ſurpriſe, enquired for Mr. Harrel, obſerving that ſhe had not ſeen him the whole day.

"O," cried his lady, "don't think of wondering at that, for it happens continually. He dines at home, indeed, in general, but otherwiſe I ſhould ſee nothing of him at all."

"Indeed? why how does he fill up his time?"

"That I am ſure I cannot tell, for he never conſults me about it; but I ſuppoſe much in the ſame way that other people do."

"Ah Priſcilla!" cried Cecilia, with ſome earneſtneſs," how little did I ever expect to ſee you ſo much a fine lady!"

"A fine lady?" repeated Mrs. Harrel, "why what is it I do? don't I live exactly like every body elſe that mixes at all with the world?"

"You, Miſs Beverley," ſaid Mr. Arnott in a low voice," will I hope give to the world an example, not take one from it."

Soon after, they ſeparated for the night.

The next morning, Cecilia took care to fill up her time more advantageouſly, than in wandering about the houſe in ſearch of a companion ſhe now expected not to find: ſhe got together her books, arranged them to her fancy, and ſecured to herſelf for the future occupation of her leiſure hours, the exhauſtleſs fund of entertainment which reading, that richeſt, higheſt, and nobleſt ſource of intellectual enjoyment, perpetually affords.

While they were yet at breakfaſt, they were again viſited by Miſs Larolles. "I

am come," cried ſhe, eagerly, "to run away with you both to my Lord Belgrade's ſale. All the world will be there; and we ſhall go in with tickets, and you have no notion how it will be crowded."

"What is to be ſold there?" ſaid Cecilia.

"O every thing you can conceive; houſe, ſtables, china, laces, horſes, caps, every thing in the world."

"And do you intend to buy any thing?"

"Lord, no; but one likes to ſee the people's things."

Cecilia then begged they would excuſe her attendance.

"O by no means, cried Miſs Larolles, you muſt go, I aſſure you; there'll be ſuch a monſtrous crowd as you never ſaw in your life. I dare ſay we ſhall be half ſqueezed to death."

"That," ſaid Cecilia, "is an inducement which you muſt not expect will have much weight with a poor ruſtic juſt out of the country: it muſt require all the poliſh of a long reſidence in the metropolis to make it attractive."

"O but do go, for I aſſure you it will be the beſt ſale we ſhall have this ſeaſon. I can't imagine, Mrs. Harrel, what poor Lady Belgrade will do with herſelf; I hear the creditors have ſeized every thing; I really

really believe creditors are the crueleſt ſet of people in the world! they have taken thoſe beautiful buckles out of her ſhoes! Poor ſoul! I declare it will make my heart ache to ſee them put up. Its quite ſhocking, upon my word. I wonder who'll buy them. I aſſure you they were the prettieſt fancied I ever ſaw. But come, if we don't go directly, there will be no getting in."

Cecilia again deſired to be excuſed accompanying them, adding that ſhe wiſhed to ſpend the day at home.

"At home, my dear?" cried Mrs. Harrel;" why we have been engaged to Mrs. Mears this month, and ſhe begged me to prevail with you to be of the party. I expect ſhe'll call, or ſend you a ticket, every moment."

"How unlucky for me," ſaid Cecilia, "that you ſhould happen to have ſo many engagements juſt at this time! I hope, at leaſt, there will not be any for to-morrow."

"O yes; to-morrow we go to Mrs. Elton's."

"Again to-morrow? and how long is this to laſt?"

"O heaven knows; I'll ſhew you my catalogue."

She then produced a book which contained a liſt of engagements for more than

three weeks. "And as theſe," ſhe ſaid, are ſtruck off, new ones are made; and ſo it is we go on till after the birth-day."

When this liſt had been examined and commented upon by Miſs Larolles, and viewed and wondered at by Cecilia, it was reſtored to its place, and the two ladies went together to the auction, permiting Cecilia, at her repeated requeſt, to return to her own apartment.

She returned, however, neither ſatisfied with the behaviour of her friend, nor pleaſed with her own ſituation: the ſobriety of her education, as it had early inſtilled into her mind the pure dictates of religion, and ſtrict principles of honour, had alſo taught her to regard continual diſſipation as an introduction to vice, and unbounded extravagance as the harbinger of injuſtice. Long accuſtomed to ſee Mrs. Harrel in the ſame retirement in which ſhe had hitherto lived herſelf, when books were their firſt amuſement, and the ſociety of each other was their chief happineſs, the change ſhe now perceived in her mind and manners equally concerned and ſurpriſed her. She found her inſenſible to friendſhip, indifferent to her huſband, and negligent of all ſocial felicity. Dreſs, company, parties of pleaſure, and public places, ſeemed not merely to occupy all her time; but to gratify all her wiſhes.

wiſhes. Cecilia, in whoſe heart glowed the warmeſt affections and moſt generous virtue, was cruelly depreſſed and mortified by this diſappointment; yet ſhe had the good ſenſe to determine againſt upbraiding her, well aware that if reproach has any power over indifference, it is only that of changing it into averſion.

Mrs. Harrel, in truth, was innocent of heart, though diſſipated in life; married very young, ſhe had made an immediate tranſition from living in a private family and a country town, to becoming miſtreſs of one of the moſt elegant houſes in Portman-ſquare, at the head of a ſplendid fortune, and wife to a man whoſe own purſuits ſoon ſhewed her the little value he himſelf ſet upon domeſtic happineſs. Immerſed in the faſhionable round of company and diverſions, her underſtanding naturally weak, was eaſily dazzled by the brilliancy of her ſituation; greedily, therefore, ſucking in air impregnated with luxury and extravagance, ſhe had ſoon no pleaſure but to vie with ſome rival in elegance, and no ambition but to exceed ſome ſuperior in expence.

The Dean of —— in naming Mr. Harrel for one of the guardians of his neice, had no other view than that of indulging her wiſhes by allowing her to reſide in the

houſe of her friend: he had little perſonal knowledge of him, but was ſatisfied with the nomination, becauſe acquainted with his family, fortune, and connections, all which perſuaded him to believe without further enquiry, that it was more peculiarly proper for his neice than any other he could make.

In his choice of the other two truſtees he had been more prudent; the firſt of theſe, the honourable Mr. Delvile, was a man of high birth and character; the ſecond, Mr. Briggs, had ſpent his whole life in buſineſs, in which he had already amaſſed an immenſe fortune, and had ſtill no greater pleaſure than that of encreaſing it. From the high honour, therefore, of Mr. Delvile, he expected the moſt ſcrupulous watchfulneſs that his neice ſhould in nothing be injured, and from the experience of Mr. Briggs in money matters, and his diligence in tranſacting buſineſs, he hoped for the moſt vigilant obſervance that her fortune, while under his care, ſhould be turned to the beſt account. And thus, as far as he was able, he had equally conſulted her pleaſure, her ſecurity, and her pecuniary advantage.

Mrs. Harrel returned home only in time to dreſs for the reſt of the day.

When Cecilia was ſummoned to dinner, ſhe

ſhe found, beſides her hoſt and hoſteſs and Mr. Arnott, a gentleman ſhe had not before ſeen, but who as ſoon as ſhe entered the parlour, Mr. Harrel preſented to her, ſaying at the ſame time he was one of the moſt intimate of his friends.

This gentleman, Sir Robert Floyer, was about thirty years of age; his face was neither remarkable for its beauty nor its uglineſs, but ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed by its expreſſion of invincible aſſurance; his perſon, too, though neither ſtriking for its grace nor its deformity, attracted notice from the inſolence of his deportment. His manners, haughty and ſupercilious, marked the high opinion he cheriſhed of his own importance; and his air and addreſs, at once bold and negligent, announced his happy perfection in the character at which he aimed, that of an accompliſhed man of the town.

The moment Cecilia appeared, ſhe became the object of his attention, though neither with the look of admiration due to her beauty, nor yet with that of curioſity excited by her novelty, but with the ſcrutinizing obſervation of a man on the point of making a bargain, who views with fault-ſeeking eyes the property he means to cheapen.

Cecilia, wholly unuſed to an exa-

mination ſo little ceremonious, ſhrunk abaſhed from his regards: but his converſation was not leſs diſpleaſing to her than his looks; his principal ſubjects, which were horſe-racing, loſſes at play, and diſputes at gaming-tables, could afford her but little amuſement, becauſe ſhe could not underſtand them; and the epiſodes with which they were occaſionally interſperſed, conſiſting chiefly of comparative ſtrictures upon celebrated beauties, hints of impending bankruptcies, and witticiſms upon recent divorces, were yet more diſagreeable to her, becauſe more intelligible. Wearied therefore, with unintereſting anecdotes, and offended with injudicious ſubjects of pleaſantry, ſhe waited with impatience for the moment of retiring; but Mrs. Harrel, leſs eager, becauſe better entertained, was in no haſte to remove, and therefore ſhe was compelled to remain quiet, till they were both obliged to ariſe, in order to fulfil their engagement with Mrs. Mears.

As they went together to the houſe of that lady, in Mrs. Harrel's vis-à-vis, Cecilia, not doubting but their opinions concerning the Baronet would accord, inſtantly and openly declared her diſapprobation of every thing he had uttered; but Mrs. Harrel, far from confirming her expectations, only

only ſaid, "I am ſorry you don't like him, for he is almoſt always with us?"

"Do you like him, then, yourſelf?"

"Extremely; he is very entertaining and clever, and knows the world."

"How judiciouſly do you praiſe him!" cried Cecilia; "and how long might you deliberate before you could add another word to his panegyric!"

Mrs. Harrel, ſatisfied to commend, without even attempting to vindicate him, was ſoon content to change the ſubject; and Cecilia, though much concerned that the huſband of her friend had made ſo diſgraceful an election of a favourite, yet hoped that the lenity of Mrs. Harrel reſulted from her deſire to excuſe his choice, not from her own approbation.

CHAP. V.

An Assembly.

MRS. Mears, whoſe character was of that common ſort which renders delineation ſuperfluous, received them with the cuſtomary forms of good breeding.

Mrs. Harrel ſoon engaged herſelf at a card-table: and Cecilia, who declined playing, was ſeated next to Miſs Leeſon, who aroſe to return the courteſy ſhe made in advancing to her, but that paſt, did not again even look at her.

Cecilia, though fond of converſation and formed for ſociety, was too diffident to attempt ſpeaking where ſo little encouraged; they both, therefore, continued ſilent, till Sir Robert Floyer, Mr. Harrel, and Mr. Arnott entered the room together, and all at the ſame time advanced to Cecilia.

"What," cried Mr. Harrel, "don't you chuſe to play, Miſs Beverley?"

"I flatter myſelf," cried Mr. Arnott, "that Miſs Beverley never plays at all, for then, in one thing, I ſhall have the honour to reſemble her."

"Very

"Very ſeldom, indeed," anſwered Cecilia, "and conſequently very ill."

"O, you muſt take a few leſſons," ſaid Mr. Harrel, "Sir Robert Floyer, I am ſure, will be proud to inſtruct you."

Sir Robert who had placed himſelf oppoſite to her, and was ſtaring full in her face, made a ſlight inclination of his head, and ſaid "certainly."

"I ſhould be a very unpromiſing pupil," returned Cecilia, "for I fear I ſhould not only want diligence to improve, but deſire."

"O, you will learn better things," ſaid Mr. Harrel; "we have had you yet but three days amongſt us,—in three months we ſhall ſee the difference."

"I hope not," cried Mr. Arnott, "I earneſtly hope there will be none!"

Mr. Harrel now joined another party; and Mr. Arnott ſeeing no ſeat vacant near that of Cecilia, moved round to the back of her chair, where he patiently ſtood for the reſt of the evening. But Sir Robert ſtill kept his poſt, and ſtill, without troubling himſelf to ſpeak, kept his eyes fixed upon the ſame object.

Cecilia, offended by his boldneſs, looked a thouſand ways to avoid him; but her embarraſſment, by giving greater play to her features, ſerved only to keep awake an at-

tention which might otherwiſe have wearied. She was almoſt tempted to move her chair round and face Mr. Arnott, but though ſhe wiſhed to ſhew her diſapprobation of the Baronet, ſhe had not yet been reconciled by faſhion to turning her back upon the company at large, for the indulgence of converſing with ſome particular perſon: a faſhion which to unaccuſtomed obſervers ſeems rude and repulſive, but which, when once adopted, carries with it imperceptibly its own recommendation, in the eaſe, convenience and freedom it promotes.

Thus diſagreeably ſtationed, ſhe found but little aſſiſtance from the neighbourhood of Mr. Arnott, ſince even his own deſire of converſing with her, was ſwallowed up by an anxious and involuntary impulſe to watch the looks and motions of Sir Robert.

At length quite tired of ſitting as if merely an object to be gazed at, ſhe determined to attempt entering into converſation with Miſs Leeſon.

The difficulty, however, was not inconſiderable how to make the attack; ſhe was unacquainted with her friends and connections, uninformed of her way of thinking, or her way of life, ignorant even of the ſound of her voice, and chilled by the coldneſs of her aſpect: yet, having no other alternative, ſhe was more willing to en-

counter the forbidding looks of this lady, than to continue ſilently abaſhed under the ſcrutinizing eyes of Sir Robert.

After much deliberation with what ſubject to begin, ſhe remembered that Miſs Larolles had been preſent the firſt time they had met, and thought it probable they might be acquainted with each other; and therefore, bending forward, ſhe ventured to enquire if ſhe had lately ſeen that young lady?

Miſs Leeſon in a voice alike inexpreſſive of ſatisfaction or diſpleaſure, quietly anſwered "No, ma'am."

Cecilia, diſcouraged by this conciſeneſs, was a few minutes ſilent; but the perſeverance of Sir Robert in ſtaring at her, exciting her own in trying to avoid his eyes, ſhe exerted herſelf ſo far as to add "Does Mrs. Mears expect Miſs Larolles here this evening?"

Miſs Leeſon, without raiſing her head, gravely replied "I don't know, ma'am."

All was now to be done over again, and a new ſubject to be ſtarted, for ſhe could ſuggeſt nothing further to aſk concerning Miſs Larolles.

Cecilia had ſeen little of life, but that little ſhe had well marked, and her obſervation had taught her, that among faſhionable people, public places ſeemed a never-

failing

failing ſource of converſation and entertainment: upon this topic, therefore, ſhe hoped for better ſucceſs; and as to thoſe who have ſpent more time in the country than in London, no place of amuſement is ſo intereſting as a theatre, ſhe opened the ſubject ſhe had ſo happily ſuggeſted, by an enquiry whether any new play had lately come out?

Miſs Leeſon, with the ſame dryneſs, only anſwered "Indeed I can't tell."

Another pauſe now followed, and the ſpirits of Cecilia were conſiderably dampt; but happening accidentally to recollect the name of Almack, ſhe preſently revived, and, congratulating herſelf that ſhe ſhould now be able to ſpeak of a place too faſhionable for diſdain, ſhe aſked her, in a manner ſomewhat more aſſured, if ſhe was a ſubſcriber to his aſſemblies?

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you go to them conſtantly?"

"No, ma'am."

Again they were both ſilent. And now, tired of finding the ill ſucceſs of each particular enquiry, ſhe thought a more general one might obtain an anſwer leſs laconic, and therefore begged ſhe would inform her what was the moſt faſhionable place of diverſion for the preſent ſeaſon?

This queſtion, however, coſt Miſs Leeſon no more trouble than any which had

preceded it, for ſhe only replied "Indeed I don't know."

Cecilia now began to ſicken of her attempt, and for ſome minutes to give it up as hopeleſs; but afterwards when ſhe reflected how frivolous were the queſtions ſhe had aſked, ſhe felt more inclined to pardon the anſwers ſhe had received, and in a ſhort time to fancy ſhe had miſtaken contempt for ſtupidity, and to grow leſs angry with Miſs Leeſon than aſhamed of herſelf.

This ſuppoſition excited her to make yet another trial of her talents for converſation, and therefore, ſummoning all the courage in her power, ſhe modeſtly apologiſed for the liberty ſhe was taking, and then begged her permiſſion to enquire whether there was any thing new in the literary way that ſhe thought worth recommending?

Miſs Leeſon now turned her eyes towards her, with a look that implied a doubt whether ſhe had heard right; and when the attentive attitude of Cecilia confirmed her queſtion, ſurpriſe for a few inſtants took place of inſenſibility, and with rather more ſpirit than ſhe had yet ſhewn, ſhe anſwered "Indeed I know nothing of the matter."

Cecilia was now utterly diſconcerted; and half angry with herſelf, and wholly provoked with her ſullen neighbour, ſhe reſolved to let nothing in future provoke her

to

to a ſimilar trial with ſo unpromiſing a ſubject.

She had not, however, much longer to endure the examination of Sir Robert, who being pretty well ſatisfied with ſtaring, turned upon his heel, and was ſtriding out of the room, when he was ſtopt by Mr. Goſport, who for ſome time had been watching him.

Mr. Goſport was a man of good parts, and keen ſatire: minute in his obſervations, and ironical in his expreſſions.

"So you don't play, Sir Robert?" he cried.

"What here? No, I am going to Brookes's."

"But how do you like Harrel's Ward? You have taken a pretty good ſurvey of her."

"Why faith I don't know; but not much, I think; ſhe's a deviliſh fine woman too; but ſhe has no ſpirit, no life."

"Did you try her? Have you talked to her?"

"Not I, truly!"

"Nay, then how do you mean to judge of her?"

"O, faith, that's all over, now; one never thinks of talking to the women by way of trying them."

"What

"What other method, then, have you adopted?"

"None."

"None? Why then how do you go on?"

"Why they talk to us. The women take all that trouble upon themſelves now."

"And pray how long may you have commenced *fade macaroni?* For this is a part of your character with which I was not acquainted."

"O, hang it, 'tis not from *ton*; no, it's merely from lazineſs. Who the d——l will fatigue himſelf with dancing attendance upon the women, when keeping them at a diſtance makes them dance attendance upon us?"

Then ſtalking from him to Mr. Harrel, he took him by the arm, and they left the room together.

Mr. Goſport now advanced to Cecilia, and addreſſing her ſo as not to be heard by Miſs Leeſon, ſaid "I have been wiſhing to approach you, ſome time, but the fear that you are already overpowered by the loquacity of your fair neighbour makes me cautious of attempting to engage you."

"You mean," ſaid Cecilia, "to laugh at *my* loquacity, and indeed its ill ſucceſs has rendered it ſufficiently ridiculous."

"Are you, then, yet to learn," cried he, "that

"that there are certain young ladies who make it a rule never to ſpeak but to their own cronies? Of this claſs is Miſs Leeſon, and till you get into her particular Coterie, you muſt never expect to hear from her a word of two ſyllables. The TON miſſes, as they are called, who now infeſt the town, are in two diviſions, the SUPERCILIOUS, and the VOLUBLE. The SUPERCILIOUS, like Miſs Leeſon, are ſilent, ſcornful, languid, and affected, and diſdain all converſe but with thoſe of their own ſet: the VOLUBLE, like Miſs Larolles, are flirting, communicative, reſtleſs, and familiar, and attack without the ſmalleſt ceremony, every one they think worthy their notice. But this they have in common, that at home they think of nothing but dreſs, abroad, of nothing but admiration, and that every where they hold in ſupreme contempt all but themſelves."

"Probably, then," ſaid Cecilia, "I have paſſed to night, for one of the VOLUBLES; however, all the advantage has been with the SUPERCILIOUS, for I have ſuffered a total repulſe."

"Are you ſure, however, you have not talked too well for her?"

"O, a child of five years old ought to have been whipt for not talking better!"

"But it is not capacity alone you are to conſult when you talk with miſſes of the TON; were

were their underſtandings only to be conſidered, they would indeed be wonderfully eaſy of acceſs! in order therefore, to render their commerce ſomewhat difficult, they will only be pleaſed by an obſervance of their humours: which are ever moſt various and moſt exuberant where the intellects are weakeſt and leaſt cultivated. I have, however, a receipt which I have found infallible for engaging the attention of young ladies of whatſoever character or denomination."

"O, then," cried Cecilia, "pray favour me with it, for I have here an admirable opportunity to try its efficacy."

"I will give it you," he anſwered "with full directions. When you meet with a young lady who ſeems reſolutely determined not to ſpeak, or who, if compelled by a direct queſtion to make ſome anſwer, drily gives a brief affirmative, or coldly a laconic negative——"

"A caſe in point!" interrupted Cecilia.

"Well, thus circumſtanced," he continued, "the remedy I have to propoſe conſiſts of three topics of diſcourſe."

"Pray what are they?"

"Dreſs, public places, and love."

Cecilia, half ſurpriſed and half diverted, waited a fuller explanation without giving any interruption.

"Theſe

"Theſe three topics," he continued, "are to anſwer three purpoſes, ſince there are no leſs than three cauſes from which the ſilence of young ladies may proceed: ſorrow, affectation, and ſtupidity."

"Do you, then," cried Cecilia, "give nothing at all to modeſty?"

"I give much to it," he anſwered, "as an excuſe, nay almoſt as an equivalent for wit; but for that ſullen ſilence which reſiſts all encouragement, modeſty is a mere pretence, not a cauſe."

"You muſt, however, be ſomewhat more explicit, if you mean that I ſhould benefit from your inſtructions."

"Well then," he anſwered, "I will briefly enumerate the three cauſes, with directions for the three methods of cure. To begin with ſorrow. The taciturnity which really reſults from that is attended with an incurable abſence of mind, and a total unconſciouſneſs of the obſervation which it excites; upon this occaſion, public places may ſometimes be tried in vain, and even dreſs may fail; but love——"

"Are you ſure, then," ſaid Cecilia, with a laugh, "that ſorrow has but that one ſource?"

"By no means," anſwered he, "for perhaps papa may have been angry, or mama may have been croſs; a milliner may have ſent

ſent a wrong pompoon, or a chaperon to an aſſembly may have been taken ill;——"

"Bitter ſubjects of affliction, indeed! And are theſe all you allow us?"

"Nay, I ſpeak but of young ladies of faſhion, and what of greater importance can befall them? If, therefore, the grief of the fair patient proceeds from papa, mama, or the chaperon, then the mention of public places, thoſe endleſs incentives of diſpleaſure between the old and the young, will draw forth her complaints, and her complaints will bring their own cure, for thoſe who lament find ſpeedy conſolation: if the milliner has occaſioned the calamity, the diſcuſſion of dreſs will have the ſame effect; ſhould both theſe medicines fail, love, as I ſaid before, will be found infallible, for you will then have inveſtigated every ſubject of uneaſineſs which a youthful female in high life can experience."

"They are greatly obliged to you," cried Cecilia, bowing, "for granting them motives of ſorrow ſo honourable, and I thank you in the name of the whole ſex."

"You, madam," ſaid he, returning her bow, "are I hope an exception in the happieſt way, that of having no ſorrow at all. I come, now, to the ſilence of affectation, which is preſently diſcernable by the roving of the eye round the room to ſee if it

is

is heeded, by the ſedulous care to avoid an accidental ſmile, and by the variety of diſconſolate attitudes exhibited to the beholders. This ſpecies of ſilence has almoſt without exception its origin in that babyiſh vanity which is always gratified by exciting attention, without ever perceiving that it provokes contempt. In theſe caſes, as nature is wholly out of the queſtion, and the mind is guarded againſt its own feelings, dreſs and public places are almoſt certain of failing, but here again love is ſure to vanquiſh; as ſoon as it is named, attention becomes involuntary, and in a ſhort time a ſtruggling ſimper diſcompoſes the arrangement of the features, and then the buſineſs is preſently over, for the young lady is either ſupporting ſome ſyſtem, or oppoſing ſome propoſition, before ſhe is well aware that ſhe has been cheated out of her ſad ſilence at all."

"So much," ſaid Cecilia, "for ſorrow and for affectation. Proceed next to ſtupidity; for that, in all probability, I ſhall moſt frequently encounter."

"That always muſt be heavy work," returned he, "yet the road is plain, though it is all up hill. Love, here, may be talked of without exciting any emotion, or provoking any reply, and dreſs may be dilated upon without producing any other effect than

than that of attracting a vacant ſtare; but public places are indubitably certain of ſucceſs. Dull and heavy characters, incapable of animating from wit or from reaſon, becauſe unable to keep pace with them, and void of all internal ſources of entertainment, require the ſtimulation of ſhew, glare, noiſe and buſtle to intereſt or awaken them. Talk to them of ſuch ſubjects and they adore you; no matter whether you paint to them joy or horror, let there but be action, and they are content; a battle has charms for them equal to a coronation, and a funeral amuſes them as much as a wedding."

"I am much obliged to you," ſaid Cecilia, ſmiling, "for theſe inſtructions; yet I muſt confeſs I know not how upon the preſent occaſion to make uſe of them: public places I have already tried, but tried in vain; dreſs I dare not mention, as I have not yet learned its technical terms,——"

"Well but," interrupted he, "be not deſperate; you have yet the third topic uneſſayed."

"O that," returned ſhe laughing, "I leave to you!"

"Pardon me," cried he, "love is a ſource of loquacity only with yourſelves: when it is ſtarted by men, young ladies dwindle into mere liſteners. *Simpering* liſteners,

liſteners, I confeſs; but it is only with one another that you will diſcuſs its merits."

At this time they were interrupted by the approach of Miſs Larolles, who tripping towards Cecilia, exclaimed "Lord how glad I am to ſee you! So you would not go to the auction? Well, you had a prodigious loſs, I aſſure you. All the wardrobe was ſold, and all Lady Belgrade's trinkets. I never ſaw ſuch a collection of ſweet things in my life. I was ready to cry that I could not bid for half an hundred of them. I declare I was kept in an agony the whole morning. I would not but have been there for the world. Poor Lady Belgrade! you really can't conceive how I was ſhocked for her. All her beautiful things ſold for almoſt nothing. I aſſure you if you had ſeen how they went you would have loſt all patience. It's a thouſand pities you were not there."

"On the contrary," ſaid Cecilia, "I think I had a very fortunate eſcape, for the loſs of patience without the acquiſition of the trinkets, would have been rather mortifying."

"Yes," ſaid Mr. Goſport; "but when you have lived ſome time longer in this commercial city, you will find the exchange of patience for mortification the

moſt

moſt common and conſtant traffic among it's inhabitants."

"Pray have you been here long?" cried Miſs Larolles, "for I have been to twenty places, wondering I did not meet with you before. But whereabouts is Mrs. Mears? O, I ſee her now; I'm ſure there's no miſtaking her; I could know her by that old red gown half a mile off. Did you ever ſee ſuch a frightful thing in your life? And it's never off her back. I believe ſhe ſleeps in it. I am ſure I have ſeen her in nothing elſe all winter. It quite tires one's eye. She's a monſtrous ſhocking dreſſer. But do you know, I have met with the moſt provoking thing in the world this evening? I declare it has made me quite ſick. I was never in ſuch a paſſion in my life. You can conceive nothing like it."

"Like what?" cried Cecilia, laughing, "your paſſion, or your provocation?"

"Why I'll tell you what it was, and then you ſhall judge if it was not quite paſt endurance. You muſt know I commiſſioned a particular friend of mine, Miſs Moffat, to buy me a trimming when ſhe went to Paris; well, ſhe ſent it me over about a month ago by Mr. Meadows, and it's the ſweeteſt thing you ever ſaw in your life; but I would not make it up, becauſe there was not a creature in town, ſo I thought to

bring it out quite new in about a week's time, for you know any thing does till after Chriſtmas. Well, to night at Lady Jane Dranet's, who ſhould I meet but Miſs Moffat! She had been in town ſome days, but ſo monſtrouſly engaged I could never find her at home. Well, I was quite delighted to ſee her, for you muſt know ſhe's a prodigious favourite with me, ſo I ran up to her in a great hurry to ſhake hands, and what do you think was the firſt thing that ſtruck my eyes? Why juſt ſuch a trimming as my own, upon a naſty odious gown, and half dirty! Can you conceive any thing ſo diſtreſſing? I could have cried with pleaſure."

"Why ſo?" ſaid Cecilia; "If her trimming is dirty, yours will look the more delicate."

"O lord, but it's making it ſeem quite an old thing! half the town will get ſomething like it. And I quite ruined myſelf to buy it. I declare I don't think any thing was ever half ſo mortifying. It diſtreſſed me ſo I could hardly ſpeak to her. If ſhe had ſtayed a month or two longer I ſhould not have minded it, but it was the cruelleſt thing in the world to come over juſt now. I wiſh the Cuſtom-houſe-officers had kept all her cloaths till ſummer."

"The wiſh is tender, indeed," ſaid Cecilia, "for a *particular friend*."

Mrs.

Mrs. Mears now riſing from the card-table, Miſs Larolles tript away to pay her compliments to her.

"Here, at leaſt," cried Cecilia, "no receipt ſeems requiſite for the cure of ſilence! I would have Miſs Larolles be the conſtant companion of Miſs Leeſon: they could not but agree admirably, ſince that SUPERCILIOUS young lady ſeems determined never to ſpeak, and the VOLUBLE Miſs Larolles never to be ſilent. Were each to borrow ſomething of the other, how greatly would both be the better!"

"The compoſition would ſtill be a ſorry one," anſwered Mr. Goſport, "for I believe they are equally weak, and equally ignorant; the only difference is, that one, though ſilly, is quick, the other, though deliberate is ſtupid. Upon a ſhort acquaintance, that heavineſs which leaves to others the whole weight of diſcourſe, and whole ſearch of entertainment, is the moſt fatiguing, but, upon a longer intimacy, even that is leſs irkſome and leſs offenſive, than the flippancy which hears nothing but itſelf."

Mrs. Harrel aroſe now to depart, and Cecilia, not more tired of the beginning of the evening than entertained with its concluſion, was handed to the carriage by Mr. Arnott.

CHAP. VI.

A BREAKFAST.

THE next morning, during breakfaſt, a ſervant acquainted Cecilia that a young gentleman was in the hall, who begged to ſpeak with her. She deſired he might be admitted; and Mrs. Harrel, laughing, aſked if ſhe ought not to quit the room; while Mr. Arnott, with even more than his uſual gravity, directed his eye towards the door to watch who ſhould enter.

Neither of them, however, received any ſatisfaction when it was opened, for the gentleman who made his appearance was unknown to both: but great was the amazement of Cecilia, though little her emotion, when ſhe ſaw Mr. Morrice!

He came forward with an air of the moſt profound reſpect for the company in general, and obſequiouſly advancing to Cecilia, made an earneſt enquiry into her health after her journey, and hoped ſhe had heard good news from her friends in the country.

Mrs. Harrel, naturally concluding both from

from his viſit and behaviour, that he was an acquaintance of ſome intimacy, very civilly offered him a ſeat and ſome breakfaſt, which, very frankly, he accepted. But Mr. Arnott, who already felt the anxiety of a riſing paſſion which was too full of veneration to be ſanguine, looked at him with uneaſineſs, and waited his departure with impatience.

Cecilia began to imagine he had been commiſſioned to call upon her with ſome meſſage from Mr. Monckton: for ſhe knew not how to ſuppoſe that merely and accidentally having ſpent an hour or two in the ſame room with her, would authorize a viſiting acquaintance. Mr. Morrice, however, had a facility the moſt happy of reconciling his pretenſions to his inclination; and therefore ſhe ſoon found that the pretence ſhe had ſuggeſted appeared to him unneceſſary. To lead, however, to the ſubject from which ſhe expected his excuſe, ſhe enquired how long he had left Suffolk?

"But yeſterday noon, ma'am," he anſwered, "or I ſhould certainly have taken the liberty to wait upon you before."

Cecilia, who had only been perplexing herſelf to deviſe ſome reaſon why he came at all, now looked at him with a grave ſurprize, which would totally have abaſhed a man whoſe courage had been leſs, or

whoſe expectations had been greater; but Mr. Morrice, though he hazarded every danger upon the ſlighteſt chance of hope, knew too well the weakneſs of his claims to be confident of ſucceſs, and had been too familiar with rebuffs to be much hurt by receiving them. He might poſſibly have ſomething to gain, but he knew he had nothing to loſe.

"I had the pleaſure," he continued, "to leave all our friends well, except poor lady Margaret, and ſhe has had an attack of the aſthma; yet ſhe would not have a phyſician, though Mr. Monckton would fain have perſuaded her: however, I believe the old lady knows better things." And he looked archly at Cecilia: but perceiving that the inſinuation gave her nothing but diſguſt, he changed his tone, and added, "It is amazing how well they live together; nobody would imagine the diſparity in their years. Poor old lady! Mr. Monckton will really have a great loſs of her when ſhe dies."

"A loſs of her!" repeated Mrs. Harrel, "I am ſure ſhe is an exceeding ill-natured old woman. When I lived at Bury, I was always frightened out of my wits at the ſight of her."

"Why indeed, ma'am," ſaid Morrice, "I muſt own her appearance is rather againſt

againſt her: I had myſelf a great averſion to her at firſt ſight. But the houſe is chearful,—very chearful; I like to ſpend a few days there now and then of all things. Miſs Bennet, too, is agreeable enough, and ——."

"Miſs Bennet agreeable!" cried Mrs. Harrel, "I think ſhe's the moſt odious creature I ever knew in my life; a naſty, ſpiteful old maid!"

"Why indeed, ma'am, as you ſay," anſwered Morrice, "ſhe is not very young; and as to her temper, I confeſs I know very little about it; and Mr. Monckton is likely enough to try it, for he is pretty ſevere."

"Mr. Monckton," cried Cecilia, extremely provoked at hearing him cenſured by a man ſhe thought highly honoured in being permitted to approach him, "whenever *I* have been his gueſt, has merited from me nothing but praiſe and gratitude."

"O," cried Morrice eagerly, "there is not a more worthy man in the world! he has ſo much wit, ſo much politeneſs! I don't know a more charming man any where than my friend Mr. Monckton."

Cecilia now perceiving that the opinions of her new acquaintance were as pliant as his bows, determined to pay him no further attention, and hoped by ſitting ſilent to force from him the buſineſs of his viſit,

if any he had, or if, as ſhe now ſuſpected, he had none, to weary him into a retreat.

But this plan, though it would have ſucceeded with herſelf, failed with Mr. Morrice, who to a ſtock of good-humour that made him always ready to oblige others, added an equal portion of inſenſibility that hardened him againſt all indignity. Finding, therefore, that Cecilia, to whom his viſit was intended, ſeemed already ſatisfied with its length, he prudently forbore to torment her; but perceiving that the lady of the houſe was more acceſſible, he quickly made a transfer of his attention, and addreſſed his diſcourſe to her with as much pleaſure as if his only view had been to ſee her, and as much eaſe as if he had known her all his life.

With Mrs. Harrel this conduct was not injudicious; ſhe was pleaſed with his aſſiduity, amuſed with his vivacity, and ſufficiently ſatisfied with his underſtanding. They converſed, therefore, upon pretty equal terms, and neither of them were yet tired, when they were interrupted by Mr. Harrel, who came into the room to aſk if they had ſeen or heard any thing of Sir Robert Floyer?

"No," anſwered Mrs. Harrel, "nothing at all."

"I wiſh he was hanged," returned he, "for

" for he has kept me waiting this hour. He made me promiſe not to ride out till he called, and now he'll ſtay till the morning is over."

" Pray where does he live, Sir?" cried Morrice, ſtarting from his ſeat.

" In Cavendiſh-ſquare, Sir," anſwered Mr. Harrel, looking at him with much ſurpriſe.

Not a word more ſaid Morrice, but ſcampered out of the room.

" Pray who is this Genius?" cried Mr. Harrel, " and what has he run away for?"

" Upon my word I know nothing at all of him," ſaid Mrs. Harrel; " he is a viſitor of Miſs Beverley's."

" And I, too," ſaid Cecilia, " might almoſt equally diſclaim all knowledge of him; for though I once ſaw, I never was introduced to him."

She then began a relation of her meeting him at Mr. Monckton's houſe, and had hardly concluded it, before again, and quite out of breath, he made his appearance.

" Sir Robert Floyer, Sir," ſaid he to Mr. Harrel, " will be here in two minutes."

" I hope, Sir," ſaid Mr. Harrel, " you have not given yourſelf the trouble of going to him?"

" No, Sir, it has given me nothing but

pleaſure; a run theſe cold mornings is the thing I like beſt."

"Sir, you are extremely good," ſaid Mr. Harrel, "but I had not the leaſt intention of your taking ſuch a walk upon my account."

He then begged him to be ſeated, to reſt himſelf, and to take ſome refreſhment; which civilities he received without ſcruple.

"But, Miſs Beverley," ſaid Mr. Harrel, turning ſuddenly to Cecilia, "you don't tell me what you think of my friend?"

"What friend, Sir?"

"Why, Sir Robert Floyer; I obſerved he never quitted you a moment while he ſtayed at Mrs. Mears."

"His ſtay, however, was too ſhort," ſaid Cecilia, "to allow me to form a fair opinion of him."

"But perhaps," cried Morrice, "it was long enough to allow you to form a *foul* one."

Cecilia could not forbear laughing to hear the truth thus accidentally blundered out; but Mr. Harrel, looking very little pleaſed, ſaid, "Surely you can find no fault with him? he is one of the moſt faſhionable men I know."

"My finding fault with him then," ſaid Cecilia, "will only farther prove what I believe

believe is already pretty evident, that I am yet a novice in the art of admiration."

Mr. Arnott, animating at this ſpeech, glided behind her chair, and ſaid, "I knew you could not like him! I knew it from the turn of your mind;—I knew it even from your countenance!"

Soon after, Sir Robert Floyer arrived.

"You are a pretty fellow, a'n't you," cried Mr. Harrel, "to keep me waiting ſo long?"

"I could not come a moment ſooner; I hardly expected to get here at all, for my horſe has been ſo confounded reſty I could not tell how to get him along."

"Do you come on horſeback through the ſtreets, Sir Robert?" aſked Mrs. Harrel.

"Sometimes; when I am lazy. But what the d——l is the matter with him I don't know; he has ſtarted at every thing. I ſuſpect there has been ſome foul play with him."

"Is he at the door, Sir?" cried Morrice.

"Yes," anſwered Sir Robert.

"Then I'll tell you what's the matter with him in a minute;" and away again ran Morrice.

"What time did you get off laſt night Harrel?" ſaid Sir Robert.

"Not very early; but you were too much engaged to miſs me. By the way," lowering his voice, "what do you think I loſt?"

"I can't tell indeed, but I know what I gained: I have not had ſuch a run of luck this winter."

They then went up to a window to carry on their enquiries more privately.

At the words *what do you think I loſt*, Cecilia, half ſtarting, caſt her eyes uneaſily upon Mrs. Harrel, but perceived not the leaſt change in her countenance. Mr. Arnott, however, ſeemed as little pleaſed as herſelf, and from a ſimilar ſenſation looked anxiouſly at his ſiſter.

Morrice now returning, called out, "He's had a fall, I aſſure you!"

"Curſe him!" cried Sir Robert, "what ſhall I do now? he coſt me the d——l and all of money, and I have not had him a twelvemonth. Can you lend me a horſe for this morning, Harrel?"

"No, I have not one that will do for you. You muſt ſend to Aſtley."

"Who can I ſend? John muſt take care of this."

"I'll go, Sir," cried Morrice, "if you'll give me the commiſſion."

"By no means, Sir," ſaid Sir Robert,

"I

"I can't think of giving you ſuch an office."

"It is the thing in the world I like beſt," anſwered he; "I underſtand horſes, and had rather go to Aſtley's than any where."

The matter was now ſettled in a few minutes, and having received his directions, and an invitation to dinner, Morrice danced off, with an heart yet lighter than his heels.

"Why, Miſs Beverley," ſaid Mr. Harrel, "this friend of yours is the moſt obliging gentleman I ever met with; there was no avoiding aſking him to dinner."

"Remember, however," ſaid Cecilia, who was involuntarily diverted at the ſucceſsful officiouſneſs of her new acquaintance, "that if you receive him henceforth as your gueſt, he obtains admiſſion through his own merits, and not through my intereſt."

At dinner, Morrice, who failed not to accept the invitation of Mr. Harrel, was the gayeſt, and indeed the happieſt man in the company: the effort he had made to faſten himſelf upon Cecilia as an acquaintance, had not, it is true, from herſelf met with much encouragement; but he knew the chances were againſt him when he made the trial, and therefore the proſpect of gaining

gaining admiſſion into ſuch a houſe as Mr. Harrel's, was not only ſufficient to make amends for what ſcarcely amounted to a diſappointment, but a ſubject of ſerious comfort from the credit of the connection, and of internal exultation at his own management and addreſs.

In the evening, the ladies, as uſual, went to a private aſſembly, and, as uſual, were attended to it by Mr. Arnott. The other gentlemen had engagements elſewhere.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

A PROJECT.

SEVERAL days paſſed on nearly in the ſame manner; the mornings were all ſpent in goſſipping, ſhopping and dreſſing, and the evenings were regularly appropriated to public places, or large parties of company.

Meanwhile Mr. Arnott lived almoſt entirely in Portman-ſquare; he ſlept, indeed, at his own lodgings, but he boarded wholly with Mr. Harrel, whoſe houſe he never for a moment quitted till night, except to attend Cecilia and his ſiſter in their viſitings and rambles.

Mr. Arnott was a young man of unexceptionable character, and of a diſpoſition mild, ſerious and benignant: his principles and blameleſs conduct obtained the univerſal eſteem of the world, but his manners, which were rather too preciſe, joined to an uncommon gravity of countenance and demeanour, made his ſociety rather permitted as a duty, than ſought as a pleaſure.

The charms of Cecilia had forcibly, ſuddenly

denly and deeply penetrated his heart; he only lived in her preſence, away from her he hardly exiſted: the emotions ſhe excited were rather thoſe of adoration than of love, for he gazed upon her beauty till he thought her more than human, and hung upon her accents till all ſpeech ſeemed impertinent to him but her own. Yet ſo ſmall were his expectations of ſucceſs, that not even to his ſiſter did he hint at the ſituation of his heart: happy in an eaſy acceſs to her, he contented himſelf with ſeeing, hearing and watching her, beyond which bounds he formed not any plan, and ſcarce indulged any hope.

Sir Robert Floyer, too, was a frequent viſitor in Portman-ſquare, where he dined almoſt daily. Cecilia was chagrined at ſeeing ſo much of him, and provoked to find herſelf almoſt conſtantly the object of his unreſtrained examination; ſhe was, however, far more ſeriouſly concerned for Mrs. Harrel, when ſhe diſcovered that this favourite friend of her huſband was an unprincipled ſpendthrift, and an extravagant gameſter, for as he was the inſeparable companion of Mr. Harrel, ſhe dreaded the conſequence both of his influence and his example.

She ſaw, too, with an amazement that daily increaſed, the fatigue, yet faſcination of

of a life of pleaſure: Mr. Harrel ſeemed to conſider his own houſe merely as an Hôtel, where at any hour of the night he might diſturb the family to claim admittance, where letters and meſſages might be left for him, where he dined when no other dinner was offered him, and where, when he made an appointment, he was to be met with. His lady, too, though more at home, was not therefore more ſolitary; her acquaintance were numerous, expenſive and idle, and every moment not actually ſpent in company, was ſcrupulouſly devoted to making arrangements for that purpoſe.

In a ſhort time Cecilia, who every day had hoped that the next would afford her greater ſatisfaction, but who every day found the preſent no better than the former, began to grow weary of eternally running the ſame round, and to ſicken at the irkſome repetition of unremitting yet unintereſting diſſipation. She ſaw nobody ſhe wiſhed to ſee, as ſhe had met with nobody for whom ſhe could care; for though ſometimes thoſe with whom ſhe mixed appeared to be amiable, ſhe knew that their manners, like their perſons, were in their beſt array, and therefore ſhe had too much underſtanding to judge deciſively of their characters. But what chiefly damped her hopes of forming a friendſhip with any of the new acquain-

acquaintance to whom ſhe was introduced, was the obſervation ſhe herſelf made how ill the coldneſs of their hearts accorded with the warmth of their profeſſions: upon every firſt meeting, the civilities which were ſhewn her, flattered her into believing ſhe had excited a partiality that a very little time would ripen into affection; the next meeting commonly confirmed the expectation; but the third, and every future one, regularly deſtroyed it. She found that time added nothing to their fondneſs, nor intimacy to their ſincerity; that the intereſt in her welfare which appeared to be taken at firſt ſight, ſeldom, with whatever reaſon, encreaſed, and often without any abated; that the diſtinction ſhe at firſt met with, was no effuſion of kindneſs, but of curioſity, which is ſcarcely ſooner gratified than ſatiated; and that thoſe who lived always the life into which ſhe had only lately been initiated, were as much harraſſed with it as herſelf, though leſs ſpirited to relinquiſh, and more helpleſs to better it, and that they coveted nothing but what was new, becauſe they had experienced the inſufficiency of whatever was familiar.

She began now to regret the loſs ſhe ſuſtained in quitting the neighbourhood, and being deprived of the converſation of Mr. Monckton, and yet more earneſtly to miſs

the

the affection and ſigh for the ſociety of Mrs. Charlton, the lady with whom ſhe had long and happily reſided at Bury; for ſhe was very ſoon compelled to give up all expectation of renewing the felicity of her earlier years, by being reſtored to the friendſhip of Mrs. Harrel, in whom ſhe had miſtaken the kindneſs of childiſh intimacy for the ſincerity of choſen affection; and though ſhe ſaw her credulous error with mortification and diſpleaſure, ſhe regretted it with tenderneſs and ſorrow. "What, at laſt," cried ſhe, "is human felicity, who has taſted, and where is it to be found? If I, who, to others, ſeem marked out for even a partial poſſeſſion of it,—diſtinguiſhed by fortune, careſſed by the world, brought into the circle of high life, and ſurrounded with ſplendour, ſeek without finding it, yet loſing, ſcarce know how I miſs it!"

Aſhamed upon reflection to believe ſhe was conſidered as an object of envy by others, while repining and diſcontentd herſelf, ſhe determined no longer to be the only one inſenſible to the bleſſings within her reach, but by projecting and adopting ſome plan of conduct, better ſuited to her taſte and feelings than the frivolous inſipidity of her preſent life, to make at once a more ſpirited and more worthy uſe of the affluence

affluence, freedom and power which ſhe poſſeſſed.

A ſcheme of happineſs at once rational and refined ſoon preſented itſelf to her imagination. She purpoſed, for the baſis of her plan, to become miſtreſs of her own time, and with this view, to drop all idle and unintereſting acquaintance, who while they contribute neither to uſe nor pleaſure, make ſo large a part of the community, that they may properly be called the underminers of exiſtence: ſhe could then ſhew ſome taſte and diſcernment in her choice of friends, and ſhe reſolved to ſelect ſuch only as by their piety could elevate her mind, by their knowledge improve her underſtanding, or by their accompliſhments and manners delight her affections. This regulation, if ſtrictly adhered to, would ſoon relieve her from the fatigue of receiving many viſitors, and therefore ſhe might have all the leiſure ſhe could deſire for the purſuit of her favourite ſtudies, muſic and reading.

Having thus, from her own eſtimation of human perfection, culled whatever was nobleſt for her ſociety, and from her own ideas of ſedentary enjoyments, arranged the occupations of her hours of ſolitude, ſhe felt fully ſatisfied with the portion of happineſs which her ſcheme promiſed to herſelf,

and

and began next to conſider what was due from her to the world.

And not without trembling did ſhe then look forward to the claims which the ſplendid income ſhe was ſoon to poſſeſs would call upon her to diſcharge. A ſtrong ſenſe of DUTY, a fervent deſire to ACT RIGHT, were the ruling characteriſtics of her mind: her affluence ſhe therefore conſidered as a debt contracted with the poor, and her independence, as a tie upon her liberality to pay it with intereſt.

Many and various, then, ſoothing to her ſpirit and grateful to her ſenſibility, were the ſcenes which her fancy delineated; now ſhe ſupported an orphan, now ſoftened the ſorrows of a widow, now ſnatched from iniquity the feeble trembler at poverty, and now reſcued from ſhame the proud ſtruggler with diſgrace. The proſpect at once exalted her hopes, and enraptured her imagination; ſhe regarded herſelf as an agent of Charity, and already in idea anticipated the rewards of a good and faithful delegate: ſo animating are the deſigns of diſintereſted benevolence! ſo pure is the bliſs of intellectual philanthropy!

Not immediately, however, could this plan be put in execution; the ſociety ſhe meant to form could not be ſelected in the houſe of another, where, though to ſome

ſhe

ſhe might ſhew a preference, there were none ſhe could reject: nor had ſhe yet the power to indulge, according to the munificence of her wiſhes, the extenſive generoſity ſhe projected: theſe purpoſes demanded an houſe of her own, and the unlimited diſpoſal of her fortune, neither of which ſhe could claim till ſhe became of age. That period, however, was only eight months diſtant, and ſhe pleaſed herſelf with the intention of meliorating her plan in the mean time, and preparing to put it in practice.

But though, in common with all the race of ſtill-expecting man, ſhe looked for that happineſs in the time to come which the preſent failed to afford, ſhe had yet the ſpirit and good ſenſe to determine upon making every effort in her power, to render her immediate way of life more uſeful and contented.

Her firſt wiſh therefore, now, was to quit the houſe of Mr. Harrel, where ſhe neither met with entertainment nor inſtruction, but was perpetually mortified by ſeeing the total indifference of the friend in whoſe ſociety ſhe had hoped for nothing but affection.

The will of her uncle, though it obliged her while under-age to live with one of her guardians, left her at liberty to chuſe and to change amongſt them according to her

wiſhes or convenience: ſhe determined, therefore, to make a viſit herſelf to each of them, to obſerve their manners and way of life, and then, to the beſt of her judgment, decide with which ſhe could be moſt contented: reſolving, however, not to hint at her intention till it was ripe for execution, and then honeſtly to confeſs the reaſons of her retreat.

She had acquainted them both of her journey to town the morning after her arrival. She was almoſt an entire ſtranger to each of them, as ſhe had not ſeen Mr. Briggs ſince ſhe was nine years old, nor Mr. Delvile within the time ſhe could remember.

The very morning that ſhe had ſettled her proceedings for the arrangement of this new plan, ſhe intended to requeſt the uſe of Mrs. Harrel's carriage, and to make, without delay, the viſits preparatory to her removal: but when ſhe entered the parlour upon a ſummons to breakfaſt, her eagerneſs to quit the houſe gave way, for the preſent, to the pleaſure ſhe felt at the ſight of Mr. Monckton, who was juſt arrived from Suffolk.

She expreſſed her ſatisfaction in the moſt lively terms, and ſcrupled not to tell him ſhe had not once been ſo much pleaſed ſince her

her journey to town, except at her firſt meeting with Mrs. Harrel.

Mr. Monckton, whoſe delight was infinitely ſuperior to her own, and whoſe joy in ſeeing her was redoubled by the affectionate frankneſs of her reception, ſtifled the emotions to which her ſight gave riſe, and denying himſelf the ſolace of expreſſing his feelings, ſeemed much leſs charmed than herſelf at the meeting, and ſuffered no word nor look to eſcape him beyond what could be authoriſed by friendly civility.

He then renewed with Mrs. Harrel an acquaintance which had been formed before her marriage, but which ſhe had dropt when her diſtance from Cecilia, upon whoſe account alone he had thought it worth cultivation, made it no longer of uſe to him. She afterwards introduced her brother to him; and a converſation very intereſting to both the ladies took place, concerning ſeveral families with which they had been formerly connected, as well as the neighbourhood at large in which they had lately dwelt.

Very little was the ſhare taken by Mr. Arnott in theſe accounts and enquiries; the unaffected joy with which Cecilia had received Mr. Monckton, had ſtruck him with a ſenſation of envy as involuntary as it was painful: he did not, indeed, ſuſpect

that gentleman's ſecret views; no reaſon for ſuſpicion was obvious, and his penetration ſunk not deeper than appearances; he knew, too, that he was married, and therefore no jealouſy occurred to him; but ſtill ſhe had ſmiled upon him! —— and he felt that to purchaſe for himſelf a ſmile of ſo much ſweetneſs, he would have ſacrificed almoſt all elſe that was valuable to him upon earth.

With an attention infinitely more accurate, Mr. Monckton had returned his obſervations. The uneaſineſs of his mind was apparent, and the anxious watchfulneſs of his eyes plainly manifeſted whence it aroſe. From a ſituation, indeed, which permitted an intercourſe the moſt conſtant and unreſtrained with ſuch an object as Cecilia, nothing leſs could be expected, and therefore he conſidered his admiration as inevitable; all that remained to be diſcovered, was the reception it had met from his fair enſlaver. Nor was he here long in doubt; he ſoon ſaw that ſhe was not merely free from all paſſion herſelf, but had ſo little watched Mr. Arnott as to be unconſcious ſhe had inſpired any.

Yet was his own ſerenity, though apparently unmoved, little leſs diſturbed in ſecret than that of his rival; he did not think him a formidable candidate, but he dreaded

the effects of intimacy, fearing ſhe might firſt grow accuſtomed to his attentions, and then become pleaſed with them: he apprehended, alſo, the influence of his ſiſter, and of Mr. Harrel in his favour; and though he had no difficulty to perſuade himſelf that any offer he might now make would be rejected without heſitation, he knew too well the inſidious properties of perſeverance, to ſee him, without inquietude, ſituated ſo advantageouſly.

The morning was far advanced before he took leave, yet he found no opportunity of diſcourſing with Cecilia, though he impatiently deſired to examine into the ſtate of her mind, and to diſcover whether her London journey had added any freſh difficulties to the ſucceſs of his long concerted ſcheme. But as Mrs. Harrel invited him to dinner, he hoped the afternoon would be more propitious to his wiſhes.

Cecilia, too, was eager to communicate to him her favourite project, and to receive his advice with reſpect to it's execution. She had long been uſed to his counſel, and ſhe was now more than ever ſolicitous to obtain it, becauſe ſhe conſidered him as the only perſon in London who was intereſted in her welfare.

He ſaw, however, no promiſe of better

ſucceſs

ſucceſs when he made his appearance at dinner time, for not only Mr. Arnott was already arrived, but Sir Robert Floyer, and he found Cecilia ſo much the object of their mutual attention, that he had ſtill leſs chance than in the morning of ſpeaking to her unheard.

Yet was he not idle; the ſight of Sir Robert gave abundant employment to his penetration, which was immediately at work, to diſcover the motive of his viſit: but this, with all his ſagacity, was not eaſily decided; for though the conſtant direction of his eyes towards Cecilia, proved, at leaſt, that he was not inſenſible of her beauty, his careleſſneſs whether or not ſhe was hurt by his examination, the little pains he took to converſe with her, and the invariable aſſurance and negligence of his manners, ſeemed ſtrongly to demonſtrate an indifference to the ſentiments he inſpired, totally incompatible with the ſolicitude of affection.

In Cecilia he had nothing to obſerve but what his knowledge of her character prepared him to expect, a ſhame no leſs indignant than modeſt at the freedom with which ſhe ſaw herſelf ſurveyed.

Very little, therefore, was the ſatisfaction which this viſit procured him, for ſoon after dinner the ladies retired; and as they

had an early engagement for the evening, the gentlemen received no ſummons to their tea-table. But he contrived, before they quitted the room, to make an appointment for attending them the next morning to a rehearſal of a new ſerious Opera.

He ſtayed not after their departure longer than decency required, for too much in earneſt was his preſent purſuit, to fit him for ſuch converſation as the houſe in Cecilia's abſence could afford him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

An Opera Rehearsal.

THE next day, between eleven and twelve o'clock, Mr. Monckton was again in Portman-ſquare; he found, as he expected, both the ladies, and he found, as he feared, Mr. Arnott prepared to be of their party. He had, however, but little time to repine at this intruſion, before he was diſturbed by another, for, in a few minutes, they were joined by Sir Robert Floyer, who alſo declared his intention of accompanying them to the Haymarket.

Mr. Monckton, to diſguiſe his chagrin, pretended he was in great haſte to ſet off, leſt they ſhould be too late for the overture: they were, therefore, quitting the breakfaſt room, when they were ſtopt by the appearance of Mr. Morrice.

The ſurpriſe which the ſight of him gave to Mr. Monckton was extreme; he knew that he was unacquainted with Mr. Harrel, for he remembered they were ſtrangers to each other when they lately met at his houſe; he concluded, therefore, that Ce-

cilia was the object of his viſit, but he could frame no conjecture under what pretence.

The eaſy terms upon which he ſeemed with all the family by no means diminiſhed his amazement; for when Mrs. Harrel expreſſed ſome concern that ſhe was obliged to go out, he galiy begged her not to mind him, aſſuring her he could not have ſtayed two minutes, and promiſing, unaſked, to call again the next day: and when ſhe added, "We would not hurry away ſo, only we are going to a rehearſal of an Opera," he exclaimed with quickneſs, "A rehearſal!—are you really? I have a great mind to go too!"

Then, perceiving Mr. Monckton, he bowed to him with great reſpect, and enquired, with no little ſolemnity, how he had left lady Margaret, hoped ſhe was perfectly recovered from her late indiſpoſition, and aſked ſundry queſtions with regard to her plan for the winter.

This diſcourſe was ill conſtructed for rendering his preſence deſirable to Mr. Monckton; he anſwered him very drily, and again preſſed their departure.

"O," cried Morrice, "there's no occaſion for ſuch haſte; the rehearſal does not begin till one."

"You

"You are miſtaken, Sir!" ſaid Mr. Monckton; "it is to begin at twelve o'clock."

"O ay, very true," returned Morrice; "I had forgot the dances, and I ſuppoſe they are to be rehearſed firſt. Pray, Miſs Beverley, did you ever ſee any dances rehearſed?"

"No, Sir."

"You'll be exceſſively entertained, then, I aſſure you. It's the moſt comical thing in the world to ſee thoſe ſignores and ſignoras cutting capers in a morning. And the *figuranti* will divert you beyond meaſure; you never ſaw ſuch a ſhabby ſet in your life: but the moſt amuſing thing is to look in their faces, for all the time they are jumping and ſkipping about the ſtage as if they could not ſtand ſtill for joy, they look as ſedate and as diſmal as if they were ſo many undertakers men."

"Not a word againſt dancing!" cried Sir Robert, "it's the only thing carries one to the Opera; and I am ſure it's the only thing one minds at it."

The two ladies were then handed to Mrs. Harrel's *vis-à-vis*; and the gentlemen, joined without further ceremony by Mr. Morrice, followed them to the Haymarket.

The rehearſal was not begun, and Mrs. Harrel and Cecilia ſecured themſelves a

box upon the ſtage, from which the gentlemen of their party took care not to be very diſtant.

They were ſoon perceived by Mr. Goſport, who inſtantly entered into converſation with Cecilia. Miſs Larolles, who with ſome other ladies came ſoon after into the next box, looked out to courtſie and nod, with her uſual readineſs, at Mrs. Harrel, but took not any notice of Cecilia, though ſhe made the firſt advances.

"What's the matter now?" cried Mr. Goſport; "have you affronted your little prattling friend?"

"Not with my own knowledge;" anſwered Cecilia; "perhaps ſhe does not recollect me."

Juſt then Miſs Larolles, tapping at the door, came in from the next box to ſpeak to Mrs. Harrel; with whom ſhe ſtood chatting and laughing ſome minutes, without ſeeming to perceive that Cecilia was of her party.

"Why what have you done to the poor girl?" whiſpered Mr. Goſport; "did you talk more than herſelf when you ſaw her laſt?"

"Would that have been poſſible?" cried Cecilia; "however, I ſtill fancy ſhe does not know me."

She then ſtood up, which making Miſs Larolles

Larolles involuntarily turn towards her, ſhe again courtſied; a civility which that young lady ſcarce deigned to return, before, bridling with an air of reſentment, ſhe haſtily looked another way, and then, nodding good-humouredly at Mrs. Harrel, hurried back to her party.

Cecilia, much amazed, ſaid to Mr. Goſport, "See now how great was our preſumption in ſuppoſing this young lady's loquacity always at our devotion!"

"Ah madam!" cried he, laughing, "there is no permanency, no conſiſtency in the world! no, not even in the tongue of a VOLUBLE! and if that fails, upon what may we depend?"

"But ſeriouſly," ſaid Cecilia, "I am ſorry I have offended her, and the more becauſe I ſo little know how, that I can offer her no apology."

"Will you appoint me your envoy? Shall I demand the cauſe of theſe hoſtilities?"

She thanked him, and he followed Miſs Larolles; who was now addreſſing herſelf with great earneſtneſs to Mr. Meadows, the gentleman with whom ſhe was converſing when Cecilia firſt ſaw her in Portman-ſquare. He ſtopt a moment to let her finiſh her ſpeech, which, with no little ſpirit,

ſhe did in theſe words, "I never knew any thing like it in my life; but I ſha'n't put up with ſuch airs, I aſſure her!"

Mr. Meadows made not any other return to her harangue, but ſtretching himſelf with a languid ſmile and yawning: Mr. Goſport, therefore, ſeizing the moment of ceſſation, ſaid, "Miſs Larolles, I hear a ſtrange report about you."

"Do you?" returned ſhe, with quickneſs, "pray what is it? ſomething monſtrous impertinent, I dare ſay,—however, I aſſure you it i'n't true."

"Your aſſurance," cried he, "carries conviction indiſputable, for the report was that you had left off talking."

"O, was that all!" cried ſhe, diſappointed, "I thought it had been ſomething about Mr. Sawyer, for I declare I have been plagued ſo about him, I am quite ſick of his name."

"And for my part, I never heard it! ſo fear nothing from me upon his account."

"Lord, Mr. Goſport, how can you ſay ſo? I am ſure you muſt know about the feſtino that night, for it was all over the town in a moment."

"What feſtino?"

"Well, only conceive how provoking!—why, I know nothing elſe was talked of for a month!"

"You

"You are moſt formidably ſtout this morning! it is not two minutes ſince I ſaw you fling the gauntlet at Miſs Beverley, and yet you are already prepared for another antagoniſt."

"O as to Miſs Beverley, I muſt really beg you not to mention her; ſhe has behaved ſo impertinently, that I don't intend ever to ſpeak to her again."

"Why, what has ſhe done?"

"O ſhe's been ſo rude you've no notion. I'll tell you how it was. You muſt know I met her at Mrs. Harrel's the day ſhe came to town, and the very next morning I waited on her myſelf, for I would not ſend a ticket, becauſe I really wiſhed to be civil to her; well, the day after, ſhe never came near me, though I called upon her again; however, I did not take any notice of that; but when the third day came, and I found ſhe had not even ſent me a ticket, I thought it monſtrous ill bred indeed; and now there has paſt more than a week, and yet ſhe has never called: ſo I ſuppoſe ſhe don't like me; ſo I ſhall drop her acquaintance."

Mr. Goſport, ſatisfied now with the ſubject of her complaint, returned to Cecilia, and informed her of the heavy charge which was brought againſt her.

"I am glad, at leaſt, to know my crime," ſaid ſhe, "for otherwiſe I ſhould

certainly have ſinned on in ignorance, as I muſt confeſs I never thought of returning her viſits: but even if I had, I ſhould not have ſuppoſed I had yet loſt much time."

"I beg your pardon there," ſaid Mrs. Harrel; "a firſt viſit ought to be returned always by the third day."

"Then have I an unanſwerable excuſe," ſaid Cecilia, "for I remember that on the third day I ſaw her at your houſe."

"O that's nothing at all to the purpoſe; you ſhould have waited upon her, or ſent her a ticket, juſt the ſame as if you had not ſeen her."

The overture was now begun, and Cecilia declined any further converſation. This was the firſt Opera ſhe had ever heard, yet ſhe was not wholly a ſtranger to Italian compoſitions, having aſſiduouſly ſtudied muſic from a natural love of the art, attended all the beſt concerts her neighbourhood afforded, and regularly received from London the works of the beſt maſters. But the little ſkill ſhe had thus gained, ſerved rather to increaſe than to leſſen the ſurpriſe with which ſhe heard the preſent performance,—a ſurprize of which the diſcovery of her own ignorance made not the leaſt part. Unconſcious from the little ſhe had acquired how much was to be learnt, ſhe was aſtoniſhed to find the inadequate

power

power of written muſic to convey any idea of vocal abilities: with juſt knowledge enough, therefore, to underſtand ſomething of the difficulties, and feel much of the merit, ſhe gave to the whole Opera an avidity of attention almoſt painful from its own eagerneſs.

But both the ſurprize and the pleaſure which ſhe received from the performance in general, were faint, cold, and languid, compared to the ſtrength of thoſe emotions when excited by Signore Pacchierotti in particular; and though not half the excellencies of that ſuperior ſinger were neceſſary either to amaze or charm her unaccuſtomed ears, though the refinement of his taſte and maſterly originality of his genius, to be praiſed as they deſerved, called for the judgment and knowledge of profeſſors, yet a natural love of muſic in ſome meaſure ſupplied the place of cultivation, and what ſhe could neither explain nor underſtand, ſhe could feel and enjoy.

The opera was Artaſerſe; and the pleaſure ſhe received from the muſic was much augmented by her previous acquaintance with that intereſting drama; yet, as to all noviciates in ſcience, whatever is leaſt complicated is moſt pleaſing, ſhe found herſelf by nothing ſo deeply impreſſed, as by the plaintive and beautiful ſimplicity with which

which Pacchierotti uttered the affecting repetition of *ſono innocente!* his voice, always either ſweet or impaſſioned, delivered thoſe words in a tone of ſoftneſs, pathos, and ſenſibility, that ſtruck her with a ſenſation not more new than delightful.

But though ſhe was, perhaps, the only perſon thus aſtoniſhed, ſhe was by no means the only one enraptured; for notwithſtanding ſhe was too earneſtly engaged to remark the company in general, ſhe could not avoid taking notice of an old gentleman who ſtood by one of the ſide ſcenes, againſt which he lent his head in a manner that concealed his face, with an evident deſign to be wholly abſorbed in liſtening: and during the ſongs of Pacchierotti he ſighed ſo deeply that Cecilia, ſtruck by his uncommon ſenſibility to the power of muſic, involuntarily watched him, whenever her mind was ſufficiently at liberty to attend to any emotions but its own.

As ſoon as the rehearſal was over, the gentlemen of Mrs. Harrel's party crowded before her box; and Cecilia then perceived that the perſon whoſe muſical enthuſiaſm had excited her curioſity, was the ſame old gentleman whoſe extraordinary behaviour had ſo much ſurprized her at the houſe of Mr. Monckton. Her deſire to obtain ſome information concerning him again reviving,

ſhe

ſhe was beginning to make freſh enquiries, when ſhe was interrupted by the approach of Captain Areſby.

That gentleman, advancing to her with a ſmile of the extremeſt ſelf-complacency, after hoping, in a low voice, he had the honour of ſeeing her well, exclaimed, "How wretchedly empty is the town! petrifying to a degree! I believe you do not find yourſelf at preſent *obſedé* by too much company?"

"*At preſent*, I believe the contrary!" cried Mr. Goſport.

"Really!" ſaid the captain, unſuſpicious of his ſneer, "I proteſt I have hardly ſeen a ſoul. Have you tried the Pantheon yet, ma'am?"

"No, Sir."

"Nor I; I don't know whether people go there this year. It is not a favourite *ſpectacle* with me; that ſitting to hear the muſic is a horrid bore. Have you done the Feſtino the honour to look in there yet?"

"No, Sir."

"Permit me, then, to have the honour to beg you will try it."

"O, ay, true," cried Mrs. Harrel; "I have really uſed you very ill about that; I ſhould have got you in for a ſubſcriber: but Lord, I have done nothing for you yet,

and

and you never put me in mind. There's the ancient muſic, and Abel's concert;—as to the opera, we may have a box between us;—but there's the ladies concert we muſt try for; and there's—O Lord, fifty other places we muſt think of!"

"Oh times of folly and diſſipation!" exclaimed a voice at ſome diſtance; "Oh mignons of idleneſs and luxury! What next will ye invent for the perdition of your time! How yet further will ye proceed in the annihilation of virtue!"

Every body ſtared; but Mrs. Harrel cooly ſaid, "Dear, it's only the man-hater!"

"The man-hater?" repeated Cecilia, who found that the ſpeech was made by the object of her former curioſity; "is that the name by which he is known?"

"He is known by fifty names," ſaid Mr. Monckton; "his friends call him the *moraliſt*; the young ladies, the *crazy-man*; the macaronies, the *bore*; in ſhort, he is called by any and every name but his own."

"He is a moſt petrifying wretch, I aſſure you," ſaid the captain; "I am *obſedé* by him *partout*; if I had known he had been ſo near, I ſhould certainly have ſaid nothing."

"That you have done ſo well," cried Mr.

Mr. Goſport, " that if you had known it the whole time, you could have done it no better."

The captain, who had not heard this ſpeech, which was rather made at him than to him, continued his addreſs to Cecilia; " Give me leave to have the honour of hoping you intend to honour our ſelect maſquerade at the Pantheon with your preſence. We ſhall have but 500 tickets, and the ſubſcription will only be three guineas and a half."

" Oh objects of penury and want!" again exclaimed the incognito; " Oh vaſſals of famine and diſtreſs! Come and liſten to this wantonneſs of wealth! Come, naked and breadleſs as ye are, and learn how that money is conſumed which to you might bring raiment and food!"

" That ſtrange wretch," ſaid the captain, " ought really to be confined; I have had the honour to be *degouté* by him ſo often, that I think him quite obnoxious. I make it quite a principle to ſeal up my lips the moment I perceive him."

" Where is it, then," ſaid Cecilia, " that you have ſo often met him?

" O," anſwered the captain, " *partout*; there is no greater bore about town. But the time I found him moſt petrifying was once when I happened to have the honour

of

of dancing with a very young lady, who was but juſt come from a boarding-ſchool, and whoſe friends had done me the honour to fix upon me upon the principle of firſt bringing her out: and while I was doing *mon poſſible* for killing the time, he came up, and in his particular manner, told her I had no meaning in any thing I ſaid! I muſt own I never felt more tempted to be *enragé* with a perſon in years, in my life."

Mr. Arnott now brought the ladies word that their carriage was ready, and they quitted their box: but as Cecilia had never before ſeen the interior parts of a theatre, Mr. Monckton, hoping while they loitered to have an opportunity of talking with her, aſked Morrice why he did not *ſhew the lyons?* Morrice, always happy in being employed, declared it was *juſt the thing he liked beſt*, and begged permiſſion to do the honours to Mrs. Harrel, who, ever eager in the ſearch of amuſement, willingly accepted his offer.

They all, therefore, marched upon the ſtage, their own party now being the only one that remained.

"We ſhall make a triumphal entry here," cried Sir Robert Floyer; "the very tread of the ſtage half tempts me to turn actor."

"You

"You are a rare man," ſaid Mr. Goſport, "if, at your time of life, that is a turn not already taken."

"My time of life!" repeated he; "what do you mean by that? do you take me for an old man!"

"No, Sir, but I take you to be paſt childhood, and conſequently to have ſerved your apprenticeſhip to the actors you have mixed with on the great ſtage of the world, and, for ſome years at leaſt, to have ſet up for yourſelf."

"Come," cried Morrice, "let's have a little ſpouting; 'twill make us warm."

"Yes," ſaid Sir Robert, "if we ſpout to an animating object. If Miſs Beverley will be Juliet, I am Romeo at her ſervice."

At this moment the incognito, quitting the corner in which he had planted himſelf, came ſuddenly forward, and ſtanding before the whole group, caſt upon Cecilia a look of much compaſſion, and called out, "Poor ſimple victim! haſt thou already ſo many purſuers? yet ſeeſt not that thou art marked for ſacrifice! yet knoweſt not that thou art deſtined for prey!"

Cecilia, extremely ſtruck by this extraordinary addreſs, ſtopt ſhort and looked much diſturbed: which, when he perceived, he added, "Let the danger, not the warning

warning affect you! diſcard the ſycophants that ſurround you, ſeek the virtuous, relieve the poor, and ſave yourſelf from the impending deſtruction of unfeeling proſperity!"

Having uttered theſe words with vehemence and authority, he ſternly paſſed them, and diſappeared.

Cecilia, too much aſtoniſhed for ſpeech, ſtood for ſome time immoveable, revolving in her mind various conjectures upon the meaning of an exhortation ſo ſtrange and ſo urgent.

Nor was the reſt of the company much leſs diſcompoſed: Sir Robert, Mr. Monckton and Mr. Arnott, each conſcious of their own particular plans, were each apprehenſive that the warning pointed at himſelf: Mr. Goſport was offended at being included in the general appellation of ſycophants; Mrs. Harrel was provoked at being interrupted in her ramble; and Captain Areſby, ſickening at the very ſight of him, retreated the moment he came forth.

"For heaven's ſake," cried Cecilia, when ſomewhat recovered from her conſternation, "who can this be, and what can he mean? You, Mr. Monckton, muſt ſurely know ſomething of him; it was at your houſe I firſt ſaw him."

"Indeed,"

"Indeed," anſwered Mr. Monckton, "I knew almoſt nothing of him then, and I am but little better informed now. Belfield picked him up ſomewhere, and deſired to bring him to my houſe: he called him by the name of Albany: I found him a moſt extraordinary character, and Belfield, who is a worſhipper of originality, was very fond of him."

"He's a deviliſh crabbed old fellow," cried Sir Robert, "and if he goes on much longer at this confounded rate, he ſtands a very fair chance of getting his ears cropt."

"He is a man of the moſt ſingular conduct I have ever met with," ſaid Mr. Goſport; "he ſeems to hold mankind in abhorrence, yet he is never a moment alone, and at the ſame time that he intrudes himſelf into all parties, he aſſociates with none: he is commonly a ſtern and ſilent obſerver of all that paſſes, or when he ſpeaks, it is but to utter ſome ſentence of rigid morality, or ſome bitterneſs of indignant reproof."

The carriage was now again announced, and Mr. Monckton taking Cecilia's hand, while Mr. Morrice ſecured to himſelf the honour of Mrs. Harrel's, Sir Robert and Mr. Goſport made their bows and departed. But though they had now quitted the ſtage, and arrived at the head of a ſmall ſtair caſe

by

by which they were to deſcend out of the theatre, Mr. Monckton, finding all his tormentors retired, except Mr. Arnott, whom he hoped to elude, could not reſiſt making one more attempt for a few moments converſation with Cecilia; and therefore, again applying to Morrice, he called out, "I don't think you have ſhewn the ladies any of the contrivances behind the ſcenes?"

"True," cried Morrice, "no more I have; ſuppoſe we go back?"

"I ſhall like it vaſtly," ſaid Mrs. Harrel; and back they returned.

Mr. Monckton now ſoon found an opportunity to ſay to Cecilia, "Miſs Beverley, what I foreſaw has exactly come to paſs; you are ſurrounded by ſelfiſh deſigners, by intereſted, double-minded people, who have nothing at heart but your fortune, and whoſe mercenary views, if you are not guarded againſt them—"

Here a loud ſcream from Mrs. Harrel interrupted his ſpeech; Cecilia, much alarmed, turned from him to enquire the cauſe, and Mr. Monckton was obliged to follow her example: but his mortification was almoſt intolerable when he ſaw that lady in a violent fit of laughter, and found her ſcream was only occaſioned by ſeeing Mr. Morrice, in his diligence to do the

honours, pull upon his own head one of the ſide ſcenes!

There was now no poſſibility of propoſing any farther delay; but Mr. Monckton, in attending the ladies to their carriage, was obliged to have recourſe to his utmoſt diſcretion and forbearance, in order to check his deſire of reprimanding Morrice for his blundering officiouſneſs.

Dreſſing, dining with company at home, and then going out with company abroad, filled up, as uſual, the reſt of the day.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

A SUPPLICATION.

THE next morning Cecilia, at the repeated remonſtrances of Mrs. Harrel, conſented to call upon Miſs Larolles. She felt the impracticability of beginning at preſent the alteration in her way of life ſhe had projected, and therefore thought it moſt expedient to aſſume no ſingularity till her independency ſhould enable her to ſupport it with conſiſtency; yet greater than ever was her internal eagerneſs to better ſatisfy her inclination and her conſcience in the diſpoſition of her time, and the diſtribution of her wealth, ſince ſhe had heard the emphatic charge of her unknown Mentor.

Mrs. Harrel declined accompanying her in this viſit, becauſe ſhe had appointed a ſurveyor to bring a plan for the inſpection of Mr. Harrel and herſelf, of a ſmall temporary building, to be erected at Violet-Bank, for the purpoſe of performing plays in private the enſuing Eaſter.

When the ſtreet door was opened for her to get into the carriage, ſhe was ſtruck with

the appearance of an elderly woman who was ſtanding at ſome diſtance, and ſeemed ſhivering with cold, and who, as ſhe deſcended the ſteps, joined her hands in an act of ſupplication, and advanced nearer to the carriage.

Cecilia ſtopt to look at her: her dreſs, though parſimonious, was too neat for a beggar, and ſhe conſidered a moment what ſhe could offer her. The poor woman continued to move forward, but with a ſlowneſs of pace that indicated extreme weakneſs; and, as ſhe approached and raiſed her head, ſhe exhibited a countenance ſo wretched, and a complection ſo ſickly, that Cecilia was impreſſed with horror at the ſight.

With her hands ſtill joined, and a voice that ſeemed fearful of its own ſound, "Oh madam," ſhe cried, "that you would but hear me!"

"Hear you!" repeated Cecilia, haſtily feeling for her purſe, "moſt certainly; and tell me how I ſhall aſſiſt you?"

"Heaven bleſs you for ſpeaking ſo kindly, madam!" cried the woman, with a voice more aſſured; "I was ſadly afraid you would be angry, but I ſaw the carriage at the door, and I thought I would try; for I could be no worſe; and diſtreſs, madam, makes very bold."

"Angry!" ſaid Cecilia, taking a crown

from her purſe, "no, indeed!—who could ſee ſuch wretchedneſs, and feel any thing but pity!"

"Oh madam," returned the poor woman, "I could almoſt cry to hear you talk ſo, though I never thought to cry again, ſince I left it off for my poor Billy!"

"Have you, then, loſt a ſon?"

"Yes, madam; but he was a great deal too good to live, ſo I have quite left off grieving for him now."

"Come in, good woman," ſaid Cecilia, "it is too cold to ſtand here, and you ſeem half ſtarved already: come in, and let me have ſome talk with you."

She then gave orders that the carriage ſhould be driven round the ſquare till ſhe was ready, and making the woman follow her into a parlour, deſired to know what ſhe ſhould do for her; changing, while ſhe ſpoke, from a movement of encreaſing compaſſion, the crown which ſhe held in her hand for double that ſum.

"You can do every thing, madam," ſhe anſwered, "if you will but plead for us to his honour: he little thinks of our diſtreſs, becauſe he has been afflicted with none himſelf, and I would not be ſo troubleſome to him, but indeed, indeed, madam, we are quite pinched for want!"

Cecilia, ſtruck with the words *he little thinks*

thinks of our diſtreſs, becauſe he has been afflicted with none himſelf, felt again aſhamed of the ſmallneſs of her intended donation, and taking from her purſe another half guinea, ſaid "will this aſſiſt you? Will a guinea be ſufficient to you for the preſent?"

"I humbly thank you, madam," ſaid the woman, curtſying low, "ſhall I give you a receipt?"

"A receipt?" cried Cecilia, with emotion, "for what? Alas, our accounts are by no means balanced! but I ſhall do more for you if I find you as deſerving an object as you ſeem to be."

"You are very good, madam; but I only meant a receipt in part of payment."

"Payment for what? I don't underſtand you."

"Did his honour never tell you, madam, of our account?"

"What account?"

"Our bill, madam, for work done to the new Temple at Violet-Bank: it was the laſt great work my poor huſband was able to do, for it was there he met with his misfortune."

"What bill? What misfortune?" cried Cecilia; "What had your huſband to do at Violet-Bank?"

"He was the carpenter, madam. I

thought you might have ſeen poor Hill the carpenter there."

"No, I never was there myſelf. Perhaps you miſtake me for Mrs. Harrel."

"Why ſure, madam, a'n't you his honour's lady?"

"No. But tell me, what is this bill?"

"'Tis a bill, madam, for very hard work, for work, madam, which I am ſure will coſt my huſband his life; and though I have been after his honour night and day to get it, and ſent him letters and petitions with an account of our misfortunes, I have never received ſo much as a ſhilling! and now the ſervants won't even let me wait in the hall to ſpeak to him. Oh madam! you who ſeem ſo good, plead to his honour in our behalf! tell him my poor huſband cannot live! tell him my children are ſtarving! and tell him my poor Billy, that uſed to help to keep us, is dead, and that all the work I can do by myſelf is not enough to maintain us!"

"Good heaven!" cried Cecilia, extremely moved, "is it then your own money for which you ſue thus humbly?"

"Yes, madam, for my own juſt and honeſt money, as his honour knows, and will tell you himſelf."

"Impoſſible!" cried Cecilia, "he cannot know it; but I will take care he ſhall

ſoon

ſoon be informed of it. How much is the bill?"

"Two-and-twenty pounds, madam."

"What, no more?"

"Ah madam, you gentlefolks little think how much that is to poor people! A hard working family, like mine, madam, with the help of 20*l.* will go on for a long while quite in paradiſe."

"Poor worthy woman!" cried Cecilia, whoſe eyes were filled with tears of compaſſion, "if 20*l.* will place you in paradiſe, and that 20*l.* only your juſt right, it is hard, indeed, that you ſhould be kept without it; eſpecially when your debtors are too affluent to miſs it. Stay here a few moments, and I will bring you the money immediately."

Away ſhe flew, and returned to the breakfaſt room, but found there only Mr. Arnott, who told her that Mr. Harrel was in the library, with his ſiſter and ſome gentlemen. Cecilia briefly related her buſineſs, and begged he would inform Mr. Harrel ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak to him directly. Mr. Arnott ſhook his head, but obeyed.

They returned together, and immediately

"Miſs Beverley," cried Mr. Harrel, gaily, "I am glad you are not gone, for

we want much to conſult with you. Will you come up ſtairs?"

"Preſently," anſwered ſhe; "but firſt I muſt ſpeak to you about a poor woman with whom I have accidentally been talking, who has begged me to intercede with you to pay a little debt that ſhe thinks you have forgotten, but that probably you have never heard mentioned."

"A debt?" cried he, with an immediate change of countenance, "to whom?"

"Her name, I think, is Hill; ſhe is wife to the carpenter you employed about a new temple at Violet-Bank.

"O what—what that woman?—Well, well, I'll ſee ſhe ſhall be paid. Come, let us go to the library."

"What, with my commiſſion ſo ill executed? I promiſed to petition for her to have the money directly."

"Pho, pho, there's no ſuch hurry; I don't know what I have done with her bill."

"I'll run and get another."

"O upon no account! She may ſend another in two or three days. She deſerves to wait a twelvemonth for her impertinence in troubling you at all about it."

"That was entirely accidental: but indeed you muſt give me leave to perform my promiſe and plead for her. It muſt be almoſt

moſt the ſame to you whether you pay ſuch a trifle as 20*l.* now, or a month hence, and to this poor woman, the difference ſeems little ſhort of life or death, for ſhe tells me her huſband is dying, and her children are half famiſhed, and though ſhe looks an object of the cruelleſt want and diſtreſs herſelf, ſhe appears to be their only ſupport."

"O," cried Mr. Harrel, laughing, "what a diſmal tale has ſhe been telling you! no doubt ſhe ſaw you were freſh from the country! But if you give credit to all the farragos of theſe trumpery impoſtors, you will never have a moment to yourſelf, nor a guinea in your purſe."

"This woman," anſwered Cecilia, "cannot be an impoſtor, ſhe carries marks but too evident and too dreadful in her countenance of the ſufferings which ſhe relates."

"O," returned he, "when you know the town better, you will ſoon ſee through tricks of this ſort; a ſick huſband and five ſmall children are complaints ſo ſtale now, that they ſerve no other purpoſe in the world but to make a joke."

"Thoſe, however, who can laugh at them muſt have notions of merriment very different to mine. And this poor woman, whoſe cauſe I have ventured to undertake, had ſhe no family at all, muſt ſtill and indiſputably be an object of pity her-

ſelf, for ſhe is ſo weak ſhe can hardly crawl, and ſo pallid, that ſhe ſeems already half dead."

"All impoſition, depend upon it! The moment ſhe is out of your ſight, her complaints will vaniſh."

"Nay, ſir," cried Cecilia, a little impatiently, "there is no reaſon to ſuſpect ſuch deceit, ſince ſhe does not come hither as a beggar, however well the ſtate of beggary may accord with her poverty: ſhe only ſollicits the payment of a bill, and if in that there is any fraud, nothing can be ſo eaſy as detection."

Mr. Harrel bit his lips at this ſpeech, and for ſome inſtants looked much diſturbed; but ſoon recovering himſelf, he negligently ſaid "Pray how did ſhe get at you?"

"I met her at the ſtreet door. But tell me, is not her bill a juſt one?"

"I cannot ſay; I have never had time to look at it."

"But you know who the woman is, and that her huſband worked for you, and therefore that in all probability it is right, —do you not?"

"Yes, yes, I know who the woman is well enough; ſhe has taken care of that, for ſhe has peſtered me every day theſe nine months."

Cecilia was ſtruck dumb by this ſpeech: hitherto

hitherto ſhe had ſuppoſed that the diſſipation of his life kept him ignorant of his own injuſtice; but when ſhe found he was ſo well informed of it, yet, with ſuch total indifference, could ſuffer a poor woman to claim a juſt debt every day for nine months together, ſhe was ſhocked and aſtoniſhed beyond meaſure. They were both ſome time ſilent, and then Mr. Harrel, yawning and ſtretching out his arms, indolently aſked "Pray why does not the man come himſelf?"

"Did I not tell you," anſwered Cecilia, ſtaring at ſo abſent a queſtion, "that he was very ill, and unable even to work?"

"Well, when he is better," added he, moving towards the door, "he may call, and I will talk to him."

Cecilia, all amazement at this unfeeling behaviour, turned involuntarily to Mr. Arnott, with a countenance that appealed for his aſſiſtance; but Mr. Arnott hung his head, aſhamed to meet her eyes, and abruptly left the room.

Mean time Mr. Harrel, half turning back, though without looking Cecilia in the face, careleſsly ſaid, "Well, won't you come?"

"No, ſir," anſwered ſhe, coldly.

He then returned to the library, leaving her equally diſpleaſed, ſurpriſed and diſcon-

certed at the converſation which had juſt paſſed between them. "Good heaven," cried ſhe to herſelf, "what ſtrange, what cruel inſenſibility! to ſuffer a wretched family to ſtarve, from an obſtinate determination to aſſert that they can live! to diſtreſs the poor by retaining the recompence for which alone they labour, and which at laſt they muſt have, merely from indolence, forgetfulneſs, or inſolence! O how little did my uncle know, how little did I imagine to what a guardian I was intruſted!" She now felt aſhamed even to return to the poor woman, though ſhe reſolved to do all in her power to ſoften her diſappointment, and relieve her diſtreſs.

But before ſhe had quitted the room, one of the ſervants came to tell her that his maſter begged the honor of her company up ſtairs. "Perhaps he relents!" thought ſhe; and pleaſed with the hope, readily obeyed the ſummons.

She found him, his lady, Sir Robert Floyer, and two other gentlemen, all earneſtly engaged in an argument over a large table, which was covered with plans and elevations of ſmall buildings.

Mr. Harrel immediately addreſſed her with an air of vivacity and ſaid "You are very good for coming; we can ſettle nothing without your advice: pray look at

theſe different plans for our theatre, and tell us which is the beſt."

Cecilia advanced not a ſtep: the ſight of plans for new edifices when the workmen were yet unpaid for old ones; the cruel wantonneſs of raiſing freſh fabrics of expenſive luxury, while thoſe ſo lately built had brought their neglected labourers to ruin, excited an indignation ſhe ſcarce thought right to repreſs: while the eaſy ſprightlineſs of the director of theſe revels, to whom but the moment before ſhe had repreſented the oppreſſion of which they made him guilty, filled her with averſion and diſguſt: and, recollecting the charge given her by the ſtranger at the Opera rehearſal, ſhe reſolved to ſpeed her departure to another houſe, internally repeating "Yes, I *will* ſave myſelf from *the impending deſtruction of unfeeling proſperity!*"

Mrs. Harrel, ſurpriſed at her ſilence and extreme gravity, enquired if ſhe was not well, and why ſhe had put off her viſit to Miſs Larolles? And Sir Robert Floyer, turning ſuddenly to look at her, ſaid "Do you begin to feel the London air already?"

Cecilia endeavoured to recover her ſerenity, and anſwer theſe queſtions in her uſual manner; but ſhe perſiſted in declining to give any opinion at all about the plans,

and, after ſlightly looking at them, left the room.

Mr. Harrel, who knew better how to account for her behaviour than he thought proper to declare, ſaw with concern that ſhe was more ſeriouſly diſpleaſed, than he had believed an occurrence which he had regarded as wholly unimportant, could have made her: and therefore, deſirous that ſhe ſhould be appeaſed, he followed her out of the library, and ſaid "Miſs Beverley, will to-morrow be ſoon enough for your *Protegeé?*"

"O yes, no doubt!" anſwered ſhe, moſt agreeably ſurpriſed by the queſtion.

"Well, then, will you take the trouble to bid her come to me in the morning?"

Delighted at this unexpected commiſſion, ſhe thanked him with ſmiles for the office; and as ſhe haſtened down ſtairs to chear the poor expectant with the welcome intelligence, ſhe framed a thouſand excuſes for the part he had hitherto acted, and without any difficulty, perſuaded herſelf he began to ſee the faults of his conduct, and to meditate a reformation.

She was received by the poor creature ſhe ſo warmly wiſhed to ſerve with a countenance already ſo much enlivened, that ſhe fancied Mr. Harrel had himſelf anticipated her intended information: this, however,

ſhe

ſhe found was not the caſe, for as ſoon as ſhe heard his meſſage, ſhe ſhook her head, and ſaid "Ah, madam, his honour always ſays to-morrow! but I can better bear to be diſappointed now, ſo I'll grumble no more; for indeed, madam, I have been bleſt enough to-day to comfort me for every thing in the world, if I could but keep from thinking of poor Billy! I could bear all the reſt, madam, but whenever my other troubles go off, that comes back to me ſo much the harder!"

"There, indeed, I can afford you no relief," ſaid Cecilia, "but you muſt try to think leſs of him, and more of your huſband and children who are now alive. To-morrow you will receive your money, and that, I hope, will raiſe your ſpirits. And pray let your huſband have a phyſician, to tell you how to nurſe and manage him; I will give you one fee for him now, and if he ſhould want further advice, don't fear to let me know."

Cecilia had again taken out her purſe, but Mrs. Hill, claſping her hands, called out "Oh madam no! I don't come here to fleece ſuch goodneſs! but bleſſed be the hour that brought me here to-day, and if my poor Billy was alive, he ſhould help me to thank you!"

She then told her that ſhe was now quite rich,

rich, for while ſhe was gone, a gentleman had come into the room, who had given her five guineas.

Cecilia, by her deſcription, ſoon found this gentleman was Mr. Arnott, and a charity ſo ſympathetic with her own, failed not to raiſe him greatly in her favour. But as her benevolence was a ſtranger to that parade which is only liberal from emulation, when ſhe found more money not immediately wanted, ſhe put up her purſe, and charging Mrs. Hill to enquire for her the next morning when ſhe came to be paid, bid her haſten back to her ſick huſband.

And then, again ordering the carriage to the door, ſhe ſet off upon her viſit to Miſs Larolles, with a heart happy in the good already done, and happier ſtill in the hope of doing more.

Miſs Larolles was out, and ſhe returned home; for ſhe was too ſanguine in her expectations from Mr. Harrel, to have any deſire of ſeeking her other guardians. The reſt of the day ſhe was more than uſually civil to him, with a view to mark her approbation of his good intentions; while Mr. Arnott, gratified by meeting the ſmiles he ſo much valued, thought his five gnineas amply repaid, independently of the real pleaſure which he took in doing good.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A PROVOCATION.

THE next morning, when breakfaſt was over, Cecilia waited with much impatience to hear ſome tidings of the poor carpenter's wife; but though Mr. Harrel, who had always that meal in his own room, came into his lady's at his uſual hour, to ſee what was going forward, he did not mention her name. She therefore went into the hall herſelf, to enquire among the ſervants if Mrs. Hill was yet come?

Yes, they anſwered, and had ſeen their maſter, and was gone.

She then returned to the breakfaſt room, where her eagerneſs to procure ſome information detained her, though the entrance of Sir Robert Floyer made her wiſh to retire. But ſhe was wholly at a loſs whether to impute to general forgetfulneſs, or to the failure of performing his promiſe, the ſilence of Mr. Harrel upon the ſubject of her petition.

In a few minutes they were viſited by Mr. Morrice, who ſaid he called to acquaint

quaint the ladies that the next morning there was to be a rehearſal of a very grand new dance at the Opera-Houſe, where, though admiſſion was difficult, if it was agreeable to them to go, he would undertake to introduce them.

Mrs. Harrel happened to be engaged, and therefore declined the offer. He then turned to Cecilia, and ſaid, "Well, ma'am, when did you ſee our friend Monckton?

"Not ſince the rehearſal, Sir."

"He is a mighty agreeable fellow," he continued, "and his houſe in the country is charming. One is as eaſy at it as at home. Were you ever there, Sir Robert?"

"Not I, truly," replied Sir Robert; "what ſhould I go for?—to ſee an old woman with never a tooth in her head ſitting at the top of the table! Faith I'd go an hundred miles a day for a month never to ſee ſuch a ſight again."

"O but you don't know how well ſhe does the honours," ſaid Morrice; "and for my part, except juſt at meal times, I always contrive to keep out of her way."

"I wonder when ſhe intends to die," ſaid Mr. Harrel.

"She's been a long time about it," cried Sir Robert; "but thoſe tough old cats laſt for ever. We all thought ſhe was going when Monckton married her; however,

ever, if he had not managed like a driveler, he might have broke her heart nine years ago."

"I am ſure I wiſh he had," cried Mrs. Harrel, "for ſhe's an odious creature, and uſed always to make me afraid of her."

"But an old woman," anſwered Sir Robert, "is a perſon who has no ſenſe of decency; if once ſhe takes to living, the devil himſelf can't get rid of her."

"I dare ſay," cried Morrice, "ſhe'll pop off before long in one of thoſe fits of the aſthma. I aſſure you ſometimes you may hear her wheeze a mile off."

"She'll go never the ſooner for that," ſaid Sir Robert, "for I have got an old aunt of my own, who has been puffing and blowing as if ſhe was at her laſt gaſp ever ſince I can remember; and for all that, only yeſterday, when I aſked her doctor when ſhe'd give up the ghoſt, he told me ſhe might live theſe dozen years."

Cecilia was by no means ſorry to have this brutal converſation interrupted by the entrance of a ſervant with a letter for her. She was immediately retiring to read it; but upon the petition of Mr. Monckton, who juſt then came into the room, ſhe only went to a window. The letter was as follows:

To

To

Miſs,

at his Honour Squire Harrel's,

Theſe.

Honoured Madam,

THIS with my humble duty. His Honour has given me nothing. But I would not be troubleſome, having wherewithal to wait, ſo conclude,

Honoured Madam,

Your dutiful ſervant to command,

till death,

M. HILL.

The vexation with which Cecilia read this letter was viſible to the whole company; and while Mr. Arnott looked at her with a wiſh of enquiry he did not dare expreſs, and Mr. Monckton, under an appearance of inattention, concealed the moſt anxious curioſity, Mr. Morrice alone had courage to interrogate her; and, pertly advancing, ſaid, "He is a happy man who writ that letter, ma'am, for I am ſure you have not read it with indifference."

"Were I the writer," ſaid Mr. Arnott, tenderly, "I am ſure I ſhould reckon myſelf far otherwiſe, for Miſs Beverley ſeems to have read it with uneaſineſs."

"How-

"However, I have read it," anſwered ſhe, "I aſſure you it is not from *any man*."

"O pray, Miſs Beverley," cried Sir Robert, coming forward, "are you any better to-day?"

"No, Sir, for I have not been ill."

"A little vapoured, I thought, yeſterday; perhaps you want exerciſe."

"I wiſh the ladies would put themſelves under my care," cried Morrice, "and take a turn round the park."

"I don't doubt you, Sir," ſaid Mr. Monckton, contemptuouſly, "and, but for the check of modeſty, probably there is not a man here who would not wiſh the ſame."

"I could propoſe a much better ſcheme than that," ſaid Sir Robert; "what if you all walk to Harley-ſtreet, and give me your notions of a houſe I am about there? what ſay you, Mrs. Harrel?"

"O, I ſhall like it vaſtly."

"Done," cried Mr. Harrel; "'tis an excellent motion."

"Come then," ſaid Sir Robert, "let's be off. Miſs Beverley, I hope you have a good warm cloak?"

"I muſt beg you to excuſe my attending you, Sir."

Mr. Monckton, who had heard this propoſal with the utmoſt dread of its ſucceſs, revived

revived at the calm ſteadineſs with which it was declined. Mr. and Mrs. Harrel both teized Cecilia to conſent; but the haughty Baronet, evidently more offended than hurt by her refuſal, preſſed the matter no further: either with her or the reſt of the party, and the ſcheme was dropt entirely.

Mr. Monckton failed not to remark this circumſtance, which confirmed his ſuſpicions, that though the propoſal ſeemed made by chance, its deſign was nothing elſe than to obtain Cecilia's opinion concerning his houſe. But while this ſomewhat alarmed him, the unabated inſolence of his carriage, and the confident defiance of his pride, ſtill more ſurprized him; and notwithſtanding all he obſerved of Cecilia, ſeemed to promiſe nothing but diſlike; he could draw no other inference from his behaviour, than that if he admired, he alſo concluded himſelf ſure of her.

This was not a pleaſant conjecture, however little weight he allowed to it; and he reſolved, by outſtaying all the company, to have a few minutes private diſcourſe with her upon the ſubject.

In about half an hour, Sir Robert and Mr. Harrel went out together: Mr. Monckton ſtill perſevered in keeping his ground, and tried, though already weary,

to

to keep up a general converſation; but what moved at once his wonder and his indignation was the aſſurance of Morrice, who ſeemed not only bent upon ſtaying as long as himſelf, but determined, by rattling away, to make his own entertainment.

At length a ſervant came in to tell Mrs. Harrel that a ſtranger, who was waiting in the houſe-keeper's room, begged to ſpeak with her upon very particular buſineſs.

"O I know," cried ſhe, "'tis that odious John Groot: do pray, brother, try to get rid of him for me, for he comes to teize me about his bill, and I never know what to ſay to him."

"Mr. Arnott went immediately, and Mr. Monckton could ſcarce refrain from going too, that he might entreat John Groot by no means to be ſatisfied without ſeeing Mrs. Harrel herſelf: John Groot, however, wanted not his entreaties, as the ſervant ſoon returned to ſummon his lady to the conference.

But though Mr. Monckton now ſeemed near the completion of his purpoſe, Morrice ſtill remained; his vexation at this circumſtance ſoon grew intolerable; to ſee himſelf upon the point of receiving the recompence of his perſeverance, by the fortunate removal of all the obſtacles in its way, and then to have it held from him by a young

a young fellow he ſo much deſpiſed, and who had no entrance into the houſe but through his own boldneſs, and no inducement to ſtay in it but from his own impertinence, mortified him ſo inſufferably, that it was with difficulty he even forbore affronting him. Nor would he have ſcrupled a moment deſiring him to leave the room, had he not prudently determined to guard with the utmoſt ſedulity againſt raiſing any ſuſpicions of his paſſion for Cecilia.

He aroſe, however, and was moving towards her, with intention to occupy a part of a ſofa on which ſhe was ſeated, when Morrice, who was ſtanding at the back of it, with a ſudden ſpring which made the whole room ſhake, jumpt over, and ſunk plump into the vacant place himſelf, calling out at the ſame time, "Come, come, what have you married men to do with young ladies? I ſhall ſeize this poſt for myſelf."

The rage of Mr. Monckton at this feat, and ſtill more at the words *married men*, almoſt exceeded endurance; he ſtopt ſhort, and looking at him with a fierceneſs that overpowered his diſcretion, was burſting out with, "Sir, you are an ——*impudent fellow*;" but checking himſelf when he got half way, concluded with, "a very facetious gentleman!"

Morrice, who wiſhed nothing ſo little as

diſobliging Mr. Monckton, and whoſe behaviour was merely the reſult of levity and a want of early education, no ſooner perceived his diſpleaſure, than riſing with yet more agility than he had ſeated himſelf, he reſumed the obſequiouſneſs of which an uncommon flow of ſpirits had robbed him, and gueſſing no other ſubject for his anger than the diſturbance he had made, he bowed almoſt to the ground, firſt to him, and afterwards to Cecilia, moſt reſpectfully begging pardon of them both for his frolic, and proteſting he had no notion he ſhould have made ſuch a noiſe!

Mrs. Harrel and Mr. Arnott now haſtening back, enquired what had been the matter? Morrice, aſhamed of his exploit, and frightened by the looks of Mr. Monckton, made an apology with the utmoſt humility, and hurried away: and Mr. Monckton, hopeleſs of any better fortune, ſoon did the ſame, gnawn with a cruel diſcontent which he did not dare avow, and longing to revenge himſelf upon Morrice, even by perſonal chaſtiſement.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

A NARRATION.

THE moment Cecilia was at liberty, ſhe ſent her own ſervant to examine into the real ſituation of the carpenter and his family, and to deſire his wife would call upon her as ſoon as ſhe was at leiſure. The account which he brought back encreaſed her concern for the injuries of theſe poor people, and determined her not to reſt ſatisfied till ſhe ſaw them redreſſed. He informed her that they lived in a ſmall lodging up two pair of ſtairs; that there were five children, all girls, the three eldeſt of whom were hard at work with their mother in matting chair-bottoms, and the fourth, though a mere child, was nurſing the youngeſt; while the poor carpenter himſelf was confined to his bed, in conſequence of a fall from a ladder while working at Violet-Bank, by which he was covered with wounds and contuſions, and an object of miſery and pain.

As ſoon as Mrs. Hill came, Cecilia ſent for her into her own room, where ſhe re-

ceived her with the moſt compaſſionate tenderneſs, and deſired to know when Mr. Harrel talked of paying her?

"To-morrow, madam," ſhe anſwered, ſhaking her head, "that is always his honour's ſpeech: but I ſhall bear it while I can. However, though I dare not tell his honour, ſomething bad will come of it, if I am not paid ſoon."

"Do you mean, then, to apply to the law?"

"I muſt not tell you, madam; but to be ſure we have thought of it many a ſad time and often; but ſtill while we could rub on, we thought it beſt not to make enemies: but, indeed, madam, his honour was ſo hard-hearted this morning, that if I was not afraid you would be angry, I could not tell how to bear it; for when I told him I had no help now, for I had loſt my Billy, he had the heart to ſay, ſo much the better, there's one the leſs of you."

"But what," cried Cecilia, extremely ſhocked by this unfeeling ſpeech, "is the reaſon he gives for diſappointing you ſo often?"

"He ſays, madam, that none of the other workmen are paid yet; and that, to be ſure, is very true; but then they can all better afford to wait than we can, for we were the pooreſt of all, madam, and have

been misfortunate from the beginning: and his honour would never have employed us, only he had run up ſuch a bill with Mr. Wright, that he would not undertake any thing more till he was paid. We were told from the firſt we ſhould not get our money; but we were willing to hope for the beſt, for we had nothing to do, and were hard run, and had never had the offer of ſo good a job before; and we had a great family to keep, and many loſſes, and ſo much illneſs!——Oh madam! if you did but know what the poor go through!"

This ſpeech opened to Cecilia a new view of life; that a young man could appear ſo gay and happy, yet be guilty of ſuch injuſtice and inhumanity, that he could take pride in works which not even money had made his own, and live with undiminiſhed ſplendor, when his credit itſelf began to fail, ſeemed to her incongruities ſo irrational, that hitherto ſhe had ſuppoſed them impoſſible.

She then enquired, if her huſband had yet had any phyſician?

"Yes, madam, I humbly thank your goodneſs," ſhe anſwered; "but I am not the poorer for that, for the gentleman was ſo kind he would take nothing."

"And does he give you any hopes? what does he ſay?"

"He ſays he muſt die, madam! but I knew that before."

"Poor woman! and what will you do then?"

"The ſame, madam, as I did when I loſt my Billy, work on the harder!"

"Good heaven, how ſevere a lot! but tell me, why is it you ſeem to love your Billy ſo much better than the reſt of your children?"

"Becauſe, madam, he was the only boy that ever I had; he was ſeventeen years old, madam, and as tall and as pretty a lad! and ſo good, that he never coſt me a wet eye till I loſt him. He worked with his father, and all the folks uſed to ſay he was the better workman of the two."

"And what was the occaſion of his death?"

"A conſumption, madam, that waſted him quite to nothing: and he was ill a long time, and coſt us a deal of money, for we ſpared neither for wine nor any thing, that we thought would but comfort him; and we loved him ſo we never grudged it. But he died, madam! and if it had not been for very hard work, the loſs of him would quite have broke my heart."

"Try, however, to think leſs of him," ſaid Cecilia; "and depend upon my ſpeaking again for you to Mr. Harrel. You

ſhall certainly have your money; take care, therefore, of your own health, and go home and give comfort to your ſick huſband."

"Oh madam," cried the poor woman, tears ſtreaming down her cheeks, "you don't know how touching it is to hear gentlefolks talk ſo kindly! And I have been uſed to nothing but roughneſs from his honour! But what I moſt fear, madam, is that when my huſband is gone, he will be harder to deal with than ever; for a widow, madam, is always hard to be righted; and I don't expect to hold out long myſelf, for ſickneſs and ſorrow wear faſt: and then, when we are both gone, who is to help our poor children?"

"*I* will!" cried the generous Cecilia; "I am able, and I am willing; you ſhall not find all the rich hard-hearted, and I will try to make you ſome amends for the unkindneſs you have ſuffered."

The poor woman, overcome by a promiſe ſo unexpected, burſt into a paſſionate fit of tears, and ſobbed out her thanks with a violence of emotion that frightened Cecilia almoſt as much as it melted her. She endeavoured, by reiterated aſſurances of aſſiſtance, to appeaſe her, and ſolemnly pledged her own honour that ſhe ſhould certainly be paid the following Saturday, which was only three days diſtant.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hill, when a little calmer, dried her eyes, and humbly begging her to forgive a tranſport which ſhe could not reſtrain, moſt gratefully thanked her for the engagement into which ſhe had entered, proteſting that ſhe would not be *troubleſome to her goodneſs* as long as ſhe could help it; "And I believe," ſhe continued, "that if his honour will but pay me time enough for the burial, I can make ſhift with what I have till then. But when my poor Billy died, we were ſadly off indeed, for we could not bear but bury him prettily, becauſe it was the laſt we could do for him: but we could hardly ſcrape up enough for it, and yet we all went without our dinners to help forward, except the little one of all. But that did not much matter, for we had no great heart for eating."

"I cannot bear this!" cried Cecilia; "you muſt tell me no more of your Billy; but go home, and chear your ſpirits, and do every thing in your power to ſave your huſband."

"I will, madam," anſwered the woman, "and his dying prayers ſhall bleſs you! and all my children ſhall bleſs you, and every night they ſhall pray for you. And oh!"—again burſting into tears, "that Billy was but alive to pray for you too!"

Cecilia kindly endeavoured to ſoothe her,

but the poor creature, no longer able to ſuppreſs the violence of her awakened ſorrows, cried out, "I muſt go, madam, and pray for you at home, for now I have once begun crying again, I don't know how to have done!" and hurried away.

Cecilia determined to make once more an effort with Mr. Harrel for the payment of the bill, and if that, in two days, did not ſucceed, to take up money for the diſcharge of it herſelf, and reſt all her ſecurity for reimburſement upon the ſhame with which ſuch a proceeding muſt overwhelm him. Offended, however, by the repulſe ſhe had already received from him, and diſguſted by all ſhe had heard of his unfeeling negligence, ſhe knew not how to addreſs him, and reſolved upon applying again to Mr. Arnott, who was already acquainted with the affair, for advice and aſſiſtance.

Mr. Arnott, though extremely gratified that ſhe conſulted him, betrayed by his looks an hopeleſſneſs of ſucceſs that damped all her expectations. He promiſed, however, to ſpeak to Mr. Harrel upon the ſubject, but the promiſe was evidently given to oblige the fair mediatrix, without any hope of advantage to the cauſe.

The next morning Mrs. Hill again came, and again without payment was diſmiſſed.

Mr.

Mr. Arnott then, at the requeſt of Cecilia, followed Mr. Harrel into his room, to enquire into the reaſon of this breach of promiſe; they continued ſome time together, and when he returned to Cecilia, he told her, that his brother had aſſured him he would give orders to Daviſon, his gentleman, to let her have the money the next day.

The pleaſure with which ſhe would have heard this intelligence was much checked by the grave and cold manner in which it was communicated: ſhe waited, therefore, with more impatience than confidence for the reſult of this freſh aſſurance.

The next morning, however, was the ſame as the laſt; Mrs. Hill came, ſaw Daviſon, and was ſent away.

Cecilia, to whom ſhe related her grievances, then flew to Mr. Arnott, and entreated him to enquire at leaſt of Daviſon why the woman had again been diſappointed.

Mr. Arnott obeyed her, and brought for anſwer, that Daviſon had received no orders from his maſter.

"I entreat you then," cried ſhe, with mingled eagerneſs and vexation, "to go, for the laſt time, to Mr. Harrel. I am ſorry to impoſe upon you an office ſo diſagreeable, but I am ſure you compaſſionate

theſe poor people, and will ſerve them now with your intereſt, as you have already done with your purſe. I only wiſh to know if there has been any miſtake, or if theſe delays are merely to ſicken me of petitioning."

Mr. Arnott, with a repugnance to the requeſt which he could as ill conceal as his admiration of the zealous requeſter, again forced himſelf to follow Mr. Harrel. His ſtay was not long, and Cecilia at his return perceived that he was hurt and diſconcerted. As ſoon as they were alone together, ſhe begged to know what had paſſed? "Nothing," anſwered he, "that will give you any pleaſure. When I entreated my brother to come to the point, he ſaid it was his intention to pay all his workmen together, for that if he paid any one ſingly, all the reſt would be diſſatisfied."

"And why," ſaid Cecilia, "ſhould he not pay them at once? There can be no more compariſon in the value of the money to him and to them, than, to ſpeak with truth, there is in his and in their right to it."

"But, madam, the bills for the new houſe itſelf are none of them ſettled, and he ſays that the moment he is known to diſcharge an account for the Temple, he ſhall not have any reſt for the clamours it will

will raiſe among the workmen who were employed about the houſe."

"How infinitely ſtrange!" exclaimed Cecilia; "will he not, then, pay any body?"

"Next quarter, he ſays, he ſhall pay them all, but, at preſent, he has a particular call for his money."

Cecilia would not truſt herſelf to make any comments upon ſuch an avowal, but thanking Mr. Arnott for the trouble which he had taken, ſhe determined, without any further application, to deſire Mr. Harrel to advance her 20*l.* the next morning, and ſatisfy the carpenter herſelf, be the riſk what it might.

The following day, therefore, which was the Saturday when payment was promiſed, ſhe begged an audience of Mr. Harrel; which he immediately granted; but, before ſhe could make her demand, he ſaid to her, with an air of the utmoſt gaiety and good-humour, "Well, Miſs Beverley, how fares it with your *protegée?* I hope, at length, ſhe is contented. But I muſt beg you would charge her to keep her own counſel, as otherwiſe ſhe will draw me into a ſcrape I ſhall not thank her for."

"Have you, then, paid her?" cried Cecilia, with much amazement.

"Yes; I promiſed you I would, you know."

This intelligence equally delighted and aſtoniſhed her; ſhe repeatedly thanked him for his attention to her petition, and, eager to communicate her ſucceſs to Mr. Arnott, ſhe haſtened to find him. "Now," cried ſhe, "I ſhall torment you no more with painful commiſſions; the Hills, at laſt, are paid!"

"From you, madam," anſwered he gravely, "no commiſſions could be painful."

"Well but," ſaid Cecilia, ſomewhat diſappointed, "you don't ſeem glad of this?"

"Yes," anſwered he, with a forced ſmile, "I am very glad to ſee you ſo."

"But how was it brought about? did Mr. Harrel relent? or did you attack him again?"

The heſitation of his anſwer convinced her there was ſome myſtery in the tranſaction; ſhe began to apprehend ſhe had been deceived, and haſtily quitting the room, ſent for Mrs. Hill: but the moment the poor woman appeared, ſhe was ſatisfied of the contrary, for, almoſt frantic with joy and gratitude, ſhe immediately flung herſelf upon her knees, to thank her benefactreſs for having *ſeen her righted*.

Cecilia then gave her ſome general advice, promiſed to continue her friend, and offered her aſſiſtance in getting her huſband into an hoſpital: but ſhe told her he had already been in one many months, where he had been pronounced incurable, and therefore was deſirous to ſpend his laſt days in his own lodgings.

"Well," ſaid Cecilia, "make them as eaſy to him as you can, and come to me next week, and I will try to put you in a better way of living."

She then, ſtill greatly perplexed about Mr. Arnott, ſought him again, and, after various queſtions and conjectures, at length brought him to confeſs he had himſelf lent his brother the ſum with which the Hills had been paid.

Struck with his generoſity, ſhe poured forth thanks and praiſes ſo grateful to his ears, that ſhe ſoon gave him a recompenſe which he would have thought cheaply purchaſed by half his fortune.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

A Man of Wealth.

THE meanneſs with which Mr. Harrel had aſſumed the credit, as well as accepted the aſſiſtance of Mr. Arnott, encreaſed the diſguſt he had already excited in Cecilia, and haſtened her reſolution of quitting his houſe: and therefore, without waiting any longer for the advice of Mr. Monckton, ſhe reſolved to go inſtantly to her other guardians, and ſee what better proſpects their habitations might offer.

For this purpoſe, ſhe borrowed one of the carriages, and gave orders to be driven into the city, to the houſe of Mr. Briggs.

She told her name, and was ſhewn, by a little ſhabby foot-boy, into a parlour.

Here ſhe waited, with tolerable patience, for half an hour, but then, imagining the boy had forgotten to tell his maſter ſhe was in the houſe, ſhe thought it expedient to make ſome enquiry.

No

No bell, however, could ſhe find, and therefore ſhe went into the paſſage in ſearch of the foot-boy; but, as ſhe was proceeding to the head of the kitchen ſtairs, ſhe was ſtartled by hearing a man's voice from the upper part of the houſe, exclaiming, in a furious paſſion, "Dare ſay you've filched it for a diſh-clout!"

She called out, however, "Are any of Mr. Briggs's ſervants below?"

"Anan!" anſwered the boy, who came to the foot of the ſtairs, with a knife in one hand, and an old ſhoe, upon the ſole of which he was ſharpening it, in the other, "Does any one call?"

"Yes," ſaid Cecilia, "I do; for I could not find the bell."

"O, we have no bell in the parlour," returned the boy, "maſter always knocks with his ſtick."

"I am afraid Mr. Briggs is too buſy to ſee me, and if ſo, I will come another time."

"No, ma'am," ſaid the boy, "maſter's only looking over his things from the waſh."

"Will you tell him, then, that I am waiting?"

"I has, ma'am; but maſter miſſes his ſhaving-rag, and he ſays he won't come to the Mogul till he's found it." And then he went on with ſharpening his knife.

This

This little circumſtance was at leaſt ſufficient to ſatisfy Cecilia that if ſhe fixed her abode with Mr. Briggs, ſhe ſhould not have much uneaſineſs to fear from the ſight of extravagance and profuſion.

She returned to the parlour, and after waiting another half hour, Mr. Briggs made his appearance.

Mr. Briggs was a ſhort, thick, ſturdy man, with very ſmall keen black eyes, a ſquare face, a dark complection, and a ſnub noſe. His conſtant dreſs, both in winter and ſummer, was a ſnuff-colour ſuit of cloaths, blue and white ſpeckled worſted ſtockings, a plain ſhirt, and a bob wig. He was ſeldom without a ſtick in his hand, which he uſually held to his forehead when not ſpeaking.

This bob wig, however, to the no ſmall amazement of Cecilia, he now brought into the room upon the fore finger of his left hand, while, with his right, he was ſmoothing the curls; and his head, in defiance of the coldneſs of the weather, was bald and uncovered.

"Well," cried he, as he entered, "did you think ſhould not come?"

"I was very willing, ſir, to wait your leiſure."

"Ay, ay, knew you had not much to do. Been looking for my ſhaving-rag.

Going

Going out of town; never uſe ſuch a thing at home, paper does as well. Warrant maſter Harrel never heard of ſuch a thing; ever ſee him comb his own wig? Warrant he don't know how! never truſt mine out of my hands, the boy would tear off half the hair; all one to maſter Harrel, I ſuppoſe. Well, which is the warmer man, that's all? Will he caſt an account with me?"

Cecilia, at a loſs what to ſay to this ſingular exordium, began an apology for not waiting upon him ſooner.

"Ay, ay," cried he, "always gadding, no getting ſight of you. Live a fine life! A pretty guardian maſter Harrel! and where's t'other? where's old Don Puff-about?"

"If you mean Mr. Delvile, ſir, I have not yet ſeen him."

"Thought ſo. No matter, as well not. Only tell you he's a German Duke, or a Spaniſh Don Ferdinand. Well you've me! poorly off elſe. A couple of ignoramuſſes! don't know when to buy nor when to ſell. No doing buſineſs with either of them. We met once or twice; all to no purpoſe; only heard Don Vampus count his old Grandees; how will that get intereſt for money? Then comes Maſter Harrel,——twenty bows to a word,—looks at a watch,

—about

—about as big as a ſix-pence,—poor raw ninny!—a couple of rare guardians! Well you've me, I ſay; mind that!"

Cecilia was wholly unable to deviſe any anſwer to theſe effuſions of contempt and anger; and therefore his harangue laſted without interruption, till he had exhauſted all his ſubjects of complaint, and emptied his mind of ill-will; and then, ſettling his wig, he drew a chair near her, and twinkling his little black eyes in her face, his rage ſubſided into the moſt perfect good humour; and, after peering at her ſome time with a look of much approbation, he ſaid, with an arch nod, "Well, my duck, got ever a ſweet-heart yet?"

Cecilia laughed, and ſaid "No."

"Ah, little rogue, don't believe you! all a fib! better ſpeak out: come, fit I ſhould know; a'n't you my own ward? to be ſure almoſt of age, but not quite, ſo what's that to me?"

She then, more ſeriouſly, aſſured him ſhe had no intelligence of that ſort to communicate.

"Well, when you have tell, that's all. Warrant ſparks enough hankering. I'll give you ſome advice. Take care of ſharpers; don't truſt ſhoe-buckles, nothing but Briſtol ſtones! tricks in all things. A fine gentleman ſharp as another man. Never give

give your heart to a gold topped cane, nothing but braſs gilt over. Cheats every where: fleece you in a year; wont leave you a groat. But one way to be ſafe,—— bring 'em all to me."

Cecilia thanked him for his caution, and promiſed not to forget his advice.

"That's the way," he continued, "bring 'em to me. Won't be bamboozled. Know their tricks. Shew 'em the odds on't. Aſk for the rent-roll,—ſee how they'll look! ſtare like ſtuck pigs! got no ſuch thing."

"Certainly, ſir, that will be an excellent method of trial."

"Ay, ay, know the way! ſoon find if they are above par. Be ſure don't mind gold waiſtcoats; nothing but tinſel, all ſhew and no ſubſtance; better leave the mater to me; take care of you myſelf; know where to find one will do."

She again thanked him; and, being fully ſatisfied with this ſpecimen of his converſation, and unambitious of any further counſel from him, ſhe aroſe to depart.

"Well," repeated he, nodding at her with a look of much kindneſs, "leave it to me, I ſay; I'll get you a careful huſband, ſo take no thought about the matter."

Cecilia, half laughing, begged he would not

not give himſelf much trouble, and aſſured him ſhe was not in any haſte.

"All the better," ſaid he, "good girl; no fear for you: look out myſelf; warrant I'll find one. Not very eaſy, neither; hard times! men ſcarce! wars and tumults! ſtocks low! women chargeable!—— but don't fear; do our beſt; get you off ſoon."

She then returned to her carriage; full of reflection upon the ſcene in which ſhe had juſt been engaged, and upon the ſtrangeneſs of haſtening from one houſe to avoid a vice the very want of which ſeemed to render another inſupportable! but ſhe now found that, though luxury was more baneful in it's conſequences, it was leſs diſguſtful in it's progreſs than avarice; yet, inſuperably averſe to both, and almoſt equally deſirous to fly from the unjuſt extravagance of Mr. Harrel, as from the comfortleſs and unneceſſary parſimony of Mr. Briggs, ſhe proceeded inſtantly to St. James's-Square, convinced that her third guardian, unleſs exactly reſembling one of the others, muſt inevitably be preferable to both.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

A MAN OF FAMILY.

THE houſe of Mr. Delvile was grand and ſpacious, fitted up not with modern taſte, but with the magnificence of former times; the ſervants were all veterans, gorgeous in their liveries, and profoundly reſpectful in their manners; every thing had an air of ſtate, but of a ſtate ſo gloomy, that while it inſpired awe, it repreſſed pleaſure.

Cecilia ſent in her name and was admitted without difficulty, and was then uſhered with great pomp through ſundry apartments, and rows of ſervants, before ſhe came into the preſence of Mr. Delvile.

He received her with an air of haughty affability which, to a ſpirit open and liberal as that of Cecilia, could not fail being extremely offenſive: but too much occupied with the care of his own importance to penetrate into the feelings of another, he attributed the uneaſineſs which his reception occaſioned, to the over-awing predominance of ſuperior rank and conſequence.

He

He ordered a ſervant to bring her a chair, while he only half roſe from his own upon her entering into the room; then, waving his hand and bowing, with a motion that deſired her to be ſeated, he ſaid "I am very happy, Miſs Beverley, that you have found me alone; you would rarely have had the ſame good fortune. At this time of day I am generally in a crowd. People of large connections have not much leiſure in London, eſpecially if they ſee a little after their own affairs, and if their eſtates, like mine, are diſperſed in various parts of the kingdom. However, I am glad it happened ſo. And I am glad, too, that you have done me the favour of calling without waiting till I ſent, which I really would have done as ſoon as I heard of your arrival, but that the multiplicity of my engagements allowed me no reſpite."

A diſplay of importance ſo oſtentatious made Cecilia already half repent her viſit, ſatisfied that the hope in which ſhe had planned it would be fruitleſs.

Mr. Delvile, ſtill imputing to embarraſſment, an inquietude of countenance that proceeded merely from diſappointment, imagined her veneration was every moment encreaſing; and therefore, pitying a timidity which both gratified and ſoftened him, and equally pleaſed with himſelf for inſpiring,

ſpiring, and with her for feeling it, he abated more and more of his greatneſs, till he became, at length, ſo infinitely condeſcending, with intention to give her courage, that he totally depreſſed her with mortification and chagrin.

After ſome general enquiries concerning her way of life, he told her that he hoped ſhe was contented with her ſituation at the Harrel's, adding "If you have any thing to complain of, remember to whom you may appeal." He then aſked if ſhe had ſeen Mr. Briggs?

"Yes, ſir, I am this moment come from his houſe."

"I am ſorry for it; his houſe cannot be a proper one for the reception of a young lady. When the Dean made application that I would be one of your guardians, I inſtantly ſent him a refuſal, as is my cuſtom upon all ſuch occaſions, which indeed occur to me with a frequency extremely importunate: but the Dean was a man for whom I had really a regard, and therefore, when I found my refuſal had affected him, I ſuffered myſelf to be prevailed upon to indulge him, contrary not only to my general rule, but to my inclination."

Here he ſtopt, as if to receive ſome compliment, but Cecilia, very little diſpoſed to

pay

pay him any, went no farther than an inclination of the head.

"I knew not, however," he continued, "at the time I was induced to give my conſent, with whom I was to be aſſociated; nor could I have imagined the Dean ſo little converſant with the diſtinctions of the world, as to diſgrace me with inferior coadjutors: but the moment I learnt the ſtate of the affair, I inſiſted upon withdrawing both my name and countenance."

Here again he pauſed; not in expectation of an anſwer from Cecilia, but merely to give her time to marvel in what manner he had at laſt been melted.

"The Dean," he reſumed, "was then very ill; my diſpleaſure, I believe, hurt him. I was ſorry for it; he was a worthy man, and had not meant to offend me; in the end, I accepted his apology, and was even perſuaded to accept the office. You have a right, therefore, to conſider yourſelf as *perſonally* my ward, and though I do not think proper to mix much with your other guardians, I ſhall always be ready to ſerve and adviſe you, and much pleaſed to ſee you.

"You do me honour, ſir;" ſaid Cecilia, extremely wearied of ſuch graciouſneſs, and riſing to be gone.

"Pray ſit ſtill," ſaid he, with a ſmile;

"I

"I have not many engagements for this morning. You muſt give me ſome account how you paſs your time. Are you much out? The Harrel's, I am told, live at a great expence. What is their eſtabliſhment?"

"I don't exactly know, ſir."

"They are decent ſort of people, I believe; are they not?"

"I hope ſo, ſir!"

"And they have a tolerable acquaintance, I believe: I am told ſo; for I know nothing of them."

"They have, at leaſt, a very numerous one, ſir."

"Well, my dear," ſaid he, taking her hand," now you have once ventured to come, don't be apprehenſive of repeating your viſits: I muſt introduce you to Mrs. Delvile; I am ſure ſhe will be happy to ſhew you any kindneſs. Come, therefore, when you pleaſe, and without ſcruple. I would call upon you myſelf, but am fearful of being embarraſſed by the people with whom you live."

He then rang his bell, and with the ſame ceremonies which had attended her admittance, ſhe was conducted back to her carriage.

And here died away all hope of putting into execution, during her minority, the

the plan of which the formation had given her ſo much pleaſure. She found that her preſent ſituation, however wide of her wiſhes, was by no means the moſt diſagreeable in which ſhe could be placed; ſhe was tired, indeed, of diſſipation, and ſhocked at the ſight of unfeeling extravagance; but notwithſtanding the houſes of each of her other guardians were exempt from theſe particular vices, ſhe ſaw not any proſpect of happineſs with either of them; vulgarity ſeemed leagued with avarice to drive her from the manſion of Mr. Briggs, and haughtineſs with oſtentation to exclude her from that of Mr. Delvile.

She came back, therefore, to Portman-Square, diſappointed in her hopes, and ſick both of thoſe whom ſhe quitted, and of thoſe to whom ſhe was returning; but in going to her own apartment Mrs. Harrel, eagerly ſtopping her, begged ſhe would come into the drawing-room, where ſhe promiſed her a moſt agreeable ſurpriſe.

Cecilia, for an inſtant, imagined that ſome old acquaintance was juſt arrived out of the country; but, upon her entrance, ſhe ſaw only Mr. Harrel and ſome workmen, and found that the agreeable ſurpriſe was to proceed from the ſight of an elegant Awning, prepared for one of the inner apartments, to be fixed over a long deſert-table,

which was to be ornamented with various devices of cut glaſs.

"Did you ever ſee any thing ſo beautiful in your life?" cried Mrs. Harrel; "and when the table is covered with the coloured ices, and thoſe ſort of things, it will be as beautiful again. We ſhall have it ready for Tueſday ſe'nnight.

"I underſtood you were engaged to go to the Maſquerade?"

"So we ſhall; only we intend to ſee maſks at home firſt."

"I have ſome thoughts," ſaid Mr. Harrel, leading the way to another ſmall room, "of running up a flight of ſteps, and a little light gallery here, and ſo making a little Orcheſtra. What would ſuch a thing come to, Mr. Tomkins?"

"O, a trifle, ſir," anſwered Mr. Tomkins, "a mere nothing."

"Well, then, give orders for it, and let it be done directly. I don't care how ſlight it is, but pray let it be very elegant. Won't it be a great addition, Miſs Beverley?"

"Indeed, ſir, I don't think it ſeems to be very neceſſary;" ſaid Cecilia, who wiſhed much to take that moment for reminding him of the debt he had contracted with Mr. Arnott.

"Lord, Miſs Beverley is ſo grave!"

cried Mrs. Harrel; "nothing of this ſort gives her any pleaſure."

"She has indeed," anſwered Cecilia, trying to ſmile, "not much taſte for the pleaſure of being always ſurrounded by workmen."

And, as ſoon as ſhe was able, ſhe retired to her room, feeling, both on the part of Mr. Arnott and the Hills, a reſentment at the injuſtice of Mr. Harrel, which fixed her in the reſolution of breaking through that facility of compliance, which had hitherto confined her diſapprobation to her own breaſt, and venturing, henceforward, to mark the opinion ſhe entertained of his conduct, by conſulting nothing but reaſon and principle in her own.

Her firſt effort towards this change was made immediately, in begging to be excuſed from accompanying Mrs. Harrel to a large card aſſembly that evening.

Mrs. Harrel, extremely ſurpriſed, aſked a thouſand times the reaſon of her refuſal, imagining it to proceed from ſome very extraordinary cauſe; nor was ſhe, without the utmoſt difficulty, perſuaded at laſt that ſhe merely meant to paſs one evening by herſelf.

But the next day, when the refuſal was repeated, ſhe was ſtill more incredulous; it ſeemed to her impoſſible that any one who had

had the power to be encircled with company, could by choice ſpend a ſecond afternoon alone: and ſhe was ſo urgent in her requeſt to be entruſted with the ſecret, that Cecilia found no way left to appeaſe her, but by frankly confeſſing ſhe was weary of eternal viſiting, and ſick of living always in a crowd.

"Suppoſe, then," cried ſhe, "I ſend for Miſs Larolles to come and ſit with you?"

Cecilia, not without laughing, declined this propoſal, aſſuring her that no ſuch aſſiſtant was neceſſary for her entertainment: yet it was not till after a long contention that ſhe was able to convince her there would be no cruelty in leaving her by herſelf.

The following day, however, her trouble diminiſhed; for Mrs. Harrel, ceaſing to be ſurpriſed, thought little more of the matter, and forebore any earneſtneſs of ſolicitation: and, from that time, ſhe ſuffered her to follow her own humour with very little oppoſition. Cecilia was much concerned to find her ſo unmoved; and not leſs diſappointed at the indifference of Mr. Harrel, who, being ſeldom of the ſame parties with his lady, and ſeeing her too rarely either to communicate or hear any domeſtic occurrences, far from being ſtruck, as ſhe had hoped, with the new way in which ſhe paſ-

ſed her time, was ſcarce ſenſible of the change, and interfered not upon the ſubject.

Sir Robert Floyer, who continued to ſee her when he dined in Portman-Square, often enquired what ſhe did with herſelf in an evening; but never obtaining any ſatisfactory anſwer, he concluded her engagements were with people to whom he was a ſtranger.

Poor Mr. Arnott felt the cruelleſt diſappointment in being deprived of the happineſs of attending her in her evening's expeditions, when, whether he converſed with her or not, he was ſure of the indulgence of ſeeing and hearing her.

But the greateſt ſufferer from this new regulation was Mr. Monckton, who, unable any longer to endure the mortifications of which his morning viſits to Portman-Square had been productive, determined not to truſt his temper with ſuch provocations in future, but rather to take his chance of meeting with her elſewhere: for which purpoſe, he aſſiduouſly frequented all public places, and ſought acquaintance with every family and every perſon he believed to be known to the Harrels: but his patience was unrewarded, and his diligence unſucceſsful; he met with her no where, and, while he continued his ſearch, fancied every

evil

evil power was at work to lead him whither he was ſure never to find her.

Mean while Cecilia paſſed her time greatly to her own ſatisfaction. Her firſt care was to aſſiſt and comfort the Hills. She went herſelf to their lodgings, ordered and paid for whatever the phyſician preſcribed to the ſick man, gave clothes to the children, and money and various neceſſaries to the wife. She found that the poor carpenter was not likely to languiſh much longer, and therefore, for the preſent, only thought of alleviating his ſufferings, by procuring him ſuch indulgencies as were authoriſed by his phyſician, and enabling his family to abate ſo much of their labour as was requiſite for obtaining time to nurſe and attend him: but ſhe meant, as ſoon as the laſt duties ſhould be paid him, to aſſiſt his ſurvivors in attempting to follow ſome better and more profitable buſineſs.

Her next ſolicitude was to furniſh herſelf with a well-choſen collection of books; and this employment, which to a lover of literature, young and ardent in it's purſuit, is perhaps the mind's firſt luxury, proved a ſource of entertainment ſo fertile and delightful that it left her nothing to wiſh.

She confined not her acquiſitions to the limits of her preſent power, but, as ſhe was laying in a ſtock for future as well as

immediate advantage, ſhe was reſtrained by no expence from gratifying her taſte and her inclination. She had now entered the laſt year of her minority, and therefore had not any doubt that her guardians would permit her to take up whatever ſum ſhe ſhould require for ſuch a purpoſe.

And thus, in the exerciſe of charity, the ſearch of knowledge, and the enjoyment of quiet, ſerenely in innocent philoſophy paſſed the hours of Cecilia.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A MASQUERADE.

THE firſt check this tranquility received was upon the day of the maſquerade, the preparations for which have been already mentioned. The whole houſe was then in commotion from various arrangements and improvements which were planned for almoſt every apartment that was to be opened for the reception of maſks. Cecilia herſelf, however little pleaſed with the attendant circumſtance of wantonly accumulating unneceſſary debts, was not the leaſt animated of the party: ſhe was a ſtranger to every diverſion of this ſort, and from the novelty of the ſcene, hoped for uncommon ſatisfaction.

At noon Mrs. Harrel ſent for her to conſult upon a new ſcheme which occurred to Mr. Harrel, of fixing in fantaſtic forms ſome coloured lamps in the drawing room.

While they were all diſcourſing this matter over, one of the ſervants, who had two or three times whiſpered ſome meſſage to Mr. Harrel, and then retired, ſaid, in a

voice not too low to be heard by Cecilia, "Indeed, Sir, I can't get him away."

"He's an inſolent ſcoundrel," anſwered Mr. Harrel; "however, if I muſt ſpeak to him, I muſt;" and went out of the room.

Mrs. Harrel ſtill continued to exerciſe her fancy upon this new project, calling both upon Mr. Arnott and Cecilia to admire her taſte and contrivance; till they were all interrupted by the loudneſs of a voice from below ſtairs, which frequently repeated, "Sir, I can wait no longer! I have been put off till I can be put off no more!"

Startled by this, Mrs. Harrel ceaſed her employment, and they all ſtood ſtill and ſilent. They then heard Mr. Harrel with much ſoftneſs anſwer, "Good Mr. Rawlins have a little patience; I ſhall receive a large ſum of money to-morrow, or next day, and you may then depend upon being paid."

"Sir," cried the man, "you have ſo often told me the ſame, that it goes juſt for nothing: I have had a right to it a long time, and I have a bill to make up that can't be waited for any longer."

"Certainly, Mr. Rawlins," replied Mr. Harrel, with ſtill increaſing gentleneſs, "and certainly you ſhall have it: nobody means to diſpute your right; I only beg

you

you to wait a day, or two days at furtheſt, and you may then depend upon being paid. And you ſhall not be the worſe for obliging me; I will never employ any body elſe, and I ſhall have occaſion for you very ſoon, as I intend to make ſome alterations at Violet-Bank that will be very conſiderable."

"Sir," ſaid the man, ſtill louder, "it is of no uſe your employing me, if I can never get my money: All my workmen muſt be paid whether I am or no; and ſo, if I muſt needs ſpeak to a lawyer, why there's no help for it."

"Did you ever hear any thing ſo impertinent?" exclaimed Mrs. Harrel; "I am ſure Mr. Harrel will be very much to blame, if ever he lets that man do any thing more for him."

Juſt then Mr. Harrel appeared, and, with an air of affected unconcern, ſaid, "Here's the moſt inſolent raſcal of a maſon below ſtairs I ever met with in my life; he has come upon me, quite unexpectedly, with a bill of 400*l.* and won't leave the houſe without the money. Brother Arnott, I wiſh you would do me the favour to ſpeak to the fellow, for I could not bear to ſtay with him any longer."

"Do you wiſh me to give him a draught for the money upon my own banker?"

"That would be vaſtly obliging," anſwered Mr. Harrel, "and I will give you my note for it directly. And ſo we ſhall get rid of this fellow at once: and he ſhall do nothing more for me as long as he lives. I will run up a new building at Violet-Bank next ſummer, if only to ſhew him what a job he has loſt."

"Pay the man at once, there's a good brother," cried Mrs. Harrel, "and let's hear no more of him."

The two gentlemen then retired to another room, and Mrs. Harrel, after praiſing the extreme good-nature of her brother, of whom ſhe was very fond, and declaring that the maſon's impertinence had quite frightened her, again returned to her plan of new decorations.

Cecilia, amazed at this indifference to the ſtate of her huſband's affairs, began to think it was her own duty to talk with her upon the ſubject: and therefore, after a ſilence ſo marked that Mrs. Harrel enquired into its reaſon, ſhe ſaid, "Will you pardon me, my dear friend, if I own I am rather ſurprized to ſee you continue theſe preparations?"

"Lord, why?"

"Becauſe any freſh unneceſſary expences juſt now, till Mr. Harrel actually receives the money he talks of——"

"Why

"Why, my dear, the expence of ſuch a thing as this is nothing; in Mr. Harrel's affairs I aſſure you it will not be at all felt. Beſides, he expects money ſo ſoon, that it is juſt the ſame as if he had it already."

Cecilia, unwilling to be too officious, began then to expreſs her admiration of the goodneſs and generoſity of Mr. Arnott; taking frequent occaſion, in the courſe of her praiſe, to inſinuate that thoſe only can be properly liberal, who are juſt and œconomical.

She had prepared no maſquerade habit for this evening, as Mrs. Harrel, by whoſe direction ſhe was guided, informed her it was not neceſſary for ladies to be maſked at home, and ſaid ſhe ſhould receive her company herſelf in a dreſs which ſhe might wear upon any other occaſion. Mr. Harrel, alſo, and Mr. Arnott made not any alteration in their appearance.

At about eight o'clock the buſineſs of the evening began; and before nine, there were ſo many maſks that Cecilia wiſhed ſhe had herſelf made one of the number, as ſhe was far more conſpicuous in being almoſt the only female in a common dreſs, than any maſquerade habit could have made her. The novelty of the ſcene, however, joined to the general air of gaiety diffuſed throughout the company, ſhortly leſſened her em-

barraſſment; and, after being ſomewhat familiarized to the abruptneſs with which the maſks approached her, and the freedom with which they looked at or addreſſed her, the firſt confuſion of her ſituation ſubſided, and in her curioſity to watch others, ſhe ceaſed to obſerve how much ſhe was watched herſelf.

Her expectations of entertainment were not only fulfilled but ſurpaſſed; the variety of dreſſes, the medley of characters, the quick ſucceſſion of figures, and the ludicrous mixture of groupes, kept her attention unwearied: while the conceited efforts at wit, the total thoughtleſſneſs of conſiſtency, and the ridiculous incongruity of the language with the appearance, were incitements to ſurpriſe and diverſion without end. Even the local cant of, *Do you know me? Who are you?* and *I know you*; with the ſly pointing of the finger, the arch nod of the head, and the pert ſqueak of the voice, though weariſome to thoſe who frequent ſuch aſſemblies, were, to her unhackneyed obſervation, additional ſubjects of amuſement.

Soon after nine o'clock, every room was occupied, and the common crowd of regular maſqueraders were diſperſed through the various apartments. Dominos of no character, and fancy-dreſſes of no meaning, made,

as

as is uſual at ſuch meetings, the general herd of the company: for the reſt, the men were Spaniards, chimney-ſweepers, Turks, watchmen, conjurers, and old women; and the ladies, ſhepherdeſſes, orange girls, Circaſſians, gipſeys, haymakers, and ſultanas.

Cecilia had, as yet, eſcaped any addreſs beyond the cuſtomary enquiry of *Do you know me?* and a few paſſing compliments; but when the rooms filled, and the general crowd gave general courage, ſhe was attacked in a manner more pointed and ſingular.

The very firſt maſk who approached her, ſeemed to have nothing leſs in view than preventing the approach of every other: yet had he little reaſon to hope favour for himſelf, as the perſon he repreſented, of all others leaſt alluring to the view, was the devil! He was black from head to foot, ſave that two red horns ſeemed to iſſue from his forehead; his face was ſo completely covered, that the ſight only of his eyes was viſible, his feet were cloven, and in his right hand he held a wand the colour of fire.

Waving this wand as he advanced towards Cecilia, he cleared a ſemi-circular ſpace before her chair, thrice with the moſt profound reverence bowed to her, thrice turned himſelf around with ſundry grimaces,

grimaces, and then fiercely planted himſelf at her ſide.

Cecilia was amuſed by his mummery, but ſelt no great delight in his guardianſhip, and, after a ſhort time, aroſe, with intention to walk to another place; but the black gentleman, adroitly moving round her, held out his wand to obſtruct her paſſage, and therefore, preferring captivity to reſiſtance, ſhe was again obliged to ſeat herſelf.

An Hotſpur, who juſt then made his appearance, was now ſtrutting boldly towards her; but the devil, ruſhing furiouſly forwards, placed himſelf immediately between them. Hotſpur, putting his arms a-kembo with an air of defiance, gave a loud ſtamp with his right foot, and then —— marched into another room!

The victorious devil oſtentatiouſly waved his wand, and returned to his ſtation.

Mr. Arnott, who had never moved two yards from Cecilia, knowing her too well to ſuppoſe ſhe received any pleaſure from being thus diſtinguiſhed, modeſtly advanced to offer his aſſiſtance in releaſing her from confinement; but the devil, again deſcribing a circle with his wand, gave him three ſuch ſmart raps on the head that his hair was diſordered, and his face covered with powder. A general laugh ſucceeded, and

Mr.

Mr. Arnott, too diffident to brave raillery, or withſtand ſhame, retired in confuſion.

The black gentleman ſeemed now to have all authority in his own hands, and his wand was brandiſhed with more ferocity than ever, no one again venturing to invade the domain he thought fit to appropriate for his own.

At length, however, a Don Quixote appeared, and every maſk in the room was eager to point out to him the impriſonment of Cecilia.

This Don Quixote was accoutered with tolerable exactneſs according to the deſcription of the admirable Cervantes; his armour was ruſty, his helmet was a barber's baſon, his ſhield, a pewter diſh, and his lance, an old ſword faſtened to a ſlim cane. His figure, tall and thin, was well adapted to the character he repreſented, and his maſk, which depictured a lean and haggard face, worn with care, yet fiery with crazy paſſions, exhibited with propriety the moſt ſtriking, the knight of the doleful countenance.

The complaints againſt the devil with which immediately and from all quarters he was aſſailed, he heard with the moſt ſolemn taciturnity: after which, making a motion for general ſilence, he ſtalked majeſtically towards Cecilia, but ſtopping ſhort of the limits preſcribed by her guard;

he

he kiſſed his ſpear in token of allegiance, and then, ſlowly dropping upon one knee, began the following addreſs:

" Moſt incomparable Princeſs!

THUS humbly proſtrate at the feet of your divine and ineffable beauty, graciouſly permit the moſt pitiful of your ſervitors, Don Quixote De la Mancha, from your high and tender grace, to ſalute the fair boards, which ſuſtain your corporeal machine."

Then, bending down his head, he kiſſed the floor; after which, raiſing himſelf upon his feet, he proceeded in his ſpeech.

" Report, O moſt fair and unmatchable virgin! daringly affirmeth, that a certain diſcourteous perſon, who calleth himſelf the devil, even now, and in thwart of your fair inclinations, keepeth and detaineth your irradiant frame in hoſtile thraldom. Suffer then, magnanimous and undiſcribable lady! that I, the moſt groveling of your unworthy vaſſals, do ſift the fair truth out of this foul ſieve, and, obſequiouſly bending to your divine attractions, conjure your highneſs veritably to inform me, if that honourable chair which haply ſupports your terreſtrial perfections, containeth the inimitable burthen with the free and legal conſent of your celeſtial ſpirit?"

Here

Here he ceaſed: and Cecilia, who laughed at this characteriſtic addreſs, though ſhe had not courage to anſwer it, again made an effort to quit her place, but again by the wand of her black perſecutor was prevented.

This little incident was anſwer ſufficient for the valorous knight, who indignantly exclaimed,

"Sublime Lady!

I BESEECH but of your exquiſite mercy to refrain mouldering the clay compoſition of my unworthy body to impalpable duſt, by the refulgence of thoſe bright ſtars vulgarly called eyes, till I have lawfully wreaked my vengeance upon this unobliging caitiff, for his moſt diſloyal obſtruction of your highneſſes adorable pleaſure."

Then, bowing low, he turned from her, and thus addreſſed his intended antagoniſt:

"Uncourtly Miſcreant,

THE black garment which envellopeth thy moſt unpleaſant perſon, ſeemeth even of the moſt raviſhing whiteneſs, in compare of the black bile which floateth within thy ſable exterior. Behold, then, my gauntlet!

gauntlet! yet ere I deign to be the inſtrument of thy extirpation, O thou moſt mean and ignoble enemy! that the honour of Don Quixote de la Mancha may not be ſullied by thy extinction, I do here confer upon thee the honour of knighthood, dubbing thee, by my own ſword, Don Devil, knight of the horrible phyſiognomy."

He then attempted to ſtrike his ſhoulder with his ſpear, but the black gentleman, adroitly eluding the blow, defended himſelf with his wand: a mock fight enſued, conducted on both ſides with admirable dexterity; but Cecilia, leſs eager to view it than to become again a free agent, made her eſcape into another apartment; while the reſt of the ladies, though they almoſt all ſcreamed, jumped upon chairs and ſofas to peep at the combat.

In concluſion, the wand of the knight of the horrible phyſiognomy, was broken againſt the ſhield of the knight of the doleful countenance; upon which Don Quixote called out *victoria!* the whole room ecchoed the ſound; the unfortunate new knight retired abruptly into another apartment, and the conquering Don, ſeizing the fragments of the weapon of his vanquiſhed enemy, went out in ſearch of the lady for whoſe releaſement he had fought:

ſought: and the moment he found her, proſtrating both himſelf and the trophies at her feet, he again preſſed the floor with his lips, and then, ſlowly ariſing, repeated his reverences with added formality, and, without waiting her acknowledgments, gravely retired.

The moment he departed a Minerva, not ſtately nor auſtere, not marching in war-like majeſty, but gay and airy,

Tripping on light fantaſtic toe,

ran up to Cecilia, and ſqueaked out, "Do you know me?"

"Not," anſwered ſhe, inſtantly recollecting Miſs Larolles, "by your *appearance*, I own! but by your *voice*, I think I can gueſs you."

"I was monſtrous ſorry," returned the goddeſs, without underſtanding this diſtinction, "that I was not at home when you called upon me. Pray how do you like my dreſs? I aſſure you I think it's the prettieſt here. But do you know there's the moſt ſhocking thing in the world happened in the next room? I really believe there's a common chimney-ſweeper got in! I aſſure you its enough to frighten one to death, for every time he moves the ſoot ſmells ſo you can't think; quite real ſoot, I aſſure you! only conceive how naſty!

naſty! I declare I wiſh with all my heart it would ſuffocate him!"

Here ſhe was interrupted by the re-appearance of *Don Devil*; who, looking around him, and perceiving that his antagoniſt was gone, again advanced to Cecilia: not, however, with the authority of his firſt approach, for with his wand he had loſt much of his power; but to recompenſe himſelf for this diſgrace, he had recourſe to another method equally effectual for keeping his prey to himſelf, for he began a growling, ſo diſmal and diſagreeable, that while many of the ladies, and, among the firſt, the *Goddeſs of Wiſdom and Courage*, ran away to avoid him, the men all ſtood aloof to watch what next was to follow.

Cecilia now became ſeriouſly uneaſy; for ſhe was made an object of general attention, yet could neither ſpeak nor be ſpoken to. She could ſuggeſt no motive for behaviour ſo whimſical, though ſhe imagined the only perſon who could have the aſſurance to practice it was Sir Robert Floyer.

After ſome time ſpent thus diſagreeably, a white domino, who for a few minutes had been a very attentive ſpectator, ſuddenly came forward, and exclaiming, "*I'll croſs him though he blaſt me!*" ruſhed upon the fiend, and graſping one of his horns, called out to a Harlequin who ſtood near him,

"Har-

"Harlequin! do you fear to fight the devil?"

"Not I truly!" anſwered Harlequin, whoſe voice immediately betrayed young Morrice, and who, iſſuing from the crowd, whirled himſelf round before the black gentleman with yet more agility than he had himſelf done before Cecilia, giving him, from time to time, many ſmart blows on his ſhoulders, head and back with his wooden ſword.

The rage of *Don Devil* at this attack ſeemed ſomewhat beyond what a maſquerade character rendered neceſſary; he foamed at the mouth with reſentment, and defended himſelf with ſo much vehemence, that he ſoon drove poor Harlequin into another room: but, when he would have returned to his prey, the genius of pantomime, curbed, but not ſubdued, at the inſtigation of the white domino returned to the charge, and by a perpetual rotation of attack and retreat, kept him in conſtant employment, purſuing him from room to room, and teazing him without ceſſation or mercy.

Mean time Cecilia, delighted at being releaſed, hurried into a corner, where ſhe hoped to breathe and look on in quiet; and the white domino, having exhorted Harlequin to torment the tormentor, and keep

keep him at bay, followed her with congratulations upon her recovered freedom.

"It is you," anſwered ſhe, "I ought to thank for it, which indeed I do moſt heartily. I was ſo tired of confinement, that my mind ſeemed almoſt as little at liberty as my perſon."

"Your perſecutor, I preſume," ſaid the domino, "is known to you."

"I hope ſo," anſwered ſhe, "becauſe there is one man I ſuſpect, and I ſhould be ſorry to find there was another equally diſagreeable."

"O, depend upon it," cried he, "there are many who would be happy to confine you in the ſame manner; neither have you much cauſe for complaint; you have, doubtleſs, been the aggreſſor, and played this game yourſelf without mercy, for I read in your face the captivity of thouſands: have you, then, any right to be offended at the ſpirit of retaliation which one, out of ſuch numbers, has courage to exert in return?"

"I proteſt," cried Cecilia, "I took you for my defender! whence is it you are become my accuſer?"

"From ſeeing the danger to which my incautious knight errantry has expoſed me; I begin, indeed, to take you for a very miſchievous ſort of perſon, and I fear the poor devil from whom I reſcued you will be amply revenged for his diſgrace, by finding

finding that the firſt uſe you make of your freedom is to doom your deliverer to bondage."

Here they were diſturbed by the extreme loquacity of two oppoſite parties: and liſtening attentively, they heard from one ſide, "My angel! faireſt of creatures! goddeſs of my heart!" uttered in accents of rapture; while from the other, the vociferation was ſo violent they could diſtinctly hear nothing.

The white domino ſatisfied his curioſity by going to both parties; and then, returning to Cecilia, ſaid, "Can you conjecture who was making thoſe ſoft ſpeeches? a Shylock! his knife all the time in his hand, and his deſign, doubtleſs, to *cut as near the heart as poſſible!* while the loud cackling from the other ſide, is owing to the riotous merriment of a noiſy Mentor! when next I hear a diſturbance, I ſhall expect to ſee ſome ſimpering Pythagoras ſtunned by his talkative diſciples."

"To own the truth," ſaid Cecilia, "the almoſt univerſal neglect of the characters aſſumed by theſe maſquers, has been the chief ſource of my entertainment this evening: for at a place of this ſort, the next beſt thing to a character well ſupported, is a character ridiculouſly burleſqued."

"You cannot, then, have wanted amuſe-

ment," returned the domino, "for among all the perſons aſſembled in theſe apartments, I have ſeen only three who have ſeemed conſcious that any change but that of dreſs was neceſſary to diſguiſe them."

"And pray who are thoſe?"

"A Don Quixote, a ſchool-maſter, and your friend the devil."

"O call him not my friend," exclaimed Cecilia, "for indeed in or out of that garb he is particularly my averſion."

"*My* friend, then, I will call him," ſaid the Domino, "for ſo, were he ten devils, I muſt think him, ſince I owe to him the honour of converſing with you. And, after all, to give him his due, to which, you know, he is even proverbially entitled, he has ſhewn ſuch abilities in the performance of his part, ſo much ſkill in the diſplay of malice, and ſo much perſeverance in the art of tormenting, that I cannot but reſpect his ingenuity and capacity. And, indeed, if inſtead of an evil genius, he had repreſented a guardian angel, he could not have ſhewn a more refined taſte in his choice of an object to hover about."

Juſt then they were approached by a young hay-maker, to whom the white domino called out "You look as gay and as briſk as if freſh from the hay-field after only half a day's work. Pray how is

it

it you pretty laſſes find employment for the winter?"

"How?" cried ſhe, pertly, "why the ſame as for the ſummer!" And pleaſed with her own readineſs at repartee, without feeling the ignorance it betrayed, ſhe tript lightly on.

Immediately after, the ſchool-maſter, mentioned by the white domino, advanced to Cecilia. His dreſs was merely a long wrapping gown of green ſtuff, a pair of red ſlippers, and a woollen night-cap of the ſame colour; while, as the ſymbol of his profeſſion, he held a rod in his hand.

"Ah, fair lady," he cried, "how ſoothing were it to the auſterity of my life, how ſoftening to the rigidity of my manners, might I — without a *breaking out of bounds* which I ought to be the firſt to diſcourage, and a "confuſion to all order" for which the ſchool-boy ſhould himſelf chaſtiſe his maſter, be permitted to caſt at your feet this emblem of my authority! and to forget, in the ſoftneſs of your converſation, all the roughneſs of diſcipline!"

"No, no," cried Cecilia, "I will not be anſwerable for ſuch corruption of taſte!"

"This repulſe," anſwered he, "is juſt what I feared; for alas! under what pretence could a poor miſerable country pedagogue preſume to approach you? Should

I examine you in the dead languages, would not your living accents charm from me all power of reproof? Could I look at you, and hear a falſe concord? Should I doom you to water-gruel as a dunce, would not my ſubſequent remorſe make me want it myſelf as a mad-man? Were your fair hand ſpread out to me for correction, ſhould I help applying my lips to it, inſtead of my rat-tan? If I ordered you to be *called up*, ſhould I ever remember to have you ſent back? And if I commanded you to ſtand in a corner, how ſhould I forbear following you thither myſelf?"

Cecilia, who had no difficulty in knowing this pretended ſchool-maſter for Mr. Goſport, was readily beginning to propoſe conditions, for according him her favour, when their ears were aſſailed by a forced phthiſical cough, which they found proceeded from an apparent old woman, who was a young man in diſguiſe, and whoſe hobbling gait, grunting voice, and moſt grievous aſthmatic complaints, ſeemed greatly enjoyed and applauded by the company.

"How true is it, yet how inconſiſtent," cried the white domino, "that while we all deſire to live long, we have all an horror of being old! The figure now paſſing is not meant to ridicule any particular perſon, nor to ſtigmatize any particular abſurdity; its ſole

ſole view is to expoſe to contempt and deriſion the general and natural infirmities of age! and the deſign is not more diſguſting than impolitic; for why, while ſo carefully we guard from all approaches of death, ſhould we cloſe the only avenues to happineſs in long life, reſpect and tenderneſs."

Cecilia, delighted both by the underſtanding and humanity of her new acquaintance, and pleaſed at being joined by Mr. Goſport, was beginning to be perfectly ſatisfied with her ſituation, when, creeping ſoftly towards her, ſhe again perceived the black gentleman.

"Ah!" cried ſhe, with ſome vexation, "here comes my old tormentor! ſcreen me from him if poſſible, or he will again make me his priſoner."

"Fear not," cried the white domino, "he is an evil ſpirit, and we will ſurely lay him. If one ſpell fails, we muſt try another."

Cecilia then perceiving Mr. Arnott, begged he would alſo aſſiſt in barricading her from the fiend who ſo obſtinately purſued her.

Mr. Arnott moſt gratefully acceded to the propoſal; and the white domino, who acted as commanding officer, aſſigned to each his ſtation: he deſired Cecilia would keep quietly to her ſeat, appointed the

ſchool-maſter to be her guard on the left, took poſſeſſion himſelf of the oppoſite poſt, and ordered Mr. Arnott to ſtand centinal in front.

This arrangement being ſettled, the guards of the right and left wings inſtantly ſecured their places; but while Mr. Arnott was conſidering whether it were better to face the beſieged, or the enemy, the arch-foe ruſhed ſuddenly before him, and laid himſelf down at the feet of Cecilia.

Mr. Arnott, extremely diſconcerted, began a ſerious expoſtulation upon the ill-breeding of this behaviour; but the devil, reſting all excuſe upon ſupporting his character, only anſwered by growling.

The white domino ſeemed to heſitate for a moment in what manner to conduct himſelf, and with a quickneſs that marked his chagrin, ſaid to Cecilia, "You told me you knew him,—has he any right to follow you?"

"If he thinks he has," anſwered ſhe, a little alarmed by his queſtion, "this is no time to diſpute it."

And then, to avoid any hazard of altercation, ſhe diſcreetly forebore making further complaints, preferring any perſecution to ſeriouſly remonſtrating with a man of ſo much inſolence as the Baronet.

The ſchool-maſter, laughing at the whole tranſac-

tranſaction, only ſaid "And pray, madam, after playing the devil with all mankind, what right have you to complain that one man plays the devil with you?"

"We ſhall, at leaſt, fortify you," ſaid the white domino, "from any other aſſailant: no three-headed Cerberus could protect you more effectually: but you will not, therefore, fancy yourſelf in the lower regions, for, if I miſtake not, the torment of *three guardians* is nothing new to you."

"And how," ſaid Cecilia, ſurpriſed, "ſhould you know of my three guardians? I hope I am not quite encompaſſed with evil ſpirits!"

"No," anſwered he; "you will find me as inoffenſive as the hue of the domino I wear; —— and would I could add as inſenſible!"

"This black gentleman," ſaid the ſchoolmaſter, "who, and very innocently, I was going to call your *black-guard*, has as noble and fiend-like a diſpoſition as I remember to have ſeen; for without even attempting to take any diverſion himſelf, he ſeems gratified to his heart's content, in excluding from it the lady he ſerves."

"He does me an honour I could well diſpenſe with," ſaid Cecilia; "but I hope he has ſome ſecret ſatisfaction in his ſituation which pays him for its apparent inconvenience."

Here the black gentleman half raiſed himſelf, and attempted to take her hand; ſhe ſtarted, and with much diſpleaſure drew it back: he then growled, and again ſunk proſtrate.

"This is a fiend," ſaid the ſchool-maſter, "who to himſelf ſayeth *Budge not!* let his conſcience never ſo often ſay *budge!* Well, fair lady, your fortifications, however, may now be deemed impregnable, ſince I, with a flouriſh of my rod, can keep off the young by recollection of the paſt, and ſince the fiend, with a jut of his foot, may keep off the old from dread of the future!"

Here a Turk, richly habited and reſplendent with jewels, ſtalked towards Cecilia, and, having regarded her ſome time, called out "I have been looking hard about me the whole evening, and, faith, I have ſeen nothing handſome before!"

The moment he opened his mouth, his voice, to her utter aſtoniſhment, betrayed Sir Robert Floyer! "Mercy on me," cried ſhe aloud, and pointing to the fiend, "who, then, can this poſſibly be?"

"Do you not know?" cried the white domino.

"I thought I had known with certainty," anſwered ſhe, "but I now find I was miſtaken."

"He

"He is a happy man," ſaid the ſchool-maſter, ſarcaſtically looking at the Turk, "who has removed your ſuſpicions only by appearing in another character!"

"Why what the deuce, then," exclaimed the Turk, "have you taken that black dog there for *me?*"

Before this queſtion could be anſwered, an offenſive ſmell of ſoot, making every body look around the room, the chimney-ſweeper already mentioned by Miſs Larolles, was perceived to enter it. Every way he moved, a paſſage was cleared for him, as the company, with general diſguſt, retreated wherever he advanced. He was ſhort, and ſeemed ſomewhat incommoded by his dreſs; he held his ſoot-bag over one arm, and his ſhovel under the other. As ſoon as he eſpied Cecilia, whoſe ſituation was ſuch as to prevent her eluding him, he hooted aloud, and came ſtumping up to her; "Ah ha," he cried, "found at laſt;" then, throwing down his ſhovel, he opened the mouth of his bag, and pointing waggiſhly to her head, ſaid "Come, ſhall I pop you?—A good place for naughty girls; in, I ſay, poke in!——cram you up the chimney."

And then he put forth his ſooty hands to reach her cap.

Cecilia, though ſhe inſtantly knew the

dialect of her guardian Mr. Briggs, was not therefore the more willing to be ſo handled, and ſtarted back to ſave herſelf from his touch; the white domino alſo came forward, and ſpread out his arms as a defence to her, while the Devil, who was ſtill before her, again began to growl.

"Ah ha!" cried the chimney-ſweeper, laughing, "ſo did not know me? Poor duck! won't hurt you; don't be frightened; nothing but old guardian; all a joke!" And then, patting her cheek with his dirty hand, and nodding at her with much kindneſs, "Pretty dove," he added, "be of good heart! ſha'n't be meddled with; come to ſee after you. Heard of your tricks; thought I'd catch you!—come o'purpoſe.—Poor duck! did not know me! ha! ha!—good joke enough!"

"What do you mean, you dirty dog," cried the Turk, "by touching that lady?"

"Won't tell!" anſwered he; "not your buſineſs. Got a good right. Who cares for pearls? Nothing but French beads." Pointing with a ſneer to his turban. Then, again addreſſing Cecilia; "Fine doings!" he continued, "Here's a place! never ſaw the like before! turn a man's noddle!—All goings out; no comings in; wax candles in every room; ſervants thick as muſhrooms! And where's the caſh? Who's

Who's to pay the piper? Come to more than a guinea; warrant Maſter Harrel thinks that nothing!"

"A guinea?" contemptuouſly repeated the Turk, "and what do you ſuppoſe a guinea will do?"

"What? Why keep a whole family handſome a week;—never ſpend ſo much myſelf; no, nor half neither."

"Why then how the devil do you live? Do you beg?"

"Beg? Who ſhould beg of? You?—Got any thing to give? Are warm?"

"Take the trouble to ſpeak more reſpectfully, ſir!" ſaid the Turk, haughtily; "I ſee you are ſome low fellow, and I ſhall not put up with your impudence."

"Shall, ſhall! I ſay!" anſwered the chimney-ſweeper ſturdily; "Hark'ee, my duck," chucking Cecilia under the chin, "don't be cajoled, nick that ſpark! never mind gold trappings; none of his own; all a take-in; hired for eighteen pence; not worth a groat. Never ſet your heart on a fine outſide, nothing within. Briſtol ſtones won't buy ſtock: only wants to chouſe you."

"What do you mean by that, you little old ſcrub!" cried the imperious Turk; "would you provoke me to ſoil my fingers by pulling that beaſtly ſnub noſe?" For

Mr. Briggs had ſaved himſelf any actual maſk, by merely blacking his face with ſoot.

"Beaſtly ſnub noſe!" ſputtered out the chimney-ſweeper, in much wrath, "good noſe enough; don't want a better; good as another man's. Where's the harm on't?"

"How could this black-guard get in?" Cried the Turk, "I believe he's a mere common chimney-ſweeper out of the ſtreets, for he's all over dirt and filth. I never ſaw ſuch a dreſs at a maſquerade before in my life."

"All the better," returned the other; "would not change. What do think it coſt?"

"Coſt? Why not a crown."

"A crown? ha! ha!—a pot o'beer! Little Tom borrowed it; had it of our own ſweep. Said 'twas for himſelf. I bid him a pint; raſcal would not take leſs."

"Did your late uncle," ſaid the white domino, in a low voice to Cecilia, "chuſe for two of your guardians, Mr. Harrel and Mr. Briggs, to give you an early leſſon upon the oppoſite errors of profuſion and meanneſs?"

"My uncle?" cried Cecilia, ſtarting, "were you acquainted with my uncle?"

"No," ſaid he, "for my happineſs I knew him not."

"You

"You would have owed no loſs of happineſs to an acquaintance with him," ſaid Cecilia, very ſeriouſly, "for he was one who diſpenſed to his friends nothing but good."

"Perhaps ſo," ſaid the domino; "but I fear I ſhould have found the good he diſpenſed through his niece not quite unmixed with evil!"

"What's here?" cried the chimney-ſweeper, ſtumbling over the fiend, "what's this black thing? Don't like it; looks like the devil. You ſha'n't ſtay with it; carry you away; take care of you myſelf."

He then offered Cecilia his hand; but the black gentleman, raiſing himſelf upon his knees before her, paid her, in dumb ſhew, the humbleſt devoirs, yet prevented her from removing.

"Ah ha!" cried the chimney-ſweeper, ſignificantly nodding his head, "ſmell a rat! a ſweet-heart in diſguiſe. No bamboozling! it won't do; a'n't ſo ſoon put upon. If you've got any thing to ſay, tell *me*, that's the way. Where's the caſh? Got ever a *rentall?* Are warm? That's the point; are warm?"

The fiend, without returning any anſwer, continued his homage to Cecilia; at which the enraged chimney-ſweeper exclaimed

" Come, come with me! won't be impoſed upon; an old fox,—underſtand trap!"

He then again held out his hand, but Cecilia, pointing to the fiend, anſwered " How can I come, ſir?"

" Shew you the way," cried he, " ſhovel him off." And taking his ſhovel, he very roughly ſet about removing him.

The fiend then began a yell ſo horrid, that it diſturbed the whole company; but the chimney-ſweeper, only ſaying " Aye, aye, blacky, growl away blacky, — makes no odds,—" ſturdily continued his work, and, as the fiend had no chance of reſiſting ſo coarſe an antagoniſt without a ſerious ſtruggle, he was preſently compelled to change his ground.

" Warm work!" cried the victorious chimney ſweeper, taking off his wig, and wiping his head with the ſleeves of his dreſs, " pure warm work this!"

Cecilia, once again freed from her perſecutor, inſtantly quitted her place, almoſt equally deſirous to eſcape the haughty Turk, who was peculiarly her averſion, and the facetious chimney-ſweeper, whoſe vicinity, either on account of his dreſs or his converſation, was by no means deſirable. She was not, however, diſpleaſed that the white domino and the ſchool-maſter ſtill continued to attend her.

" Pray

"Pray look," ſaid the white domino, as they entered another apartment, "at that figure of Hope; is there any in the room half ſo expreſſive of deſpondency?"

"The reaſon, however," anſwered the ſchool-maſter, "is obvious; that light and beautiful ſilver anchor upon which ſhe reclines, preſents an occaſion irreſiſtible for an attitude of elegant dejection; and the aſſumed character is always given up, where an opportunity offers to diſplay any beauty, or manifeſt any perfection in the dear proper perſon!"

"But why," ſaid Cecilia, "ſhould ſhe aſſume the character of *Hope?* Could ſhe not have been equally dejected, and equally elegant as Niobe, or ſome tragedy queen?"

"But ſhe does not aſſume the character," anſwered the ſchool-maſter, "ſhe does not even think of it: the dreſs is her object, and that alone fills up all her ideas. Enquire of almoſt any body in the room concerning the perſons they ſeem to repreſent, and you will find their ignorance more groſs than you can imagine; they have not once thought upon the ſubject; accident, or convenience, or caprice has alone directed their choice."

A tall and elegant youth now approached them, whoſe laurels and harp announced Apollo. The white domino immediately enquired

enquired of him if the noiſe and turbulence of the company, had any chance of being ſtilled into ſilence and rapture, by the divine muſic of the inſpired god?

"No," anſwered he, pointing to the room in which was erected the new gallery, and whence, as he ſpoke, iſſued the ſound of an *hautboy*, "there is a flute playing there already."

"O for a Midas," cried the white domino, "to return to this leather-eared god the diſgrace he received from him!"

They now proceeded to the apartment which had been lately fitted up for refreſhments, and which was ſo full of company, that they entered it with difficulty. And here they were again joined by Minerva, who, taking Cecilia's hand, ſaid "Lord how glad I am you've got away from that frightful black maſk! I can't conceive who he is; nobody can find out; it's monſtrous odd, but he has not ſpoke a word all night, and he makes ſuch a ſhocking noiſe when people touch him, that I aſſure you it's enough to put one in a fright."

"And pray," cried the ſchool-maſter, diſguiſing his voice, "how cameſt thou to take the helmet of Minerva for a fool's cap?"

"Lord, I have not," cried ſhe, innocently,

cently, "why the whole dreſs is Minerva's; don't you ſee?"

"My dear child," anſwered he, "thou couldſt as well with that little figure paſs for a Goliah, as with that little wit for a Pallas."

Their attention was now drawn from the goddeſs of wiſdom to a mad Edgar, who ſo vehemently ran about the room calling out "Poor Tom's a cold!" that, in a ſhort time, he was obliged to take off his maſk, from an effect, not very delicate, of the heat!

Soon after, a gentleman deſiring ſome lemonade whoſe toga ſpoke the conſular dignity, though his broken Engliſh betrayed a native of France, the ſchool-maſter followed him, and, with reverence the moſt profound, began to addreſs him in Latin; but, turning quick towards him, he gayly ſaid "*Monſieur, j'ai l'honneur de repreſenter Ciceron, le grand Ciceron, pere de ſa patrie! mais quoique j'ai cet honneur lá, je ne ſuis pas pedant!——mon dieu, Monſieur, je ne parle que le François dans la bonne compagnie!*" And, politely bowing, he went on.

Juſt then Cecilia, while looking about the room for Mrs. Harrel, felt herſelf ſuddenly pinched by the cheek, and haſtily turning round, perceived again her friend the chimeny-ſweeper, who, laughing, cried

"Only

"Only me! don't be frightened. Have ſomething to tell you; — had no luck! — got never a huſband yet! can't find one! looked all over, too; ſharp as a needle. Not one to be had! all catched up!"

"I am glad to hear it, ſir," ſaid Cecilia, ſomewhat vexed by obſerving the white domino attentively liſtening; "and I hope, therefore, you will give yourſelf no farther trouble."

"Pretty duck!" cried he, chucking her under the chin; "never mind, don't be caſt down; get one at laſt. Leave it to me. Nothing under a plum; won't take up with leſs. Good by, ducky, good by! muſt go home now,—begin to be nodding."

And then, repeating his kind careſſes, he walked away.

"Do you think, then," ſaid the white domino, "more highly of Mr. Briggs for diſcernment and taſte than of any body?"

"I hope not!" anſwered ſhe, "for low indeed ſhould I then think of the reſt of the world!"

"The commiſſion with which he is charged," returned the domino, "has then miſled me; I imagined diſcernment and taſte might be neceſſary ingredients for making ſuch a choice as your approbation would ſanctify; but perhaps his ſkill in guarding againſt any fraud or deduction in the

the ſtipulation he mentioned, may be all that is requiſite for the execution of his truſt."

"I underſtand very well," ſaid Cecilia, a little hurt, "the ſeverity of your meaning; and if Mr. Briggs had any commiſſion but of his own ſuggeſtion, it would fill me with ſhame and confuſion; but as that is not the caſe, thoſe at leaſt are ſenſations which it cannot give me."

"My meaning," cried the domino, with ſome earneſtneſs, "ſhould I expreſs it ſeriouſly, would but prove to you the reſpect and admiration with which you have inſpired me, and if indeed, as Mr. Briggs hinted, ſuch a prize is to be purchaſed by riches, I know not, from what I have ſeen of its merit, any ſum I ſhould think adequate to its value."

"You are determined, I ſee," ſaid Cecilia, ſmiling, "to make moſt liberal amends for your aſperity."

A loud clack of tongues now interrupted their diſcourſe; and the domino, at the deſire of Cecilia, for whom he had procured a ſeat, went forward to enquire what was the matter. But ſcarce had he given up his place a moment, before, to her great mortification, it was occupied by the fiend.

Again, but with the ſame determined ſilence he had hitherto preſerved, he made

ſigns

ſigns of obedience and homage, and her perplexity to conjecture who he could be, or what were his motives for this perſecution, became the more urgent as they ſeemed the leſs likely to be ſatisfied. But the fiend, who was no other than Mr. Monckton, had every inſtant leſs and leſs encouragement to make himſelf known: his plan had in nothing ſucceeded, and his provocation at its failure had cauſed him the bittereſt diſappointment; he had intended, in the character of a tormentor, not only to purſue and hover around her himſelf, but he had alſo hoped, in the ſame character, to have kept at a diſtance all other admirers: but the violence with which he had over-acted his part, by raiſing her diſguſt and the indignation of the company, rendered his views wholly abortive: while the conſciouſneſs of an extravagance for which, if diſcovered, he could aſſign no reaſon not liable to excite ſuſpicions of his ſecret motives, reduced him to guarding a painful and moſt irkſome ſilence the whole evening. And Cecilia, to whoſe unſuſpicious mind the idea of Mr. Monckton had never occurred, added continually to the cruelty of his ſituation, by an undiſguiſed abhorrence of his aſſiduity, as well as by a manifeſt preference to the attendance of the white domino. All, therefore, that his diſappointed

pointed ſcheme now left in his power, was to watch her motions, liſten to her diſcourſe, and inflict occaſionally upon others ſome part of the chagrin with which he was tormented himſelf.

While they were in this ſituation, Harlequin, in conſequence of being ridiculed by the Turk for want of agility, offered to jump over the new deſert table, and deſired to have a little ſpace cleared to give room for his motions. It was in vain the people who diſtributed the refreſhments, and who were placed at the other ſide of the table, expoſtulated upon the danger of the experiment; Morrice had a rage of enterprize untameable, and therefore, firſt taking a run, he attempted the leap.

The conſequence was ſuch as might naturally be expected; he could not accompliſh his purpoſe, but, finding himſelf falling, imprudently caught hold of the lately erected Awning, and pulled it entirely upon his own head, and with it the new contrived lights, which in various forms were fixed to it, and which all came down together.

The miſchief and confuſion occaſioned by this exploit were very alarming, and almoſt dangerous; thoſe who were near the table ſuffered moſt by the cruſh, but ſplinters of the glaſs flew yet further; and as the

the room, which was ſmall, had been only lighted up by lamps hanging from the Awning, it was now in total darkneſs, except cloſe to the door, which was ſtill illuminated from the adjoining apartments.

The clamour of Harlequin, who was covered with glaſs, papier machée, lamps and oil, the ſcreams of the ladies, the univerſal buz of tongues, and the ſtruggle between the frighted crowd which was encloſed to get out, and the curious crowd from the other apartments to get in, occaſioned a diſturbance and tumult equally noiſy and confuſed. But the moſt ſerious ſufferer was the unfortunate fiend, who being nearer the table than Cecilia, was ſo preſſed upon by the numbers which poured from it, that he found a ſeparation unavoidable, and was unable, from the darkneſs and the throng, to diſcover whether ſhe was ſtill in the ſame place, or had made her eſcape into another.

She had, however, encountered the white domino, and, under his protection, was ſafely conveyed to a further part of the room. Her intention and deſire were to quit it immediately, but at the remonſtrance of her conductor, ſhe conſented to remain ſome time longer. "The conflict at the door," ſaid he, "will quite overpower you. Stay here but a few minutes, and

and both parties will have ſtruggled themſelves tired, and you may then go without difficulty. Mean time, can you not by this faint light, ſuppoſe me one of your guardians, Mr. Briggs, for example, or, if he is too old for me, Mr. Harrel, and entruſt yourſelf to my care?"

"You ſeem wonderfully well acquainted with my guardians," ſaid Cecilia; "I cannot imagine how you have had your intelligence."

"Nor can I," anſwered the domino, "imagine how Mr. Briggs became ſo particularly your favourite as to be entruſted with powers to diſpoſe of you."

"You are miſtaken indeed; he is entruſted with no powers but ſuch as his own fancy has ſuggeſted."

"But how has Mr. Delvile offended you, that with him only you ſeem to have no commerce or communication?"

"Mr. Delvile!" repeated Cecilia, ſtill more ſurpriſed, "are you alſo acquainted with Mr. Delvile?"

"He is certainly a man of faſhion," continued the domino, "and he is alſo a man of honour; ſurely, then, he would be more pleaſant for confidence and conſultation, than one whoſe only notion of happineſs is money, whoſe only idea of excellence

lence is avarice, and whoſe only conception of ſenſe is diſtruſt!"

Here a violent outcry again interrupted their converſation; but not till Cecilia had ſatisfied her doubts concerning the white domino, by conjecturing he was Mr. Belfield, who might eaſily at the houſe of Mr. Monckton have gathered the little circumſtances of her ſituation to which he alluded, and whoſe ſize and figure exactly reſembled thoſe of her new acquaintance.

The author of the former diſturbance was now the occaſion of the preſent: the fiend, having vainly traverſed the room in ſearch of Cecilia, ſtumbled accidentally upon Harlequin, before he was freed from the relicks of his own miſchief; and unable to reſiſt the temptation of opportunity, and the impulſe of revenge, he gave vent to the wrath ſo often excited by the blunders, forwardneſs, and tricks of Morrice, and inflicted upon him, with his own wooden ſword, which he ſeized for that purpoſe, a chaſtiſement the moſt ſerious and ſevere.

Poor Harlequin, unable to imagine any reaſon for this violent attack, and already cut with the glaſs,, and bruiſed with the fall, ſpared not his lungs in making known his diſapprobation of ſuch treatment: but the fiend, regardleſs either of his complaints or his reſiſtance, forbore not to belabour

him till compelled by the entrance of people with lights. And then, after artfully playing ſundry anticks under pretence of ſtill ſupporting his character, with a motion too ſudden for prevention, and too rapid for purſuit, he eſcaped out of the room, and hurrying down ſtairs, threw himſelf into an hackney chair, which conveyed him to a place where he privately changed his dreſs before he returned home: bitterly repenting the experiment he had made, and conſcious too late that had he appeared in a character he might have avowed, he could, without impropriety, have attended Cecilia the whole evening. But ſuch is deſervedly the frequent fate of cunning, which while it plots ſurpriſe and detection of others, commonly overſhoots its mark, and ends in its own diſgrace.

The introduction of the lights now making manifeſt the confuſion which the frolic of Harlequin had occaſioned, he was ſeized with ſuch a dread of the reſentment of Mr. Harrel, that, forgetting blows, bruiſes and wounds, not one of which were ſo frightful to him as reproof, he made the laſt exhibition of his agility by an abrupt and haſty retreat.

He had, however, no reaſon for apprehenſion, ſince in every thing that regarded expence,

expence, Mr. Harrel had no feeling, and his lady had no thought.

The rooms now began to empty very faſt, but among the few maſks yet remaining, Cecilia again perceived Don Quixote; and while, in conjunction with the white domino, ſhe was allowing him the praiſe of having ſupported his character with more uniform propriety than any other perſon in the aſſembly, ſhe obſerved him taking off his maſk for the convenience of drinking ſome lemonade, and, looking in his face, found he was no other than Mr. Belfield! Much aſtoniſhed, and more than ever perplexed, ſhe again turned to the white domino, who ſeeing in her countenance a ſurpriſe of which he knew not the reaſon, ſaid, half laughing, "You think, perhaps, I ſhall never be gone? And indeed I am almoſt of the ſame opinion: but what can I do? Inſtead of growing weary by the length of my ſtay, my reluctance to ſhorten it encreaſes with its duration: and all the methods I take, whether by ſpeaking to you or looking at you, with a view to be ſatiated, only double my eagerneſs for looking and liſtening again! I muſt go, however; and if I am happy, I may perhaps meet with you again,——though, if I am wiſe, I ſhall never ſeek you more!"

And then, with the laſt ſtragglers that

reluctantly diſappeared, he made his exit; leaving Cecilia greatly pleaſed with his converſation and his manners, but extremely perplexed to account for his knowledge of her affairs and ſituation.

The ſchool-maſter had already been gone ſome time.

She was now earneſtly preſſed by the Harrels and Sir Robert, who ſtill remained, to ſend to a warehouſe for a dreſs, and accompany them to the Pantheon; but though ſhe was not without ſome inclination to comply, in the hope of further prolonging the entertainment of an evening from which ſhe had received much pleaſure, ſhe diſliked the attendance of the Baronet, and felt averſe to grant any requeſt that he could make, and therefore ſhe begged they would excuſe her; and having waited to ſee their dreſſes, which were very ſuperb, ſhe retired to her own apartment.

A great variety of conjecture upon all that had paſſed, now, and till the moment that ſhe ſunk to reſt, occupied her mind; the extraordinary perſecution of the fiend excited at once her curioſity and amazement, while the knowledge of her affairs ſhewn by the white domino, ſurpriſed her not leſs, and intereſted her more.

CHAP. IV.

An Affray.

THE next morning during breakfaſt, Cecilia was informed that a gentleman deſired to ſpeak with her. She begged permiſſion of Mrs. Harrel to have him aſked up ſtairs, and was not a little ſurprized when he proved to be the ſame old gentleman whoſe ſingular exclamations had ſo much ſtruck her at Mr. Monckton's, and at the rehearſal of Artaſerſe.

Abruptly and with a ſtern aſpect advancing to her, "You are rich," he cried; "are you therefore worthleſs?"

"I hope not!" anſwered ſhe, in ſome conſternation; while Mrs. Harrel, believing his intention was to rob them, ran precipitately to the bell, which ſhe rang without ceaſing till two or three ſervants haſtened into the room: by which time, being leſs alarmed, ſhe only made ſigns to them to ſtay, and ſtood quietly herſelf to wait what would follow.

The old man, without attending to her, continued his dialogue with Cecilia.

"Know

"Know you then," he ſaid, "a blameleſs uſe of riches? ſuch a uſe as not only in the broad glare of day ſhall ſhine reſplendent, but in the darkneſs of midnight, and ſtillneſs of repoſe, ſhall give you reflections unimbittered, and ſlumbers unbroken? tell me, know you this uſe?"

"Not ſo well, perhaps," anſwered ſhe, "as I ought; but I am very willing to learn better."

"Begin, then, while yet youth and inexperience, new to the calloufneſs of power and affluence, leave ſomething good to work upon: yeſterday you ſaw the extravagance of luxury and folly; to day look deeper, and ſee, and learn to pity, the miſery of diſeaſe and penury."

He then put into her hand a paper which contained a moſt affecting account of the miſery to which a poor and wretched family had been reduced, by ſickneſs, and various other misfortunes.

Cecilia, "open as day to melting charity," having haſtily peruſed it, took out her purſe, and offering to him three guineas, ſaid, "You muſt direct me, Sir, what to give if this is inſufficient."

"Haſt thou ſo much heart?" cried he, with emotion, "and has fortune, though it has curſed thee with the temptation of proſperity, not yet rooted from thy mind

its native benevolence? I return in part thy liberal contribution; this," taking one guinea, "doubles my expectations; I will not, by making thy charity diſtreſs thee, accelerate the fatal hour of hardneſs and degeneracy."

He was then going; but Cecilia, following him, ſaid, "No, take it all! Who ſhould aſſiſt the poor if I will not? Rich, without connections; powerful, without wants; upon whom have they any claim if not upon me?"

"True," cried he, receiving the reſt, "and wiſe as true. Give, therefore, whilſt yet thou haſt the heart to give, and make, in thy days of innocence and kindneſs, ſome intereſt with Heaven and the poor!"

And then he diſappeared.

"Why, my dear," cried Mrs. Harrel, "what could induce you to give the man ſo much money? Don't you ſee he is crazy? I dare ſay he would have been juſt as well contented with ſixpence."

"I know not what he is," ſaid Cecilia, "but his manners are not more ſingular than his ſentiments are affecting; and if he is actuated by charity to raiſe ſubſcriptions for the indigent, he can ſurely apply to no one who ought ſo readily to contribute as myſelf."

Mr.

Mr. Harrel then came in, and his lady moſt eagerly told him the tranſaction.

"Scandalous!" he exclaimed; "why this is no better than being a houſe-breaker! Pray give orders never to admit him again. Three Guineas! I never heard ſo impudent a thing in my life! Indeed, Miſs Beverley, you muſt be more diſcreet in future, you will elſe be ruined before you know where you are."

"Thus it is," ſaid Cecilia, half ſmiling, "that we can all lecture one another! to-day you recommend œconomy to me; yeſterday I with difficulty forbore recommending it to you."

"Nay" anſwered he, "that was quite another matter; expence incurred in the common way of a man's living is quite another thing to an extortion of this ſort."

"It is another thing indeed," ſaid ſhe, "but I know not that it is therefore a better."

Mr. Harrel made no anſwer: and Cecilia, privately moralizing upon the different eſtimates of expence and œconomy made by the diſſipated and the charitable, ſoon retired to her own apartment, determined firmly to adhere to her lately adopted plan, and hoping, by the aſſiſtance of her new and very ſingular monitor, to extend

her practice of doing good, by enlarging her knowledge of diſtreſs.

Objects are, however, never wanting for the exerciſe of benevolence; report ſoon publiſhed her liberality, and thoſe who wiſhed to believe it, failed not to enquire into its truth. She was ſoon at the head of a little band of penſioners, and, never ſatisfied with the generoſity of her donations, found in a very ſhort time, that the common allowance of her guardians was ſcarce adequate to the calls of her munificence.

And thus, in acts of goodneſs and charity, paſſed undiſturbed another week of the life of Cecilia: but when the fervour of ſelf-approbation loſt its novelty, the pleaſure with which her new plan was begun firſt ſubſided into tranquility, and then ſunk into languor. To a heart formed for friendſhip and affection the charms of ſolitude are very ſhort-lived; and though ſhe had ſickened of the turbulence of perpetual company, ſhe now wearied of paſſing all her time by herſelf, and ſighed for the comfort of ſociety, and the relief of communication. But ſhe ſaw with aſtoniſhment the difficulty with which this was to be obtained: the endleſs ſucceſſion of diverſions, the continual rotation of aſſemblies, the numerouſneſs of ſplendid engagements, of which while every one complained,

plained, every one was proud to boaſt, ſo effectually impeded private meetings and friendly intercourſe, that, which ever way ſhe turned herſelf, all commerce ſeemed impracticable, but ſuch as either led to diſſipation, or accidentally flowed from it.

Yet finding the error into which her ardour of reformation had hurried her, and that a rigid ſecluſion from company was productive of a laſſitude as little favourable to active virtue as diſſipation itſelf, ſhe reſolved to ſoften her plan, and by mingling amuſement with benevolence, to try, at leaſt, to approach that golden mean, which, like the philoſopher's ſtone, always eludes our graſp, yet always invites our wiſhes.

For this purpoſe ſhe deſired to attend Mrs. Harrel to the next Opera that ſhould be repreſented.

The following Saturday, therefore, ſhe accompanied that lady and Mrs. Mears to the Haymarket, eſcorted by Mr. Arnott.

They were very late; the Opera was begun, and even in the lobby the crowd was ſo great that their paſſage was obſtructed. Here they were preſently accoſted by Miſs Larolles, who, running up to Cecilia and taking her hand, ſaid, "Lord, you can't conceive how glad I am to ſee you! why, my dear creature, where have you hid yourſelf theſe twenty ages? You are quite in

luck in coming to-night, I aſſure you; it's the beſt Opera we have had this ſeaſon: there's ſuch a monſtrous crowd there's no ſtirring. We ſha'n't get in this half hour. The coffee-room is quite full; only come and ſee; is it not delightful?"

This intimation was ſufficient for Mrs. Harrel, whoſe love of the Opera was merely a love of company, faſhion, and ſhew; and therefore to the coffee-room ſhe readily led the way.

And here Cecilia found rather the appearance of a brilliant aſſembly of ladies and gentlemen, collected merely to ſee and to entertain one another, than of diſtinct and caſual parties, mixing ſolely from neceſſity, and waiting only for room to enter a theatre.

The firſt perſon that addreſſed them was Captain Areſby, who, with his uſual delicate languiſhment, ſmiled upon Cecilia, and ſoftly whiſpering, "How divinely you look to night!" proceeded to pay his compliments to ſome other ladies.

"Do pray now," cried Miſs Larolles, "obſerve Mr. Meadows! only juſt ſee where he has fixed himſelf! in the very beſt place in the room, and keeping the fire from every body! I do aſſure you that's always his way, and it's monſtrous provoking, for if one's ever ſo cold, he lollops

ſo,

ſo, that one's quite ſtarved. But you muſt know there's another thing he does that is quite as bad, for if he gets a ſeat, he never offers to move, if he ſees one ſinking with fatigue. And beſides, if one is waiting for one's carriage two hours together, he makes it a rule never to ſtir a ſtep to ſee for it. Only think how monſtrous!"

"Theſe are heavy complaints, indeed," ſaid Cecilia, looking at him attentively; "I ſhould have expected from his appearance a very different account of his gallantry, for he ſeems dreſſed with more ſtudied elegance than any body here."

"O yes," cried Miſs Larolles, "he is the ſweeteſt dreſſer in the world; he has the moſt delightful taſte you can conceive, nobody has half ſo good a fancy. I aſſure you it's a great thing to be ſpoke to by him: we are all of us quite angry when he won't take any notice of us."

"Is your anger," ſaid Cecilia, laughing, "in honour of himſelf or of his coat?"

"Why, Lord, don't you know all this time that he is an *ennuyé*?"

"I know, at leaſt," anſwered Cecilia, "that he would ſoon make one of me."

"O but one is never affronted with an *ennuyé*, if he is ever ſo provoking, becauſe one always knows what it means."

"Is he agreeable?"

"Why, to tell you the truth,—but pray now don't mention it,—I think him moſt exceſſive diſagreeable! He yawns in one's face every time one looks at him. I aſſure you ſometimes I expect to ſee him fall faſt aſleep while I am talking to him, for he is ſo immenſely abſent he don't hear one half that one ſays; only conceive how horrid!"

"But why, then, do you encourage him? why do you take any notice of him?"

"O, every body does, I aſſure you, elſe I would not for the world; but he is ſo courted you have no idea. However, of all things let me adviſe you never to dance with him; I did once myſelf, and I declare I was quite diſtreſſed to death the whole time, for he was taken with ſuch a fit of abſence he knew nothing he was about, ſometimes ſkipping and jumping with all the violence in the world, juſt as if he only danced for exerciſe, and ſometimes ſtanding quite ſtill, or lolling againſt the wainſcoat and gaping, and taking no more notice of me than if he had never ſeen me in his life!"

The captain now, again advancing to Cecilia, ſaid, "So you would not do us the honour to try the maſquerade at the Pantheon? however, I hear you had a very brilliant

brilliant ſpectacle at Mr. Harrel's. I was quite *au deſeſpoir* that I could not get there. I did *mon poſſible*, but it was quite beyond me."

"We ſhould have been very happy," ſaid Mrs. Harrel, "to have ſeen you; I aſſure you we had ſome excellent maſks."

"So I have heard *partout*, and I am reduced to deſpair that I could not have the honour of ſliding in. But I was *accablé* with affairs all day. Nothing could be ſo mortifying."

Cecilia now, growing very impatient to hear the Opera, begged to know if they might not make a trial to get into the pit?

"I fear," ſaid the captain, ſmiling as they paſſed him, without offering any aſſiſtance, "you will find it extreme petrifying; for my part, I confeſs I am not upon the principle of crowding."

The ladies, however, accompanied by Mr. Arnott, made the attempt, and ſoon found, according to the cuſtom of report, that the difficulty, for the pleaſure of talking of it, had been conſiderably exaggerated. They were ſeparated, indeed, but their accommodation was tolerably good.

Cecilia was much vexed to find the firſt act of the Opera almoſt over; but ſhe was ſoon ſtill more diſſatisfied when ſhe diſco-

vered that ſhe had no chance of hearing the little which remained: the place ſhe had happened to find vacant was next to a party of young ladies, who were ſo earneſtly engaged in their own diſcourſe, that they liſtened not to a note of the Opera, and ſo infinitely diverted with their own witticiſms, that their tittering and loquacity allowed no one in their vicinity to hear better than themſelves. Cecilia tried in vain to confine her attention to the ſingers, ſhe was diſtant from the ſtage, and to them ſhe was near, and her fruitleſs attempts all ended in chagrin and impatience.

At length ſhe reſolved to make an effort for entertainment in another way, and ſince the expectations which brought her to the Opera were deſtroyed, to try by liſtening to her fair neighbours, whether thoſe who occaſioned her diſappointment, could make her any amends.

For this purpoſe ſhe turned to them wholly; yet was at firſt in no little perplexity to underſtand what was going forward, ſince ſo univerſal was the eagerneſs for talking, and ſo inſurmountable the antipathy to liſtening, that every one ſeemed to have her wiſhes bounded by a continual utterance of words, without waiting for any anſwer, or ſcarce even deſiring to be heard.

But

But when, ſomewhat more uſed to their dialect and manner, ſhe began better to comprehend their diſcourſe, wretchedly indeed did it ſupply to her the loſs of the Opera. She heard nothing but deſcriptions of trimmings, and complaints of hair-dreſſers, hints of conqueſt that teemed with vanity, and hiſtories of engagements which were inflated with exultation,

At the end of the act, by the crowding forward of the gentlemen to ſee the dance, Mrs. Harrel had an opportunity of making room for her by herſelf, and ſhe had then ſome reaſon to expect hearing the reſt of the Opera in peace, for the company before her, conſiſting entirely of young men, ſeemed, even during the dance, fearful of ſpeaking, leſt their attention ſhould be drawn for a moment from the ſtage.

But to her infinite ſurprize, no ſooner was the ſecond act begun, than their attention ended! they turned from the performers to each other, and entered into a whiſpering, but gay converſation, which though not loud enough to diſturb the audience in general, kept in the ears of their neighbours, a buzzing which interrupted all pleaſure from the repreſentation. Of this effect of their gaiety it ſeemed uncertain whether they were conſcious, but very evident that they were totally careleſs.

The

The deſperate reſource which ſhe had tried during the firſt act, of ſeeking entertainment from the very converſation which prevented her enjoying it, was not now even in her power: for theſe gentlemen, though as negligent as the young ladies had been whom they diſturbed, were much more cautious whom they inſtructed: their language was ambiguous, and their terms, to Cecilia, were unintelligible: their ſubjects, indeed, required ſome diſcretion, being nothing leſs than a ludicrous calculation of the age and duration of jointured widows, and of the chances and expectations of unmarried young ladies.

But what more even than their talking provoked her, was finding that the moment the act was over, when ſhe cared not if their vociferation had been inceſſant, one of them called out, "Come, be quiet, the dance is begun;" and then they were again all ſilent attention!

In the third act, however, ſhe was more fortunate; the gentlemen again changed their places, and they were ſucceeded by others who came to the Opera not to hear themſelves but the performers: and as ſoon as ſhe was permitted to liſten, the voice of Pacchierotti took from her all deſire to hear any thing but itſelf.

During the laſt dance ſhe was diſcovered by

by Sir Robert Floyer, who ſauntering down fop's alley, ſtationed himſelf by her ſide, and whenever the *figurante* relieved the principal dancers, turned his eyes from the ſtage to her face, as better worth his notice, and equally deſtined for his amuſement.

Mr. Monckton too, who for ſome time had ſeen and watched her, now approached; he had obſerved with much ſatisfaction that her whole mind had been intent upon the performance, yet ſtill the familiarity of Sir Robert Floyer's admiration diſturbed and perplexed him; he determined, therefore, to make an effort to ſatisfy his doubts by examining into his intentions: and, taking him apart, before the dance was quite over, "Well," he ſaid, "who is ſo handſome here as Harrel's ward?"

"Yes," anſwered he, calmly, "ſhe is handſome, but I don't like her expreſſion."

"No? why, what is the fault of it?"

"Proud, curſed proud. It is not the ſort of woman I like. If one ſays a civil thing to her, ſhe only wiſhes one at the devil for one's pains."

"O, you have tried her, then, have you? why you are not, in general, much given to ſay civil things."

"Yes, you know I ſaid ſomething of that ſort to her once about Juliet, at the rehearſal. Was not you by?"

"What,

"What, then, was that all? and did you imagine one compliment would do your buſineſs with her?"

"O, hang it, who ever dreams of complimenting the women now? that's all at an end."

"You won't find ſhe thinks ſo, though; for, as you well ſay, her pride is inſufferable, and I, who have long known her, can aſſure you it does not diminiſh upon intimacy."

"Perhaps not,—but there's very pretty picking in 3000*l.* per annum! one would not think much of a little incumbrance upon ſuch an eſtate."

"Are you quite ſure the eſtate is ſo conſiderable? Report is mightily given to magnify."

"O, I have pretty good intelligence: though, after all, I don't know but I may be off; ſhe'll take a confounded deal of time and trouble."

Monckton, too much a man of intereſt and of the world to cheriſh that delicacy which covets univerſal admiration for the object of it's fondneſs, then artfully enlarged upon the obſtacles he already apprehended, and inſinuated ſuch others as he believed would be moſt likely to intimidate him. But his ſubtlety was loſt upon the impenetrable Baronet, who poſſeſſed

that

that hard inſenſibility which obſtinately purſues its own courſe, deaf to what is ſaid, and indifferent to what is thought.

Meanwhile the ladies were now making way to the coffee-room, though very ſlowly on account of the crowd; and juſt as they got near the lobby, Cecilia perceived Mr. Belfield, who, immediately making himſelf known to her, was offering his ſervice to hand her out of the pit, when Sir Robert Floyer, not ſeeing or not heeding him, preſſed forward, and ſaid, "Will you let me have the honour, Miſs Beverley, of taking care of you?"

Cecilia, to whom he grew daily more diſagreeable, coldly declined his aſſiſtance, while ſhe readily accepted that which had firſt been offered her by Mr. Belfield.

The haughty Baronet, extremely nettled, forced his way on, and rudely ſtalking up to Mr. Belfield, motioned with his hand for room to paſs him, and ſaid, "Make way, Sir!"

"Make way for *me*, Sir!" cried Belfield, oppoſing him with one hand, while with the other he held Cecilia.

"You, Sir? and who are you, Sir?" demanded the Baronet, diſdainfully.

"Of that, Sir, I ſhall give you an account whenever you pleaſe," anſwered Belfield, with equal ſcorn.

"What

"What the devil do you mean, Sir?"

"Nothing very difficult to be underſtood," replied Belfield, and attempted to draw on Cecilia, who, much alarmed, was ſhrinking back.

Sir Robert then, ſwelling with rage, reproachfully turned to her, and ſaid, "Will you ſuffer ſuch an impertinent fellow as that, Miſs Beverley, to have the honour of taking your hand?"

Belfield, with great indignation, demanded what he meant by the term impertinent fellow; and Sir Robert, yet more inſolently repeated it: Cecilia, extremely ſhocked, earneſtly beſought them both to be quiet; but Belfield, at the repetition of this inſult, haſtily let go her hand and put his own upon his ſword, while Sir Robert, taking advantage of his ſituation in being a ſtep higher than his antagoniſt, fiercely puſhed him back, and deſcended into the lobby.

Belfield, enraged beyond endurance, inſtantly drew his ſword, and Sir Robert was preparing to follow his example, when Cecilia, in an agony of fright, called out, "Good Heaven! will nobody interfere?" And then a young man, forcing his way through the crowd, exclaimed, "For ſhame, for ſhame, gentlemen! is this a place for ſuch violence!"

Belfield,

Belfield, endeavouring to recover himſelf, put up his ſword, and, though in a voice half choaked with paſſion, ſaid, "I thank you, Sir! I was off my guard. I beg pardon of the whole company."

Then, walking up to Sir Robert, he put into his hand a card with his name and direction, ſaying, "With you, Sir, I ſhall be happy to ſettle what apologies are neceſſary at your firſt leiſure;" and hurried away.

Sir Robert, exclaiming aloud that he ſhould ſoon teach him to whom he had been ſo impertinent, was immediately going to follow him, when the affrighted Cecilia again called out aloud, "Oh ſtop him!—good God! will nobody ſtop him!"—

The rapidity with which this angry ſcene had paſſed had filled her with amazement, and the evident reſentment of the Baronet upon her refuſing his aſſiſtance, gave her an immediate conſciouſneſs that ſhe was herſelf the real cauſe of the quarrel; while the manner in which he was preparing to follow Mr. Belfield, convinced her of the deſperate ſcene which was likely to ſucceed; fear, therefore, overcoming every other feeling, forced from her this exclamation before ſhe knew what ſhe ſaid.

The

The moment ſhe had ſpoken, the young man who had already interpoſed again ruſhed forward, and ſeizing Sir Robert by the arm, warmly remonſtrated againſt the violence of his proceedings, and being preſently ſeconded by other gentlemen, almoſt compelled him to give up his deſign.

Then, haſtening to Cecilia, "Be not alarmed, madam," he cried, "all is over, and every body is ſafe."

Cecilia, finding herſelf thus addreſſed by a gentleman ſhe had never before ſeen, felt extremely aſhamed of having rendered her intereſt in the debate ſo apparent; ſhe courtſied to him in ſome confuſion, and taking hold of Mrs. Harrel's arm, hurried her back into the pit, in order to quit a crowd, of which ſhe now found herſelf the principal object.

Curioſity, however, was univerſally excited, and her retreat ſerved but to inflame it: ſome of the ladies, and moſt of the gentlemen, upon various pretences, returned into the pit merely to look at her, and in a few minutes the report was current that the young lady who had been the occaſion of the quarrel, was dying with love for Sir Robert Floyer.

Mr. Monckton, who had kept by her ſide during the whole affair, felt thunderſtruck by the emotion ſhe had ſhewn; Mr. Arnott

Arnott too, who had never quitted her, wiſhed himſelf expoſed to the ſame danger as Sir Robert, ſo that he might be honoured with the ſame concern: but they were both too much the dupes of their own apprehenſions and jealouſy, to perceive that what they inſtantly imputed to fondneſs, proceeded ſimply from general humanity, accidentally united with the conſciouſneſs of being acceſſary to the quarrel.

The young ſtranger who had officiated as mediator between the diſputants, in a few moments followed her with a glaſs of water, which he had brought from the coffee-room, begging her to drink it and compoſe herſelf.

Cecilia, though ſhe declined his civility with more vexation than gratitude, perceived, as ſhe raiſed her eyes to thank him, that her new friend was a young man very ſtrikingly elegant in his addreſs and appearance.

Miſs Larolles next, who, with her party, came back into the pit, ran up to Cecilia, crying, "O my dear creature, what a monſtrous ſhocking thing! You've no Idea how I am frightened; do you know I happened to be quite at the further end of the coffee-room when it began, and I could not get out to ſee what was the matter for ten ages; only conceive what a ſituation!"

"Would your fright, then, have been leſs," ſaid Cecilia, "had you been nearer the danger?"

"O Lord no, for when I came within ſight I was fifty times worſe! I gave ſuch a monſtrous ſcream, that it quite made Mr. Meadows ſtart. I dare ſay he'll tell me of it theſe hundred years: but really when I ſaw them draw their ſwords I thought I ſhould have died; I was ſo amazingly ſurprized you've no notion."

Here ſhe was interrupted by the re-appearance of the active ſtranger, who again advancing to Cecilia, ſaid, "I am in doubt whether the efforts I make to revive will pleaſe or irritate you, but though you rejected the laſt cordial I ventured to preſent you, perhaps you will look with a more favourable eye towards that of which I am now the herald."

Cecilia then, caſting her eyes around, ſaw that he was followed by Sir Robert Floyer. Full of diſpleaſure both at this introduction and at his preſence, ſhe turned haſtily to Mr. Arnott, and entreated him to enquire if the carriage was not yet ready.

Sir Robert, looking at her with all the exultation of new-raiſed vanity, ſaid, with more ſoftneſs than he had ever before addreſſed her, "Have you been frightened?"

"Every

"Every body, I believe was frightened," anſwered Cecilia, with an air of dignity intended to check his riſing expectations.

"There was no ſort of cauſe," anſwered he; "the fellow did not know whom he ſpoke too, that was all."

"Lord, Sir Robert," cried Miſs Larolles, "how could you be ſo ſhocking as to draw your ſword? you can't conceive how horrid it looked."

"Why I did not draw my ſword," cried he, "I only had my hand on the hilt."

"Lord, did not you, indeed! well, every body ſaid you did, and I'm ſure I thought I ſaw five-and-twenty ſwords all at once. I thought one of you would be killed every moment. It was horrid diſagreeable, I aſſure you."

Sir Robert was now called away by ſome gentlemen; and Mr. Monckton, earneſt to be better informed of Cecilia's real ſentiments, ſaid, with affected concern, "At preſent this matter is merely ridiculous; I am ſorry to think in how ſhort a time it may become more important."

"Surely," cried Cecilia with quickneſs, "ſome of their friends will interfere! ſurely upon ſo trifling a ſubject they will not be ſo mad, ſo inexcuſable, as to proceed to more ſerious reſentment!"

"Which ever of them," ſaid the ſtranger,

" is moſt honoured by this anxiety, will be mad indeed to riſk a life ſo valued!"

" Cannot you, Mr. Monckton, " continued Cecilia, too much alarmed to regard this inſinuation, " ſpeak with Mr. Belfield? You are acquainted with him, I know; is it impoſſible you can follow him?"

" I will with pleaſure do whatever you wiſh; but ſtill if Sir Robert——"

" O, as to Sir Robert, Mr. Harrel, I am very ſure, will undertake him; I will try to ſee him to-night myſelf, and entreat him to exert all his influence."

" Ah, madam," cried the ſtranger, archly, and lowering his voice, " thoſe *French beads* and *Briſtol ſtones* have not, I find, ſhone in vain!"

At theſe words Cecilia recognized her white domino acquaintance at the maſquerade; ſhe had before recollected his voice, but was too much perturbed to conſider where or when ſhe had heard it.

" If Mr. Briggs," continued he, " does not ſpeedily come forth with his plum friend, before the glittering of ſwords and ſpears is joined to that of jewels, the glare will be ſo reſplendent, that he will fear to come within the influence of its rays. Though, perhaps, he may only think the ſtronger the light, the better he ſhall ſee to count his guineas: for as

" —in

" ——in ten thouſand pounds
" Ten thouſand charms are centred,"

in an hundred thouſand, the charms may have ſuch magic power, that he may defy the united efforts of tinſel and knight-errantry to deliver you from the golden ſpell."

Here the captain, advancing to Cecilia, ſaid, " I have been looking for you in vain *partout*, but the crowd has been ſo *accablant* I was almoſt reduced to deſpair. Give me leave to hope you are now recovered from the *horreur* of this little *fracas?*"

Mr. Arnott then brought intelligence that the carriage was ready. Cecilia, glad to be gone, inſtantly haſtened to it; and, as ſhe was conducted by Mr. Monckton, moſt earneſtly entreated him to take an active part, in endeavouring to prevent the fatal conſequences with which the quarrel ſeemed likely to terminate.

CHAP. V.

A FASHIONABLE FRIEND.

AS ſoon as they returned home, Cecilia begged Mrs. Harrel not to loſe a moment before ſhe tried to acquaint Mr. Harrel with the ſtate of the affair. But that lady was too helpleſs to know in what manner to ſet about it; ſhe could not tell where he was, ſhe could not conjecture where he might be.

Cecilia then rang for his own man, and upon enquiry, heard that he was, in all probability, at Brookes's in St. James's-Street.

She then begged Mrs. Harrel would write to him.

Mrs. Harrel knew not what to ſay.

Cecilia therefore, equally quick in forming and executing her deſigns, wrote to him herſelf, and entreated that without loſing an inſtant he would find out his friend Sir Robert Floyer, and endeavour to effect an accommodation between him and Mr. Belfield, with whom he had had a diſpute at the Opera-houſe.

The

The man ſoon returned with an anſwer that Mr. Harrel would not fail to obey her commands.

She determined to ſit up till he came home in order to learn the event of the negociation. She conſidered herſelf as the efficient cauſe of the quarrel, yet ſcarce knew how or in what to blame herſelf; the behaviour of Sir Robert had always been offenſive to her; ſhe diſliked his manners, and deteſted his boldneſs; and ſhe had already ſhewn her intention to accept the aſſiſtance of Mr. Belfield before he had followed her with an offer of his own. She was uncertain, indeed, whether he had remarked what had paſſed, but ſhe had reaſon to think that, ſo circumſtanced, to have changed her purpoſe, would have been conſtrued into an encouragement that might have authoriſed his future preſumption of her favour. All ſhe could find to regret with regard to herſelf, was wanting the preſence of mind to have refuſed the civilities of both.

Mrs. Harrel, though really ſorry at the ſtate of the affair, regarded herſelf as ſo entirely unconcerned in it, that, eaſily wearied when out of company, ſhe ſoon grew ſleepy, and retired to her own room.

The anxious Cecilia, hoping every inſtant the return of Mr. Harrel, ſat up by

herſelf: but it was not till near four o'clock in the morning that he made his appearance.

"Well, ſir," cried ſhe, the moment ſhe ſaw him, "I fear by your coming home ſo late you have had much trouble, but I hope it has been ſucceſsful?"

Great, however, was her mortification when he anſwered that he had not even ſeen the Baronet, having been engaged himſelf in ſo particular a manner, that he could not poſſibly break from his party till paſt three o'clock, at which time he drove to the houſe of Sir Robert, but heard that he was not yet come home.

Cecilia, though much diſguſted by ſuch a ſpecimen of inſenſibility towards a man whom he pretended to call his friend, would not leave him till he had promiſed to ariſe as ſoon as it was light, and make an effort to recover the time loſt.

She was now no longer ſurpriſed either at the debts of Mr. Harrel, or at his *particular occaſions* for money. She was convinced he ſpent half the night in gaming, and the conſequences, however dreadful, were but natural. That Sir Robert Floyer alſo did the ſame was a matter of much leſs importance to her, but that the life of any man ſhould through her means be endangered, diſturbed her inexpreſſibly.

She

She went, however, to bed, but aroſe again at ſix o'clock, and dreſſed herſelf by candle light. In an hour's time ſhe ſent to enquire if Mr. Harrel was ſtirring, and hearing he was aſleep, gave orders to have him called. Yet he did not riſe till eight o'clock, nor could all her meſſages or expoſtulations drive him out of the houſe till nine.

He was ſcarcely gone before Mr. Monckton arrived, who now for the firſt time had the ſatisfaction of finding her alone.

"You are very good for coming ſo early," cried ſhe; "have you ſeen Mr. Belfield? Have you had any converſation with him?"

Alarmed at her eagerneſs, and ſtill more at ſeeing by her looks the ſleepleſs night ſhe had paſſed, he made at firſt no reply; and when, with encreaſing impatience, ſhe repeated her queſtion, he only ſaid, "Has Belfield ever viſited you ſince he had the honour of meeting you at my houſe?"

"No, never."

"Have you ſeen him often in public?"

"No, I have never ſeen him at all but the evening Mrs. Harrel received maſks, and laſt night at the Opera."

"Is it, then, for the ſafety of Sir Robert you are ſo extremely anxious?"

"It is for the ſafety of both; the cauſe of their quarrel was ſo trifling, that I can-

not bear to think its conſequence ſhould be ſerious."

"But do you not wiſh better to one of them than to the other?"

"As a matter of juſtice I do, but not from any partiality: Sir Robert was undoubtedly the aggreſſor, and Mr. Belfield, though at firſt too fiery, was certainly ill uſed."

The candour of this ſpeech recovered Mr. Monckton from his apprehenſions; and, carefully obſerving her looks while he ſpoke, he gave her the following account.

That he had haſtened to Belfield's lodgings the moment he left the Opera-houſe, and, after repeated denials, abſolutely forced himſelf into his room, where he was quite alone, and in much agitation: he converſed with him for more than an hour upon the ſubject of the quarrel, but found he ſo warmly reſented the perſonal inſult given him by Sir Robert, that no remonſtrance had any effect in making him alter his reſolution of demanding ſatisfaction.

"And could you bring him to conſent to no compromiſe before you left him?" cried Cecilia.

"No; for before I got to him—the challenge had been ſent."

"The challenge! good heaven!—and do you know the event?"

"I cal-

"I called again this morning at his lodgings, but he was not returned home."

"And was it impoſſible to follow him? Were there no means to diſcover whither he was gone?"

"None; to elude all purſuit, he went out before any body in the houſe was ſtirring, and took his ſervant with him."

"Have you, then, been to Sir Robert?"

"I have been to Cavendiſh-Square, but there, it ſeems, he has not appeared all night; I traced him, through his ſervants, from the Opera to a gaming-houſe, where I found he had amuſed himſelf till this morning."

The uneaſineſs of Cecilia now encreaſed every moment; and Mr. Monckton, ſeeing he had no other chance of ſatisfying her, offered his ſervice to go again in ſearch of both the gentlemen, and endeavour to bring her better information. She accepted the propoſal with gratitude, and he departed.

Soon after ſhe was joined by Mr. Arnott, who, though ſeized with all the horrors of jealouſy at ſight of her apprehenſions, was ſo deſirous to relieve them, that without even making any merit of obliging her, he almoſt inſtantly ſet out upon the ſame errand that employed Mr. Monckton, and

determined not to mention his deſign till he found whether it would enable him to bring her good tidings.

He was ſcarce gone when ſhe was told that Mr. Delvile begged to have the honour of ſpeaking to her. Surpriſed at this condeſcenſion, ſhe deſired he might immediately be admitted; but much was her ſurpriſe augmented, when, inſtead of ſeeing her oſtentatious guardian, ſhe again beheld her maſquerade friend, the white domino.

He entreated her pardon for an intruſion neither authoriſed by acquaintance nor by buſineſs, though ſomewhat, he hoped, palliated, by his near connection with one who was privileged to take an intereſt in her affairs: and then, haſtening to the motives which had occaſioned his viſit, "when I had the honour," he ſaid, "of ſeeing you laſt night at the Opera-houſe, the diſpute which had juſt happened between two gentlemen, ſeemed to give you an uneaſineſs which could not but be painful to all who obſerved it, and as among that number I was not the leaſt moved, you will forgive, I hope, my eagerneſs to be the firſt to bring you intelligence that nothing fatal has happened, or is likely to happen."

"You do me, ſir," ſaid Cecilia, "much honour; and indeed you relieve me from a ſuſpence extremely diſagreeable. The accommodation,

commodation, I ſuppoſe, was brought about this morning?"

"I find," anſwered he, ſmiling, "You now expect too much; but hope is never ſo elaſtic as when it ſprings from the ruins of terror."

"What then is the matter? Are they at laſt, not ſafe?"

"Yes, perfectly ſafe; but I cannot tell you they have never been in danger."

"Well, if it is now over I am contented: but you will very much oblige me, ſir, if you will inform me what has paſſed."

"You oblige me, madam, by the honour of your commands. I ſaw but too much reaſon to apprehend that meaſures the moſt violent would follow the affray of laſt night; yet as I found that the quarrel had been accidental, and the offence unpremeditated, I thought it not abſolutely impoſſible that an expeditious mediation might effect a compromiſe: at leaſt it was worth trying; for though wrath ſlowly kindled or long nouriſhed is ſullen and intractable, the ſudden anger that has not had time to impreſs the mind with a deep ſenſe of injury, will, when gently managed, be ſometimes appeaſed with the ſame quickneſs it is excited: I hoped, therefore, that ſome trifling conceſſion from Sir Robert, as the aggreſſor,—"

"Ah ſir!" cried Cecilia, "that, I fear, was not to be obtained!"

"Not by me, I muſt own," he anſwered; "but I was not willing to think of the difficulty, and therefore ventured to make the propoſal: nor did I leave the Opera-houſe till I had uſed every poſſible argument to perſuade Sir Robert an apology would neither ſtain his courage nor his reputation. But his ſpirit brooked not the humiliation."

"Spirit!" cried Cecilia, "how mild a word! What, then, could poor Mr. Belfield reſolve upon?"

"That, I believe, took him very little time to decide. I diſcovered, by means of a gentleman at the Opera who was acquainted with him, where he lived, and I waited upon him with an intention to offer my ſervices towards ſettling the affair by arbitration: for ſince you call him *poor* Mr. Belfield, I think you will permit me, without offence to his antagoniſt, to own that his gallantry, though too impetuous for commendation, engaged me in his intereſt."

"I hope you don't think," cried Cecilia, "that an offence to his antagoniſt muſt neceſſarily be an offence to me?"

"Whatever I may have thought," anſwered he, looking at her with evident ſurpriſe, "I certainly did not wiſh that a

ſympathy

ſympathy offenſive and defenſive had been concluded between you. I could not, however, gain acceſs to Mr. Belfield laſt night, but the affair dwelt upon my mind, and this morning I called at his lodging as ſoon as it was light."

"How good you have been!" cried Cecilia; "your kind offices have not, I hope, all proved ineffectual!"

"So valourous a Don Quixote," returned he, laughing, "certainly merited a faithful Eſquire! he was, however, gone out, and nobody knew whither. About half an hour ago I called upon him again; he was then juſt returned home."

"Well, Sir?"

"I ſaw him; the affair was over; and in a ſhort time he will be able, if you will allow him ſo much honour, to thank you for theſe enquiries."

"He is then wounded?"

"He is a little hurt, but Sir Robert is perfectly ſafe. Belfield fired firſt, and miſſed; the Baronet was not ſo ſucceſsleſs."

"I am grieved to hear it, indeed! and where is the wound?"

"The ball entered his right ſide, and the moment he felt it, he fired his ſecond piſtol in the air. This I heard from his ſervant. He was brought home carefully and ſlowly; no ſurgeon had been upon the

ſpot, but one was called to him immediately. I ſtayed to enquire his opinion after the wound had been dreſſed: he told me he had extracted the ball, and aſſured me Mr. Belfield was not in any danger. Your alarm, madam, laſt night, which had always been preſent to me, then encouraged me to take the liberty of waiting upon you; for I concluded you could yet have had no certain intelligence, and thought it beſt to let the plain and ſimple fact out-run the probable exaggeration of rumour."

Cecilia thanked him for his attention, and Mrs. Harrel then making her appearance, he aroſe and ſaid "Had my father known the honour I have had this morning of waiting upon Miſs Beverley, I am ſure I ſhould have been charged with his compliments, and ſuch a commiſſion would ſomewhat have leſſened the preſumption of this viſit; but I feared leſt while I ſhould be making intereſt for my credentials, the pretence of my embaſſy might be loſt, and other couriers, leſs ſcrupulous, might obtain previous audiences, and anticipate my diſpatches."

He then took his leave.

"This white domino, at laſt then," ſaid Cecilia, "is the ſon of Mr. Delvile! and thence the knowledge of my ſituation which gave me ſo much ſurpriſe: — a ſon how infinitely unlike his father!"

"Yes,"

"Yes," ſaid Mrs. Harrel, "and as unlike his mother too, for I aſſure you ſhe is more proud and haughty even than the old gentleman. I hate the very ſight of her, for ſhe keeps every body in ſuch awe that there's nothing but reſtraint in her preſence. But the ſon is a very pretty young man, and much admired; though I have only ſeen him in public, for none of the family viſit here."

Mr. Monckton, who now ſoon returned, was not a little ſurpriſed to find that all the intelligence he meant to communicate was already known: and not the more pleaſed to hear that the white domino, to whom before he owed no good will, had thus officiouſly preceded him.

Mr. Arnott, who alſo came juſt after him, had been ſo little ſatisfied with the reſult of his enquiries, that from the fear of encreaſing Cecilia's uneaſineſs, he determined not to make known whither he had been; but he ſoon found his forbearance was of no avail, as ſhe was already acquainted with the duel and its conſequences. Yet his unremitting deſire to oblige her urged him twice in the courſe of the ſame day to again call at Mr. Belfield's lodgings, in order to bring her thence freſh and unſolicited intelligence.

Before breakfaſt was quite over, Miſs Larolles,

Larolles, out of breath with eagerneſs, came to tell the news of the duel, in her way to *church*, as it was Sunday morning! and ſoon after Mrs. Mears, who alſo was followed by other ladies, brought the ſame account, which by all was addreſſed to Cecilia, with expreſſions of concern that convinced her, to her infinite vexation, ſhe was generally regarded as the perſon chiefly intereſted in the accident.

Mr. Harrel did not return till late, but then ſeemed in very high ſpirits: "Miſs Beverley," he cried, "I bring you news that will repay all your fright; Sir Robert is not only ſafe, but is come off conqueror."

"I am very ſorry, Sir," anſwered Cecilia, extremely provoked to be thus congratulated, "that any body conquered, or any body was vanquiſhed."

"There is no need for ſorrow," cried Mr. Harrel, "or for any thing but joy, for he has not killed his man; the victory, therefore, will neither coſt him a flight nor a trial. To-day he means to wait upon you, and lay his laurels at your feet."

"He means, then, to take very fruitleſs trouble," ſaid Cecilia, "for I have not any ambition to be ſo honoured.

"Ah, Miſs Beverley," returned he, laughing,

laughing, "this won't do now! it might have paſſed a little while ago, but it won't do now, I promiſe you!"

Cecilia, though much diſpleaſed by this accuſation, found that diſclaiming it only excited further raillery, and therefore prevailed upon herſelf to give him a quiet hearing, and ſcarce any reply.

At dinner, when Sir Robert arrived, the diſlike ſhe had originally taken to him, encreaſed already into diſguſt by his behaviour the preceding evening, was now fixed into the ſtrongeſt averſion by the horror ſhe conceived of his fierceneſs, and the indignation ſhe felt excited by his arrogance. He ſeemed, from the ſucceſs of this duel, to think himſelf raiſed to the higheſt pinnacle of human glory; triumph ſat exulting on his brow; he looked down on whoever he deigned to look at all, and ſhewed that he thought his notice an honour, however imperious the manner in which it was accorded.

Upon Cecilia, however, he caſt an eye of more complacency; he now believed her ſubdued, and his vanity revelled in the belief: her anxiety had ſo thoroughly ſatisfied him of her love, that ſhe had hardly the power left to undeceive him; her ſilence he only attributed to admiration, her coldneſs to fear, and her reſerve to ſhame.

Sickened

Sickened by inſolence ſo undiſguiſed and unauthoriſed, and incenſed at the triumph of his ſucceſsful brutality, Cecilia with pain kept her ſeat, and with vexation reflected upon the neceſſity ſhe was under of paſſing ſo large a portion of her time in company to which ſhe was ſo extremely averſe.

After dinner, when Mrs. Harrel was talking of her party for the evening, of which Cecilia declined making one, Sir Robert, with a ſort of proud humility, that half feared rejection, and half proclaimed an indifference to meeting it, ſaid "I don't much care for going further myſelf, if Miſs Beverley will give me the honour of taking my tea with her."

Cecilia, regarding him with much ſurpriſe, anſwered that ſhe had letters to write into the country, which would confine her to her own room for the reſt of the evening. The Baronet, looking at his watch, inſtantly cried "Faith, that is very fortunate, for I have juſt recollected an engagement at the other end of the town which had ſlipt my memory."

Soon after they were all gone, Cecilia received a note from Mrs. Delvile, begging the favour of her company the next morning to breakfaſt. She readily accepted

accepted the invitation, though ſhe was by no means prepared, by the character ſhe had heard of her, to expect much pleaſure from an acquaintance with that lady.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

A Family Party.

CECILIA the next morning, between nine and ten o'clock, went to St. James'-ſquare; ſhe found nobody immediately ready to receive her, but in a ſhort time was waited upon by Mr. Delvile.

After the uſual ſalutations, "Miſs Beverley," he ſaid, "I have given expreſs orders to my people, that I may not be interrupted while I have the pleaſure of paſſing ſome minutes in converſation with you before you are preſented to Mrs. Delvile."

And then, with an air of ſolemnity, he led her to a ſeat, and having himſelf taken poſſeſſion of another, continued his ſpeech.

"I have received information, from authority which I cannot doubt, that the indiſcretion of certain of your admirers laſt Saturday at the Opera-houſe, occaſioned a diſturbance which to a young woman of delicacy I ſhould imagine muſt be very alarming: now as I conſider myſelf concerned in your fame and welfare from regarding

garding you as my ward, I think it is incumbent upon me to make enquiries into ſuch of your affairs as become public; for I ſhould feel in ſome meaſure diſgraced myſelf, ſhould it appear to the world, while you are under my guardianſhip, that there was any want of propriety in the direction of your conduct."

Cecilia, not much flattered by this addreſs, gravely anſwered that ſhe fancied the affair had been miſrepreſented to him.

"I am not much addicted," he replied, "to give ear to any thing lightly; you muſt therefore permit me to enquire into the merits of the cauſe, and then to draw my own inferences. And let me, at the ſame time, aſſure you there is no other young lady who has any right to expect ſuch an attention from me. I muſt begin by begging you to inform me upon what grounds the two gentlemen in queſtion, for ſuch, by courteſy, I preſume they are called, thought themſelves entitled publicly to diſpute your favour?"

"My favour, Sir!" cried Cecilia, much amazed.

"My dear," ſaid he, with a complacency meant to give her courage, "I know the queſtion is difficult for a young lady to anſwer; but be not abaſhed, I ſhould be ſorry to diſtreſs you, and mean to the utmoſt

moſt of my power to ſave your bluſhes. Do not, therefore, fear me; conſider me as your guardian, and aſſure yourſelf I am perfectly well diſpoſed to conſider you as my ward. Acquaint me, then, freely, what are the pretenſions of theſe gentlemen?"

"To me, Sir, they have, I believe, no pretenſions at all."

"I ſee you are ſhy," returned he, with encreaſing gentleneſs, "I ſee you cannot be eaſy with me; and when I conſider how little you are accuſtomed to me, I do not wonder. But pray take courage; I think it neceſſary to inform myſelf of your affairs, and therefore I beg you will ſpeak to me with freedom."

Cecilia, more and more mortified by this humiliating condeſcenſion, again aſſured him he had been miſinformed, and was again, though diſcredited, praiſed for her modeſty, when, to her great relief, they were interrupted by the entrance of her friend the *white domino*.

"Mortimer," ſaid Mr. Delvile, "I underſtand you have already had the pleaſure of ſeeing this young lady?"

"Yes, Sir," he anſwered, "I have more than once had that happineſs, but I have never had the honour of being introduced to her."

"Miſs Beverley, then," ſaid the father,

"I

"I muſt preſent to you Mr. Mortimer Delvile, my ſon; and, Mortimer, in Miſs Beverley I deſire you will remember that you reſpect a ward of your father's."

"I will not, Sir," anſwered he, "forget an injunction my own inclinations had already out-run."

Mortimer Delvile was tall and finely formed, his features, though not handſome, were full of expreſſion, and a noble openneſs of manners and addreſs ſpoke the elegance of his education, and the liberality of his mind.

When this introduction was over, a more general converſation took place, till Mr. Delvile, ſuddenly riſing, ſaid to Cecilia, "You will pardon me, Miſs Beverley, if I leave you for a few minutes; one of my tenants ſets out to-morrow morning for my eſtate in the North, and he has been two hours waiting to ſpeak with me. But if my ſon is not particularly engaged, I am ſure he will be ſo good as to do the honours of the houſe till his mother is ready to receive you."

And then, graciouſly waving his hand, he quitted the room.

"My father," cried young Delvile, "has left me an office which, could I execute it as perfectly as I ſhall willingly, would be performed without a fault."

"I am very ſorry," ſaid Cecilia, "that I have ſo much miſtaken your hour of breakfaſt; but let me not be any reſtraint upon you, I ſhall find a book, or a news-paper, or ſomething to fill up the time till Mrs. Delvile honours me with a ſummons."

"You can only be a reſtraint upon me," anſwered he, "by commanding me from your preſence. I breakfaſted long ago, and am now juſt come from Mr. Belfield. I had the pleaſure, this morning, of being admitted into his room."

"And how, Sir, did you find him?"

"Not ſo well, I fear, as he thinks himſelf; but he was in high ſpirits, and ſurrounded by his friends, whom he was entertaining with all the gaiety of a man in full health, and entirely at his eaſe; though I perceived, by the frequent changes of his countenance, ſigns of pain and indiſpoſition, that made me, however pleaſed with his converſation, think it neceſſary to ſhorten my own viſit, and to hint to thoſe who were near me the propriety of leaving him quiet."

"Did you ſee his ſurgeon, Sir?"

"No; but he told me he ſhould only have one dreſſing more of his wound, and then get rid of the whole buſineſs by running into the country."

"Were you acquainted with him, Sir, before this accident?"

"No, not at all; but the little I have ſeen of him has ſtrongly intereſted me in his favour: at Mr. Harrel's maſquerade, where I firſt met with him, I was extremely entertained by his humour,—though there, perhaps, as I had alſo the honour of firſt ſeeing Miſs Beverley, I might be too happy to feel much difficulty in being pleaſed. And even at the Opera he had the advantage of finding me in the ſame favourable diſpoſition, as I had long diſtinguiſhed you before I had taken any notice of him. I muſt, however, confeſs I did not think his anger that evening quite without provocation,—but I beg your pardon, I may perhaps be miſtaken, and you, who know the whole affair, muſt undoubtedly be better able to account for what happened."

Here he fixed his eyes upon Cecilia, with a look of curioſity that ſeemed eager to penetrate into her ſentiments of the two antagoniſts.

"No, certainly," ſhe anſwered, "he had all the provocation that ill-breeding could give him."

"And do you, madam," cried he, with much ſurprize, "judge of this matter with ſuch ſeverity?"

"No,

"No, not with ſeverity, ſimply with candour."

"With candour? alas, then, poor Sir Robert! Severity were not half ſo bad a ſign for him!"

A ſervant now came in, to acquaint Cecilia that Mrs. Delvile waited breakfaſt for her.

This ſummons was immediately followed by the re-entrance of Mr. Delvile, who, taking her hand, ſaid he would himſelf preſent her to his lady, and with much graciouſneſs aſſured her of a kind reception.

The ceremonies preceding this interview, added to the character ſhe had already heard of Mrs. Delvile, made Cecilia heartily wiſh it over; but, aſſuming all the courage in her power, ſhe determined to ſupport herſelf with a ſpirit that ſhould ſtruggle againſt the oſtentatious ſuperiority ſhe was prepared to expect.

She found her ſeated upon a ſofa, from which, however, ſhe aroſe at her approach; but the moment Cecilia beheld her, all the unfavourable impreſſions with which ſhe came into her preſence immediately vaniſhed, and that reſpect which the formalities of her introduction had failed to inſpire, her air, figure, and countenance inſtantaneouſly excited.

She was not more than fifty years of age;

age; her complection, though faded, kept the traces of its former loveliness, her eyes, though they had loſt their youthful fire, retained a luſtre that evinced their primeval brilliancy, and the fine ſymmetry of her features, ſtill uninjured by the ſiege of time, not only indicated the perfection of her juvenile beauty, but ſtill laid claim to admiration in every beholder.

Her carriage was loſty and commanding; but the dignity to which high birth and conſcious ſuperiority gave riſe, was ſo judiciouſly regulated by good ſenſe, and ſo happily blended with politeneſs, that though the world at large envied or hated her, the few for whom ſhe had herſelf any regard, ſhe was infallibly certain to captivate.

The ſurpriſe and admiration with which Cecilia at the firſt glance was ſtruck proved reciprocal: Mrs. Delvile, though prepared for youth and beauty, expected not to ſee a countenance ſo intelligent, nor manners ſo well formed as thoſe of Cecilia: thus mutually aſtoniſhed and mutually pleaſed, their firſt ſalutations were accompanied by looks ſo flattering to both, that each ſaw in the other, an immediate prepoſſeſſion in her favour, and from the moment that they met, they ſeemed inſtinctively impelled to admire.

"I have promiſed Miſs Beverley, madam,"

ſaid Mr. Delvile to his lady, "that you would give her a kind reception; and I need not remind you that my promiſes are always held ſacred."

"But I hope you have not alſo promiſed," cried ſhe, with quickneſs, "that I ſhould give *you* a kind reception, for I feel at this very moment extremely inclined to quarrel with you."

"Why ſo, madam?"

"For not bringing us together ſooner; for now I have ſeen her, I already look back with regret to the time I have loſt without the pleaſure of knowing her."

"What a claim is this," cried young Delvile," upon the benevolence of Miſs Beverley! for if ſhe has not now the indulgence by frequent and diligent viſits to make ſome reparation, ſhe muſt conſider herſelf as reſponſible for the diſſention ſhe will occaſion."

"If peace depends upon my viſits," anſwered Cecilia, "it may immediately be proclaimed; were it to be procured only by my abſence, I know not if I ſhould ſo readily agree to the conditions."

"I muſt requeſt of you, madam," ſaid Mr. Delvile, "that when my ſon and I retire, you will beſtow half an hour upon this young lady, in making enquiries concerning the diſturbance laſt Saturday at the

Opera-Houſe. I have not, myſelf, ſo much time to ſpare, as I have ſeveral appointments for this morning; but I am ſure you will not object to the office, as I know you to be equally anxious with myſelf, that the minority of Miſs Beverley ſhould paſs without reproach."

"Not only her minority, but her maturity," cried young Delvile, warmly, "and not only her maturity, but her decline of life will paſs, I hope, not merely without reproach, but with fame and applauſe!"

"I hope ſo too;" replied Mr. Delvile: "I wiſh her well through every ſtage of her life, but for her minority alone it is my buſineſs to do more than wiſh. For that, I feel my own honour and my own credit concerned; my honour, as I gave it to the Dean that I would ſuperintend her conduct, and my credit, as the world is acquainted with the claim ſhe has to my protection."

"I will not make any enquiries," ſaid Mrs. Delvile, turning to Cecilia with a ſweetneſs that recompenſed her for the haughtineſs of her guardian, "till I have had ſome opportunity of convincing Miſs Beverley, that my regard for her merits they ſhould be anſwered."

"You ſee, Miſs Beverley," ſaid Mr.

Delvile, "how little reaſon you had to be afraid of us; Mrs. Delvile is as much diſpoſed in your favour as myſelf, and as deſirous to be of ſervice to you. Endeavour, therefore, to caſt off this timidity, and to make yourſelf eaſy. You muſt come to us often; uſe will do more towards removing your fears, than all the encouragement we can give you."

"But what are the fears," cried Mrs. Delvile, "that Miſs Beverley can have to remove? unleſs, indeed, ſhe apprehends her viſits will make us encroachers, and that the more we are favoured with her preſence, the leſs we ſhall bear her abſence."

"Pray, ſon," ſaid Mr. Delvile, "what was the name of the perſon who was Sir Robert Floyer's opponent? I have again forgotten it."

"Belfield, Sir."

"True; it is a name I am perfectly unacquainted with: however, he may poſſibly be a very good ſort of man; but certainly his oppoſing himſelf to Sir Robert Floyer, a man of ſome family, a gentleman, rich, and allied to ſome people of diſtinction, was a rather ſtrange circumſtance: I mean not, however, to prejudge the caſe; I will hear it fairly ſtated; and am the more diſpoſed to be cautious in what I pronounce, becauſe I am perſuaded Miſs Beverley has

too

too much ſenſe to let my advice be thrown away upon her."

"I hope ſo, Sir; but with reſpect to the diſturbance at the Opera, I know not that I have the leaſt occaſion to trouble you."

"If your meaſures," ſaid he, very gravely, "are already taken, the Dean your uncle prevailed upon me to accept a very uſeleſs office; but if any thing is yet undecided, it will not, perhaps, be amiſs that I ſhould be conſulted. Mean time, I will only recommend to you to conſider that Mr. Belfield is a perſon whoſe name nobody has heard, and that a connection with Sir Robert Floyer would certainly be very honourable for you."

"Indeed, Sir," ſaid Cecilia, "here is ſome great miſtake; neither of theſe gentlemen, I believe, think of me at all."

"They have taken, then," cried young Delvile with a laugh, "a very extraordinary method to prove their indifference!"

"The affairs of Sir Robert Floyer," continued Mr. Delvile, "are indeed, I am informed, in ſome diſorder; but he has a noble eſtate, and your fortune would ſoon clear all its incumbrances. Such an alliance, therefore, would be mutually advantageous: but what would reſult from a union with ſuch a perſon as Mr. Belfield? he is of no family, though in that, perhaps,

you would not be very ſcrupulous; but neither has he any money; what, then, recommends him?"

"To me, Sir, nothing!" anſwered Cecilia.

"And to me," cried young Delvile, "almoſt every thing! he has wit, ſpirit, and underſtanding, talents to create admiration, and qualities, I believe, to engage eſteem!"

"You ſpeak warmly," ſaid Mrs. Delvile; "but if ſuch is his character, he merits your earneſtneſs. What is it you know of him?"

"Not enough, perhaps," anſwered he, "to coolly juſtify my praiſe; but he is one of thoſe whoſe firſt appearance takes the mind by ſurpriſe, and leaves the judgment to make afterwards ſuch terms as it can. Will you, madam, when he is recovered, permit me to introduce him to you?"

"Certainly;" ſaid ſhe, ſmiling; "but have a care your recommendation does not diſgrace your diſcernment."

"This warmth of diſpoſition, Mortimer," cried Mr. Delvile, "produces nothing but difficulties and trouble: you neglect the connections I point out, and which a little attention might render ſerviceable as well as honourable, and run precipitately into forming ſuch as can do

you

you no good among people of rank, and are not only profitleſs in themſelves, but generally lead you into expence and inconvenience. You are now of an age to correct this raſhneſs: think, therefore, better of your own conſequence, than thus idly to degrade yourſelf by forming friendſhips with every ſhewy adventurer that comes in your way."

"I know not, Sir," anſwered he, "how Mr. Belfield deſerves to be called an adventurer: he is not, indeed, rich; but he is in a profeſſion where parts ſuch as his ſeldom fail to acquire riches; however, as to me his wealth can be of no conſequence, why ſhould my regard to him wait for it? if he is a young man of worth and honour——"

"Mortimer," interrupted Mr. Delvile, "whatever he is, we know he is not a man of rank, and whatever he may be, we know he cannot become a man of family, and conſequently for Mortimer Delvile he is no companion. If you can render him any ſervice, I ſhall commend your ſo doing; it becomes your birth, it becomes your ſtation in life to aſſiſt individuals, and promote the general good: but never in your zeal for others forget what is due to yourſelf, and to the ancient and honourable houſe from which you are ſprung."

"But can we entertain Miſs Beverley with nothing better than family lectures?" cried Mrs. Delvile.

"It is for me," ſaid young Delvile, riſing, "to beg pardon of Miſs Beverley for having occaſioned them: but when ſhe is ſo good as to honour us with her company again, I hope I ſhall have more diſcretion."

He then left the room; and Mr. Delvile alſo riſing to go, ſaid, "My dear, I commit you to very kind hands; Mrs. Delvile, I am ſure, will be happy to hear your ſtory; ſpeak to her, therefore, without reſerve. And pray don't imagine that I make you over to her from any ſlight; on the contrary, I admire and commend your modeſty very much; but my time is extremely precious, and I cannot devote ſo much of it to an explanation as your diffidence requires."

And then, to the great joy of Cecilia, he retired; leaving her much in doubt whether his haughtineſs or his condeſcenſion humbled her moſt,

"Theſe men," ſaid Mrs. Delvile, "can never comprehend the pain of a delicate female mind upon entering into explanations of this ſort: I underſtand it, however, too well to inflict it. We will, therefore, have no explanations at all till we

are better acquainted, and then if you will venture to favour me with any confidence, my beſt advice, and, ſhould any be in my power, my beſt ſervices ſhall be at your command."

"You do me, madam, much honour," anſwered Cecilia, "but I muſt aſſure you I have no explanation to give."

"Well, well, at preſent," returned Mrs. Delvile, "I am content to hear that anſwer, as I have acquired no right to any other: but hereafter I ſhall hope for more openneſs: it is promiſed me by your countenance, and I mean to claim the promiſe by my friendſhip."

"Your friendſhip will both honour and delight me, and whatever are your enquiries, I ſhall always be proud to anſwer them; but indeed, with regard to this affair——"

"My dear Miſs Beverley," interrupted Mrs. Delvile, with a look of arch incredulity, "men ſeldom riſk their lives where an eſcape is without hope of recompence. But we will not now ſay a word more upon the ſubject. I hope you will often favour me with your company, and by the frequency of your viſits, make us both forget the ſhortneſs of our acquaintance."

Cecilia, finding her reſiſtance only gave birth to freſh ſuſpicion, now yielded, ſatis-

fied that a very little time muſt unavoidably clear up the truth. But her viſit was not therefore ſhortened; the ſudden partiality with which the figure and countenance of Mrs. Delvile had impreſſed her, was quickly ripened into eſteem by the charms of her converſation: ſhe found her ſenſible, well bred, and high ſpirited, gifted by nature with ſuperior talents, and poliſhed by education and ſtudy with all the elegant embelliſhments of cultivation. She ſaw in her, indeed, ſome portion of the pride ſhe had been taught to expect, but it was ſo much ſoftened by elegance, and ſo well tempered with kindneſs, that it elevated her character, without rendering her manners offenſive.

With ſuch a woman, ſubjects of diſcourſe could never be wanting, nor fertility of powers to make them entertaining: and ſo much was Cecilia delighted with her viſit, that though her carriage was announced at twelve o'clock, ſhe reluctantly concluded it at two; and in taking her leave, gladly accepted an invitation to dine with her new friend three days after; who, equally pleaſed with her young gueſt, promiſed before that time to return her viſit.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

An Examination.

CECILIA found Mrs. Harrel eagerly waiting to hear ſome account how ſhe had paſſed the morning, and fully perſuaded that ſhe would leave the Delviles with a determination never more, but by neceſſity, to ſee them: ſhe was, therefore, not only ſurpriſed but diſappointed, when inſtead of fulfilling her expectations, ſhe aſſured her that ſhe had been delighted with Mrs. Delvile, whoſe engaging qualities amply recompenſed her for the arrogance of her huſband; that her viſit had no fault but that of being too ſhort, and that ſhe had already appointed an early day for repeating it.

Mrs. Harrel was evidently hurt by this praiſe, and Cecilia, who perceived among all her guardians a powerful diſpoſition to hatred and jealouſy, ſoon dropt the ſubject: though ſo much had ſhe been charmed with Mrs. Delvile, that a ſcheme of removal once more occurred to her, notwithſtanding her diſlike of her ſtately guardian.

At dinner, as uſual, they were joined by Sir Robert Floyer, who grew more and more aſſiduous in his attendance, but who, this day, contrary to his general cuſtom of remaining with the gentlemen, made his exit before the ladies left the table; and as ſoon as he was gone, Mr. Harrel deſired a private conference with Cecilia.

They went together to the drawing-room, where, after a flouriſhing preface upon the merits of Sir Robert Floyer, he formally acquainted her that he was commiſſioned by that gentleman, to make her a tender of his hand and fortune.

Cecilia, who had not much reaſon to be ſurpriſed at this overture, deſired him to tell the Baronet, ſhe was obliged to him for the honour he intended her, at the ſame time that ſhe abſolutely declined receiving it.

Mr. Harrel, laughing, told her this anſwer was very well for a beginning, though it would by no means ſerve beyond the firſt day of the declaration; but when Cecilia aſſured him ſhe ſhould firmly adhere to it, he remonſtrated with equal ſurpriſe and diſcontent upon the reaſons of her refuſal. She thought it ſufficient to tell him that Sir Robert did not pleaſe her, but, with much raillery, he denied the aſſertion credit, aſſuring her that he was univerſally admired by the ladies,

ladies, that ſhe could not poſſibly receive a more honourable offer, and that he was reckoned by every body the fineſt gentleman about the town. His fortune, he added, was equally unexceptionable with his figure and his rank in life; all the world, he was certain, would approve the connexion, and the ſettlement made upon her ſhould be dictated by herſelf.

Cecilia begged him to be ſatisfied with an anſwer which ſhe never could change, and to ſpare her the enumeration of particular objections, ſince Sir Robert was wholly and in every reſpect diſagreeable to her.

"What, then," cried he, "could make you ſo frightened for him at the Opera-houſe? There has been but one opinion about town ever ſince of your prepoſſeſſion in his favour."

"I am extremely concerned to hear it; my fright was but the effect of ſurpriſe, and belonged not more to Sir Robert than to Mr. Belfield."

He told her that nobody elſe thought the ſame, that her marriage with the Baronet was univerſally expected, and, in concluſion, notwithſtanding her earneſt deſire that he would inſtantly and explicitly inform Sir Robert of her determination, he repeatedly refuſed to give him any final anſwer

ſwer till ſhe had taken more time for conſideration.

Cecilia was extremely diſpleaſed at this irkſome importunity, and ſtill more chagrined to find her incautious emotion at the Opera-houſe, had given riſe to ſuſpicions of her harbouring a partiality for a man whom every day ſhe more heartily diſliked.

While ſhe was deliberating in what manner ſhe could clear up this miſtake, which, after ſhe was left alone, occupied all her thoughts, ſhe was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Monckton, whoſe joy in meeting her at length by herſelf exceeded not her own, for charmed as he was that he could now examine into the ſtate of her affairs, ſhe was not leſs delighted that ſhe could make them known to him.

After mutual expreſſions, guarded, however, on the part of Mr. Monckton, though unreſerved on that of Cecilia, of their ſatisfaction in being again able to converſe as in former times, he aſked if ſhe would permit him, as the privilege of their long acquaintance, to ſpeak to her with ſincerity.

She aſſured him he could not more oblige her.

"Let me, then," ſaid he, "enquire if yet that ardent confidence in your own ſteadineſs, which ſo much diſdained my

fears

fears that the change of your reſidence might produce a change in your ſentiments, is ſtill as unſhaken as when we parted in Suffolk? Or whether experience, that foe to unpractiſed refinement, has already taught you the fallibility of theory?"

"When I aſſure you," replied Cecilia, "that your enquiry gives me no pain, I think I have ſufficiently anſwered it, for were I conſcious of any alteration, it could not but embarraſs and diſtreſs me. Very far, however, from finding myſelf in the danger with which you threatened me, of *forgetting Bury, its inhabitants and its environs*, I think with pleaſure of little elſe, ſince London, inſtead of bewitching, has greatly diſappointed me."

"How ſo?" cried Mr. Monckton, much delighted.

"Not," anſwered ſhe, "in itſelf, not in its magnificence, nor in its diverſions, which ſeem to be inexhauſtible; but theſe, though copious as inſtruments of pleaſure, are very ſhallow as ſources of happineſs: the diſappointment, therefore, comes nearer home, and ſprings not from London, but from my own ſituation."

"Is that, then, diſagreeable to you?"

"You ſhall yourſelf judge, when I have told you that from the time of my quitting your houſe till this very moment, when I have

have again the happineſs of talking with you, I have never once had any converſation, ſociety or intercourſe, in which friendſhip or affection have had any ſhare, or my mind has had the leaſt intereſt."

She then entered into a detail of her way of life, told him how little ſuited to her taſte was the unbounded diſſipation of the Harrels, and feelingly expatiated upon the diſappointment ſhe had received from the alteration in the manners and conduct of her young friend. "In her," ſhe continued, "had I found the companion I came prepared to meet, the companion from whom I had ſo lately parted, and in whoſe ſociety I expected to find conſolation for the loſs of yours and of Mrs. Charlton's, I ſhould have complained of nothing; the very places that now tire, might then have entertained me, and all that now paſſes for unmeaning diſſipation, might then have worn the appearance of variety and pleaſure. But where the mind is wholly without intereſt, every thing is languid and inſipid; and accuſtomed as I have long been to think friendſhip the firſt of human bleſſings, and ſocial converſe the greateſt of human enjoyments, how ever can I reconcile myſelf to a ſtate of careleſs indifference, to making acquaintance without any concern either for preſerving or eſteeming them, and

to

to going on from day to day in an eager ſearch of amuſement, with no companion for the hours of retirement, and no view beyond that of paſſing the preſent moment in apparent gaiety and thoughtleſsneſs?"

Mr. Monckton, who heard theſe complaints with ſecret rapture, far from ſeeking to ſoften or remove, uſed his utmoſt endeavours to ſtrengthen and encreaſe them, by artfully retracing her former way of life, and pointing out with added cenſures the change in it ſhe had been lately compelled to make: "a change," he continued, "which though ruinous of your time, and detrimental to your happineſs, uſe will, I fear, familiarize, and familiarity render pleaſant."

"Theſe ſuſpicions, Sir," ſaid Cecilia, "mortify me greatly; and why, when far from finding me pleaſed, you hear nothing but repining, ſhould you ſtill continue to harbour them?"

"Becauſe your trial has yet been too ſhort to prove your firmneſs, and becauſe there is nothing to which time cannot contentedly accuſtom us."

"I feel not much fear," ſaid Cecilia, "of ſtanding ſuch a teſt as might fully ſatisfy you; but nevertheleſs, not to be too preſumptuous, I have by no means expoſed myſelf to all the dangers which you think

ſurround

ſurround me, for of late I have ſpent almoſt every evening at home and by myſelf."

This intelligence was to Mr. Monckton a ſurpriſe the moſt agreeable he could receive. Her diſtaſte for the amuſements which were offered her greatly relieved his fears of her forming any alarming connection, and the diſcovery that while ſo anxiouſly he had ſought her every where in public, ſhe had quietly paſſed her time by her own fire-ſide, not only re-aſſured him for the preſent, but gave him information where he might meet with her in future.

He then talked of the duel, and ſolicitouſly led her to ſpeak open of Sir Robert Floyer; and here too, his ſatisfaction was entire; he found her diſlike of him ſuch as his knowledge of her diſpoſition made him expect, and ſhe wholly removed his ſuſpicions concerning her anxiety about the quarrel, by explaining to him her apprehenſions of having occaſioned it herſelf, from accepting the civility of Mr. Belfield, at the very moment ſhe ſhewed her averſion to receiving that of Sir Robert.

Neither did her confidence reſt here; ſhe acquainted him with the converſation ſhe had juſt had with Mr. Harrel, and begged his advice in what manner ſhe might ſecure herſelf from further importunity.

Mr. Monckton had now a new ſubject for

for his diſcernment. Every thing had confirmed to him the paſſion which Mr. Arnott had conceived for Cecilia, and he had therefore concluded the intereſt of the Harrels would be all in his favour: other ideas now ſtruck him; he found that Mr. Arnott was given up for Sir Robert, and he determined carefully to watch the motions both of the Baronet and her young guardian, in order to diſcover the nature of their plans and connexion. Mean time, convinced by her unaffected averſion to the propoſals ſhe had received, that ſhe was at preſent in no danger from the league he ſuſpected, he merely adviſed her to perſevere in manifeſting a calm repugnance to their ſolicitations, which could not fail, before long, to diſhearten them both.

"But Sir," cried Cecilia, "I now fear this man as much as I diſlike him, for his late fierceneſs and brutality, though they have encreaſed my diſguſt, make me dread to ſhew it. I am impatient, therefore, to have done with him, and to ſee him no more. And for this purpoſe, I wiſh to quit the houſe of Mr. Harrel, where he has acceſs at his pleaſure."

"You can wiſh nothing more judiciouſly," cried he; "would you, then, return into the country?"

"That is not yet in my power; I am obliged

obliged to reſide with one of my guardians. To day I have ſeen Mrs. Delvile, and —"

"Mrs. Delvile?" interrupted Mr. Monckton, in a voice of aſtoniſhment, "Surely you do not think of removing into that family?"

"What can I do ſo well? Mrs. Delvile is a charming woman, and her converſation would afford me more entertainment and inſtruction in a ſingle day, than under this roof I ſhould obtain in a twelvemonth."

"Are you ſerious? Do you really think of making ſuch a change?"

"I really wiſh it, but I know not yet if it is practicable: on Thurſday, however, I am to dine with her, and then, if it is in my power, I will hint to her my deſire."

"And can Miſs Beverley poſſibly wiſh," cried Mr. Monckton with earneſtneſs, "to reſide in ſuch a houſe? Is not Mr. Delvile the moſt oſtentatious, haughty, and ſelf-ſufficient of men? Is not his wife the proudeſt of women? And is not the whole family odious to all the world?"

"You amaze me!" cried Cecilia; "ſurely that cannot be their general character? Mr. Delvile, indeed, deſerves all the cenſure he can meet for his wearifome parade of ſuperiority; but his lady by no means merits to be included in the ſame reproach. I have ſpent this whole morning with

with her, and though I waited upon her with a ſtrong prejudice in her diſfavour, I obſerved in her no pride that exceeded the bounds of propriety and native dignity."

"Have you often been at the houſe? Do you know the ſon, too?"

"I have ſeen him three or four times."

"And what do you think of him?"

"I hardly know enough of him to judge fairly."

"But what does he ſeem to you? Do you not perceive in him already all the arrogance, all the contemptuous inſolence of his father?"

"O no! far from it indeed; his mind ſeems to be liberal and noble, open to impreſſions of merit, and eager to honour and promote it."

"You are much deceived; you have been reading your own mind, and thought you had read his: I would adviſe you ſedulouſly to avoid the whole family; you will find all intercourſe with them irkſome and comfortleſs: ſuch as the father appears at once, the wife and the ſon will, in a few more meetings, appear alſo. They are deſcended from the ſame ſtock, and inherit the ſame ſelf-complacency. Mr. Delvile married his couſin, and each of them inſtigates the other to believe that all birth and rank would be at an end in the world, if their own ſuperb family had not a promiſe

of

of ſupport from their hopeful Mortimer. Should you precipitately ſettle yourſelf in their houſe, you would very ſoon be totally weighed down by their united inſolence."

Cecilia again and warmly attempted to defend them; but Mr. Monckton was ſo poſitive in his aſſertions, and ſo ſignificant in his inſinuations to their diſcredit, that ſhe was at length perſuaded ſhe had judged too haſtily, and, after thanking him for his counſel, promiſed not to take any meaſures towards a removal without his advice.

This was all he deſired; and now, enlivened by finding that his influence with her was unimpaired, and that her heart was yet her own, he ceaſed his exhortations, and turned the diſcourſe to ſubjects more gay and general, judiciouſly cautious neither by tedious admonitions to diſguſt, nor by fretful ſolicitude to alarm her. He did not quit her till the evening was far advanced, and then, in returning to his own houſe, felt all his anxieties and diſappointments recompenſed by the comfort this long and ſatisfactory converſation had afforded him. While Cecilia, charmed with having ſpent the morning with her new acquaintance, and the evening with her old friend, retired to reſt better pleaſed with the diſpoſal of her time than ſhe had yet been ſince her journey from Suffolk.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

A Tête à Tête.

THE two following days had neither event nor diſturbance, except ſome little vexation occaſioned by the behaviour of Sir Robert Floyer, who ſtill appeared not to entertain any doubt of the ſucceſs of his addreſſes. This impertinent confidence ſhe could only attribute to the officious encouragement of Mr. Harrel, and therefore ſhe determined rather to ſeek than to avoid an explanation with him. But ſhe had, in the mean time, the ſatisfaction of hearing from Mr. Arnott, who, ever eager to oblige her, was frequent in his enquiries, that Mr. Belfield was almoſt entirely recovered.

On Thurſday, according to her appointment, ſhe again went to St. James'-Square, and being ſhewn into the drawing-room till dinner was ready, found there only young Mr. Delvile.

After ſome general converſation, he aſked her how lately ſhe had had any news of Mr. Belfield?

"This morning," ſhe anſwered, "when I had the pleaſure of hearing he was quite recovered. Have you ſeen him again, Sir?"

"Yes, madam, twice."

"And did you think him almoſt well?"

"I thought," anſwered he, with ſome heſitation, and I think ſtill, that your enquiries ought to be his cure."

"O," cried Cecilia, "I hope he has far better medicines: but I am afraid I have been miſinformed, for I ſee you do not think him better."

"You muſt not, however," replied he, "blame thoſe meſſengers whoſe artifice has only had your ſatisfaction in view; nor ſhould I be ſo malignant as to blaſt their deſigns, if I did not fear that Mr. Belfield's actual ſafety may be endangered by your continued deception."

"What deception, Sir? I don't at all underſtand you. How is his ſafety endangered?"

"Ah madam!" ſaid he ſmiling, "what danger indeed is there that any man would not riſk to give birth to ſuch ſolicitude! Mr. Belfield however, I believe is in none from which a command of yours cannot reſcue him."

"Then were I an hard-hearted damſel indeed not to iſſue it! but if my commands

are ſo medicinal, pray inſtruct me how to adminiſter them."

"You muſt order him to give up, for the preſent, his plan of going into the country, where he can have no aſſiſtance, and where his wound muſt be dreſſed only by a common ſervant, and to remain quietly in town till his ſurgeon pronounces that he may travel without any hazard."

"But is he, ſeriouſly, ſo mad as to intend leaving town without the conſent of his ſurgeon?"

"Nothing leſs than ſuch an intention could have induced me to undeceive you with reſpect to his recovery. But indeed I am no friend to thoſe artifices which purchaſe preſent relief by future miſery: I venture, therefore, to ſpeak to you the ſimple truth, that by a timely exertion of your influence you may prevent further evil."

"I know not, Sir," ſaid Cecilia, with the utmoſt ſurpriſe, "why you ſhould ſuppoſe I have any ſuch influence; nor can I imagine that any deception has been practiced."

"It is poſſible," anſwered he, "I may have been too much alarmed; but in ſuch a caſe as this, no information ought to be depended upon but that of his ſurgeon. You, madam, may probably know his opinion?"

"Me?—No, indeed! I never ſaw his ſurgeon; I know not even who he is."

"I purpoſe calling upon him to-morrow morning; will Miſs Beverley permit me afterwards the honour of communicating to her what may paſs?"

"I thank you, Sir," ſaid ſhe, colouring very high; "but my impatience is by no means ſo great as to occaſion my giving you that trouble."

Delvile, perceiving her change of countenance, inſtantly, and with much reſpect, entreated her pardon for the propoſal; which, however, ſhe had no ſooner granted, than he ſaid very archly "Why indeed you have not much right to be angry, ſince it was your own frankneſs that excited mine. And thus, you find, like moſt other culprits, I am ready to caſt the blame of the offence upon the offended. I feel, however, an irreſiſtible propenſity to do ſervice to Mr. Belfield;—ſhall I ſin quite beyond forgiveneſs if I venture to tell you how I found him ſituated this morning?"

"No, certainly,—if you wiſh it, I can have no objection."

"I found him, then, ſurrounded by a ſet of gay young men, who, by way of keeping up his ſpirits, made him laugh and talk without ceaſing: he aſſured me himſelf that he was perfectly well, and intended to gallop

gallop out of town to-morrow morning; though, when I ſhook hands with him at parting, I was both ſhocked and alarmed to feel by the burning heat of the ſkin, that far from diſcarding his ſurgeon, he ought rather to call in a phyſician."

"I am very much concerned to hear this account," ſaid Cecilia; "but I do not well underſtand what you mean ſhould on my part follow it?"

"That," anſwered he, bowing, with a look of mock gravity, "I pretend not to ſettle! In ſtating the caſe I have ſatisfied my conſcience, and if in hearing it you can pardon the liberty I have taken, I ſhall as much honour the openneſs of your character, as I admire that of your countenance."

Cecilia now, to her no little aſtoniſhment, found ſhe had the ſame miſtake to clear up at preſent concerning Mr. Belfield, that only three days before ſhe had explained with reſpect to the Baronet. But ſhe had no time to ſpeak further upon the ſubject, as the entrance of Mrs. Delvile put an end to their diſcourſe.

That lady received her with the moſt diſtinguiſhing kindneſs; apologiſed for not ſooner waiting upon her, and repeatedly declared that nothing but indiſpoſition

ſhould have prevented her returning the favour of her firſt viſit.

They were ſoon after ſummoned to dinner. Mr. Delvile, to the infinite joy of Cecilia, was out.

The day was ſpent greatly to her ſatisfaction. There was no interruption from viſitors, ſhe was tormented by the diſcuſſion of no diſagreeable ſubjects, the duel was not mentioned, the antagoniſts were not hinted at, ſhe was teized with no ſelf-ſufficient encouragement, and wearied with no mortifying affability; the converſation at once was lively and rational, and though general, was rendered intereſting, by a reciprocation of good-will and pleaſure in the converſers.

The favourable opinion ſhe had conceived both of the mother and the ſon this long viſit ſerved to confirm: in Mrs. Delvile ſhe found ſtrong ſenſe, quick parts, and high breeding; in Mortimer, ſincerity and vivacity joined with ſoftneſs and elegance; and in both there ſeemed the moſt liberal admiration of talents, with an openneſs of heart that diſdained all diſguiſe. Greatly pleaſed with their manners, and ſtruck with all that was apparent in their characters, ſhe much regretted the prejudice of Mr. Monckton, which now, with the promiſe ſhe had given him, was all that oppoſed her making

making an immediate effort towards a change in her abode.

She did not take her leave till eleven o'clock, when Mrs. Delvile, after repeatedly thanking her for her viſit, ſaid ſhe would not ſo much encroach upon her good nature as to requeſt another till ſhe had waited upon her in return; but added, that ſhe meant very ſpeedily to pay that debt, in order to enable herſelf, by friendly and frequent meetings, to enter upon the confidential commiſſion with which her guardian had entruſted her.

Cecilia was pleaſed with the delicacy which gave riſe to this forbearance, yet having in fact nothing either to relate or conceal, ſhe was rather ſorry than glad at the delay of an explanation, ſince ſhe found the whole family was in an error with reſpect to the ſituation of her affairs.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



