

and strict principles, render them as worthy to sustain the dignity of a ducal coronet, as their domestic virtues, simplicity, and amiable disposition, are adapted to ensure the happiness of a husband, though he were selected from a more humble station in life."

"Nothing can be more true," answered Herbert. "I willingly admit, that there is no country in the world where one meets with such perfect models of every feminine perfection as among the wives and daughters of the English aristocracy, which is perhaps one of the principal reasons why our nobility enjoy a great portion of public respect, and are looked up to, collectively speaking, in a much higher degree by their countrymen, than those of any other European nation. I will also acknowledge, that there are many, perhaps the major part, who are equally calculated to shed lustre and dignity on a Court, as they are adapted to embellish and confer happiness on a cottage: but," added Herbert, whose attachment to his venerable sovereign and his illustrious consort bordered on enthusiasm, "it is natural that the manners and morals of the Court should influence the conduct of the higher classes; we ought to expect some good qualities in our nobility when we see the King and Queen not only the most forward in setting the brightest example of every domestic excellence, but using their influence to encourage its cultivation among their subjects."

"I do not despair, in despite of your denial, to see you become a proselyte to what you call my ambitious projects," rejoined Lady Milton.

"Not under existing circumstances, most certainly," answered Herbert earnestly; "I will admit the theory, but must renounce the practice; besides, I meet with the same fate as some of my family, and unfortunately fix my choice on the daughter of one of those who inwardly consider the union of their children with men of inferior, or rather no rank, as an absolute degradation, an irrefragable blot on the family escutcheon."

"In this country, and in these days when genius and merit are the almost certain passports to the highest offices and dignities of the State, and when we see the names of distinguished men of every profession, augmenting, and

adding lustre to the peerage, by the accession of their talents and virtues, few people can be so foolish as to despise such connexions."

"You must permit me to be a little skeptical," rejoined Herbert, "as I well know that there are many who, although they may consent from motives of pecuniary or borough interest, yet the sons-in-law are considered as intruders—creatures upon sufferance, whom the papa rarely condescends to patronize, unless he intends borrowing money; whom the mamma treats with the most forbidding coolness, lest 'the man' should become familiar, and presume to look upon himself as one of the family; and whom the sisters perpetually taunt with supercilious comparisons between their own exalted birth and fashionable connexions, and his low origin and vulgar acquaintance?"

"But if the man be happy with his wife, what need he care for connexions?"

"If," replied Herbert;—"that if is the difficulty. What think you of the lady-wife addressing her husband on his remonstrating with her for a flagrant act of extravagance and folly, with this speech—'Mr. Thing-a-me, you appear to forget that you are addressing an Earl's daughter:—pray, Sir, reserve your horrid, low, mercantile observations for those vulgar griffins your sisters: whom, by-the-by, I have desired the servants not to admit; and bear in mind, Sir, that I did not condescend to connect myself with you or them for the purpose of becoming the subject of your lectures on political economy:—so ring the bell, as I have promised to go to the sale at Philips's.'"

"You are really making out a most exaggerated case," rejoined Lady Milton; "no one ever heard of such an impudent, heartless woman."

"Indeed," answered Herbert, "what I have just repeated was addressed, verbatim by Lady Barbara Sterling, in my presence, to my friend Harry, who flattered himself that he had married an angel; besides, I shall not easily forget Lady Brassford's reply to my congratulations on her daughter's marriage with Sterling, who is really one of the most accomplished, gentlemanly men in London, although his father certainly had the bad taste to amass a splendid fortune by commerce."

"What was the reply? something extremely impertinent, I dare say?" said Lady Milton, "and probably not less *deplacé*? as her Ladyship's grandfather was himself a simple manufacturer."

"Oh! her Ladyship begged me to reserve my congratulations for Lord Brassford, to whom was due the whole merit of this *mesalliance*, to which she had never given her consent. 'I have no doubt,' added her Ladyship, curling up her lip, 'that all you say about Mr.—Mr.—the man with the name which—' 'Always puts one in mind of a pound note,' exclaimed one of the daughters, giggling.—'I quite forget it,' continued Lady Brassford, 'but it is very probable, that he may be very good-looking, clean, and civil, and, in fact, so are all the shopmen now at Cooper's or Howel's, though I scarcely know him by sight. He may be also very well informed and properly behaved;—that is to say, very well for a trader. But I know nothing about him, nor do we propose enlarging our acquaintance;—do we, girls?' added her Ladyship, turning to her daughters.—'What! with Barbara's Sunday buck, as my brother calls him?' answered the young ladies, 'certainly not. Hitherto, mamma, I think you have communicated with these sort of people through papa's steward.'—'And it is not my intention to make any exception for the man whom Barbara has chosen to connect herself with,' added Lady Brassford.

"This is quite in keeping with Lady Brassford's conduct," answered Lady Milton; "but seriously, my dear, you are now arrived at an age when you ought to look out for a wife: it is my anxious desire, as well as your father's wish, that you should, ere long, be happily settled; your manners, your high character, your person and your prospects—"

"I believe the last will have the greatest influence;—that is the touchstone; and I am not so foolish as to suppose that I have been noticed from any other motive than for my prospects. The broad acres of Milton Park are the great lure, *quant à moi, j'y suis pour bien peu de chose*."

"You do yourself great injustice," rejoined Lady

Milton, "and judge much too severely of our sex: surely you do not think all women so selfish, so mercenary?"

"Not all, certainly!" answered Herbert; "but I have met with so many instances of matrimonial misery, arising from this cause; I have witnessed so few happy unions among the *habitués* of the fashionable world, that you cannot be surprised at my want of confidence."

"But why judge of the whole by a few isolated instances;—that is not in unison with your usual impartiality?"

"You cannot deny," answered Colonel Milton, "that among the votaries of fashion,—those, in short, who are devoted to the heartless system of a London life,—establishment is the first and only consideration. The temper, disposition, and character of a man,—nay, indeed, the very intellect, is a secondary object, provided his fortune is large, and he can make good settlements. What do the joys of a happy home and domestic comfort weigh in the scale against an opera-box, the run of Almack's, and the *entrée* to the Duke of Buxton's parties. The *marito*, or rather *patito*, may amuse himself with Vauxhall, Sadler's Wells, or whitebait parties to Greenwich; he may go any where, in short, but to the same place with his wife; unless, indeed, it be for the purpose of paying her losses at *écarté*. By-the-by," added Herbert, "those water-parties will have lost half their merit in the eyes of some wives, and a few elder sons, when the danger of shooting London Bridge is removed."

"But why always dwell on the gloomy side of the prospect?" replied Lady Milton; "surely you have sufficient knowledge of the world to be more wise and fortunate in your choice? You might fix—"

"Suppose I had already fixed—irrevocably fixed!" answered Herbert, interrupting his mother.

Lady Milton instantly perceived by her son's manner and tone of voice, that he was about to make that avowal of his sentiments, for which she had so long and patiently waited—a confession which would at once confirm her apprehensions respecting Emily, or set them at rest for ever. Determining, however, neither to betray her alarm or anxiety, she replied, with an assumed air of indifference,

"Some Spanish beauty, I suppose;—some descendant of the Abencerages?"

"No, my dear mother," rejoined Herbert, "you need not wander so far as the banks of the Genil. I can tell you of a person on the borders of the Thames, who unites all the virtues and beauties,—nay, indeed, some of the persecutions of that ill-fated race, in conjunction with all the perfections of the fairest, the best, of our Island."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Milton, with apparent carelessness. "What! scarcely a week in England, not a soul in town, and already in love! Why, my dear, you appear to have adopted the decision and promptitude of the hero under whom you have served;—are you equally repaid in your conquests? But I am curious to know who it can be? You have seen no one since your return?"

"True," answered her son; "I have seen no one since my arrival; but do you imagine that before I quitted England—?"

"Oh! some old flirt!" exclaimed Lady Milton, with forced gayety: "the idea of such Gothic constancy never entered my head."

"Do not judge so very lightly of my character? Do you suppose that a few years' absence can have shaken my affections? Do you suppose that I can have so easily forgotten her, whose equal I never beheld; of whose disinterested affection I cannot doubt; and who, I have reason to flatter myself, has refused the most splendid, the noblest alliance, on my account?"

"Who can this paragon be?" rejoined Lady Milton.

"However," added her Ladyship, with much earnestness, "I entertain such perfect reliance on your taste and prudence, that I am convinced it can be no one of whom your father and I shall not approve."

"My taste," rejoined Herbert, "must meet with your approbation: my prudence will, however, I fear, sink in your estimation, when I declare that this person is no other than Miss Manby."

"Miss Manby!" exclaimed Lady Milton, with a tone of voice which plainly evinced her emotion.

"Yes!" replied Colonel Milton with a deep sigh, as if

his heart were relieved from some heavy oppression by this avowal ;—" yes, it is indeed the foster-child of that unhappy and injured man, to whom my father has shown such singular and unceasing animosity."

" Then my apprehensions have been too well founded!" answered Lady Milton ;—" it is, indeed, most unfortunate."

" Unfortunate!" retorted Herbert ; " surely you cannot lament that my affections should be engaged by one so worthy of your esteem and admiration! Unfortunate!" continued he with increasing warmth and enthusiasm. " Is she not beautiful and unaffected, and virtuous as she is lovely and unassuming? Is she not acknowledged to be one of the most accomplished and amiable young women in London? Has public opinion, that severe and inexorable judge, ever whispered a thought against her principles or conduct? Has not her hand been sought by young men of the first, the noblest families? And if such a consideration as money can weigh in your mind, or that of my father, has she not an independent fortune, sufficient, amply sufficient, for both our wants, without our becoming a burthen on my father's liberality?"

" Talk not of money," rejoined Lady Milton, ere her son had concluded,—" that is one of the last considerations in the present instance."

" What, then, can be your objection?" exclaimed Herbert, with increasing eagerness and anxiety. " Does she not unite every virtue, every amiable quality, which can be conducive to the honour of my family and my own happiness?" And then taking his mother's hand, he added: " Have I not heard you declare, that had it been the will of Heaven to have spared my sister, your greatest pride would have been to have seen her resemble Miss Manby in mind and person? Ah, then! if it has pleased Providence to deprive you of one child, why, why reject this opportunity of replacing her by one who evinces every virtue and perfection which you could desire in a daughter?"

Much affected by her son's passionate avowal of his deep-rooted admiration for Emily, as well as by his appeal to her own feelings, Lady Milton continued some mo-

ments in silence. At length, wiping away the tears which were fast falling from her eyes, she said :

" Alas ! my child, my affection for you, my dread lest your future happiness should be embittered by disappointment, add poignancy to my feelings. True, most true is it, that were I to consult my own inclinations alone, most gladly would I encourage and promote your attachment to Miss Manby : I know no young woman so worthy of you — no one of whose conduct and disposition I entertain so good an opinion : but, alas ! what avails my approbation, what can my wishes weigh against your father's resolutions ? You are acquainted with his detestation to the name of Manby, and I dare not conceal from you my conviction that he will never consent to your union with Emily."

" Not when he is assured of her perfections ! Not when he ascertains that the happiness, nay the very existence, of his only son depends on his sanction !"

" I dare not flatter you with the most trifling hope," rejoined Lady Milton : " it would be an act of cruelty, were I to conceal from you a moment longer the just ground of my apprehensions. Indeed," added her Ladyship, " bitterly do I condemn myself for having so long neglected to warn you of my fatal presentiments. Before your departure for Spain, I entertained strong suspicions of your attachment to Miss Manby ; but as you were on the point of quitting England, and as I had the utmost confidence in your friendship—"

" Friendship !" exclaimed Herbert, " that is a most cutting word from you, my dear mother ; say, rather, my devoted respect and filial love."

" Both—all, my dear boy !" replied Lady Milton, affectionately pressing the hand of her son. " But I adopt that word, feeling convinced that although the strongest ties of blood and affection may unite parents and children, unless friendship, mutual friendship, also exist, there can be no reciprocal confidence ; and without confidence, no real love. In the hour of happiness let me feel myself in full possession of your filial attachment ; in the hour of sorrow and necessity look on me as your first, your dearest friend. Be to me in prosperity a tender son ; in

adversity a dear-loved brother ;—such is the footing I would ever be upon with my children. Then I shall feel proud of being your parent, for then also I shall feel certain of your confidence.”

“Then,” replied Herbert fervently, “you have been, and ever will be, my friend—my more than mother ! And,” continued he, “if until this time I have refrained from imparting my secret, my only motive was that I might first ascertain the stability of my own affections, as well as the nature of Miss Manby’s sentiments, of which, I can assure you, I was utterly ignorant when I quitted England ;—nay, indeed, I then supposed she would have become the wife of Lord Henry ere the lapse of many weeks.”

“You need not offer any excuse for having hitherto concealed your sentiments from me,” answered Lady Milton kindly : “whatever might have been the cause of your silence, your motives were, I have no doubt, both honourable and reasonable : but,” added her Ladyship, “I beg you will consider, with deep attention, what I am about to communicate ; and for your own sake, as well as for that of Miss Manby, abandon all farther pursuit of this hopeless passion.”

“Never !” exclaimed Herbert, “but with my life ! Were there a single reasonable ground for the objections which you have to urge, I would yield implicit obedience to your advice ; but it is more than cruel to offer up my future happiness as a sacrifice at the altar of the most unnatural hatred which ever entered into the breast of man !”

“Calm this impassioned agitation,” rejoined Lady Milton ; “and forget not, my dear child, that your obedience to your parents is the first, the highest duty towards your God and yourself !”

“So long as there are just and reasonable motives for demanding obedience ; but—”

“It is not my wish to enter into any argument upon a question of this nature,” said Lady Milton, interrupting her son ; “you have hitherto been the comfort, the pride of my existence : I might address to you the flattering compliment applied by our venerable Monarch to one of his sons—‘He is a model of truth, honour, and integrity ; he never caused me a moment’s pain or uneasiness in his

life ; and when I look at him, I feel proud that I am a parent.' ”

Herbert, much affected by his mother's kindness, felt ashamed of his violence, and remained silent. Lady Milton then added—“ Having, within the last year, accidentally discovered from your friend Sidney, that your attachment to Miss Manby was not utterly extinct, and having farther drawn from Mrs. Walden sufficient hints to justify my suspicions of a reciprocal constancy on the part of Miss Manby, I forthwith determined to consult your father on the subject.”

“ Did you then make known to him my attachment ? ”

“ Listen, and you shall judge of the method I adopted. In the first place, I ventured to suggest that you were now arrived at an age when it might be desirable, as an only son, for you to settle in life ; I commended your prudence, your good sense, and correct conduct, as well adapted for a married life. I then requested his opinion on the points which he might consider essential either as to the rank, fortune, and disposition of a daughter-in-law. Lastly, I hinted at your being on intimate terms with Miss Manby, whom I mentioned as combining every quality which could be desired ; and, in short, that she had rejected the offer of an alliance with one of the noblest families in England, as I suspected on your account.”

“ What was my father's reply ? ” demanded Herbert, with the greatest eagerness.

“ A few days previous to your return,” rejoined Lady Milton, opening her letter case, “ this answer reached me : read, and judge for yourself.”

Herbert, with a trembling hand took the letter from his mother, and after turning over the formal, precise epistle, which announced Sir Herbert's immediate return, read the following brief passage relative to himself :—

“ In reply to your interrogations touching the expediency of my son's selecting a wife, I beg to say that I am strongly averse to the system of young men marrying at such an early period in life ; yet, as such an arrangement appears desirable to you, I shall withdraw my objections. You have, then, my authority to consent to his union with any young woman whose disposition, principles, and fa-

mily, are amiable, correct, and respectable. Rank, though desirable, is not essential; and fortune, though worthy of consideration, is not absolutely necessary: my solicitor in London being furnished with proper instructions how to proceed in all pecuniary matters, it is superfluous to enlarge on that head. As to the young woman to whom you allude, I will hear nothing; moreover, I strictly forbid you to repeat her name again, and command you to inform my son, that unless he forthwith discontinue all intercourse with that person, he will draw inevitable ruin on himself, and call forth my eternal displeasure."

"Good God!" exclaimed Herbert, as he concluded this brief exposition of his father's sentiments; "can it be possible that he can persist in his animosity from generation to generation? Whence this unnatural rancour, this almost inhuman hatred without even a word of explanation?"

"It appears not less extraordinary to me than to yourself," answered Lady Milton, "and I am much inclined to suspect that some secret enemy both to yourself and Emily has poisoned your father's mind against her. My suspicions have indeed been awakened in a quarter which for the present I shall not communicate; but for God's sake! be on your guard!"

"What enemy can I have who would be base enough to calumniate Miss Manby? And yet," said he, "it must be so: my father is a good and just man, incapable of continuing this unholy rancour against the foster-child of the unhappy Major. When he sees her—when he hears the opinion of the world—when he ascertains more explicitly your high sentiments, his eyes will be opened; he must relent! his prejudices must give way before the conviction of her virtues; he will not then refuse—he cannot have the cruelty to blast my happiness for ever!"

"Though I dare not flatter you with any prospect of success," replied Lady Milton, "yet I will exert all my influence to convince him of his error; I will use every possible argument to obtain his consent: in the mean time, tell me if you have declared your sentiments, or entered into any engagements with Miss Manby?"

"Neither, most certainly!" answered Herbert; "it

would have been an ill method of repaying your confidence in me, had I taken such a step without your knowledge or consent; and as to contracting arrangements, such is my opinion of Emily, that I do not believe she would ever consent to such a measure, unless I appeared before her armed at least with your approbation. I will fairly avow that she has been made acquainted with my attachment to her: the Baroness having, during my absence, and without my knowledge or authority, communicated a secret which I imagined was unknown to all but Sidney and myself."

"Pursue the same prudent line of conduct," rejoined Lady Milton, "and, if possible, avoid throwing yourself in her way until your father's return; and if you should meet, prevent, if possible, any farther declaration of your feelings."

"I have understood that it is Miss Manby's intention to pass the winter with the Lymingtons: the probability of our meeting is therefore very slight; should, however, such a circumstance take place, do not expect too much of me. Consider the duration of my attachment, and the length of time which has elapsed since I saw her; but more than all, that the destinies of my future life depend on her."

"I can well imagine the difficulty of your position; therefore, I will exact no promise;—all I entreat is, that you will avoid compromising either yourself or Miss Manby. Your submission, your forbearance, will give me stronger grounds for pleading in your favour, and to you greater claims to your father's indulgence. I will not conceal from you," added Lady Milton, "that the happiest day of my existence will be that which sees you united to Miss Manby; my greatest pride, to possess two such children."

It was not until the arrival of the travellers at the summit of one of the most romantic and lovely hills in Devonshire, commanding a view of the valley in which was situated Milton Park, that Herbert was aroused from the reverie in which he had been plunged by this conversation.

"Look, Herbert!" exclaimed Lady Milton, as her eye first caught the sight of the village spire, contiguous to the mansion; "there is Milton; there, amidst that dark

mass of forest trees, stands the house, which, with the greater portion of the surrounding estates, will one day be your property!"

"May Heaven remove my right of possession to the most distant period!" replied Herbert, as he lifted up his eyes to gaze upon the lovely prospect, which spread itself for many miles before them.

The moderate pace of the postilions, as they relaxed their speed to descend the steep declivity, gave the young Colonel a few moments' leisure to examine the fair scene which stretched itself at his feet. It was not without mixed sensations of curiosity and delight that he examined the fertile tract of country, hills, glens, and water, which, in the course of nature, were destined, at some future period, to become his inheritance. The place had an additional charm in his mind, from its having been, during several centuries, in the possession of his ancestors, one of whom had rebuilt the mansion in the reign of Elizabeth; but his pleasure and pride augmented, when he recollected, that although the estate had been for a period alienated from his family, it had been again restored to them through the industry, merit, and exertions of his own father, who had continued in India for a much greater length of time than he had intended, for the sole purpose of ransoming the hereditary property from the hands of its possessor; and who, fortunately for Sir Herbert, had been obliged to dispose of his purchase, at a price, as it afterwards appeared, much below its intrinsic value.

Notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, nature still retained all the glowing loveliness of its autumnal garb, the beauty of which was heightened by the brightness of a clear, unclouded sky, and gleaming sun, whose beams danced playfully on a hundred sparkling rills, or were reflected from the ruddy projections of the sandstone-rocks, which here and there peeped through the interstices of the surrounding woods. Encircled on three sides by successive ranges of lofty hills, clothed almost to their summits with wood, lay the fertile valley in which was situated the old manor house, the rich, monotonous fertility of the vale itself being relieved and broken by alternate

undulation of dale, dingle, and upland, and from its being indented ever and anon by the projections of the neighbouring woodlands, or intersected by the ravines, which here and there stretched themselves to a considerable distance across the lower grounds. Of the mansion itself, the quaint and slender octangular chimneys and piqued gables, with here and there the glittering of a casement, as the rays of the sun darted on its panes, gleaming like the burners of a lighthouse, were alone visible from amidst the mass of lofty and majestic timber in which it was embosomed. The features of nature were rendered more picturesque from the green foliage having been partially scattered and torn by the winds from the gnarled and distorted limbs of the trees, and which had given place to a bright clothing of the most beautiful red and golden tints, here and there relieved by the more rural appearance of the lofty cedars and firs, which raised their dark and graceful branches above the scathed heads of their deciduous brethren. On the top of one of the loftiest hills, which shielded the valley from the northern blast, where masses of black and gray stone exposed their broken and rugged points from amidst the broom and heather which clothed its summit, a considerable body of water appeared to take its rise. After augmenting its currents by the addition of several tributary springs, the stream collected itself in a deep basin, encircled by huge masses of stone, overhung with beech, huckery, and sycamore: after reposing awhile, as if to acquire greater energy to pursue its course, the torrent rushed with tremendous force between the high and impending jaws of two lofty rocks, which reared themselves in the most fantastic forms on either side; then it cast itself in one undivided sheet, rushing over a rocky ledge to the depth of nearly sixty feet, into a dark chasm, where for a short time it disappeared, concealed by the stems and still remaining foliage of the neighbouring plantations. From the bottom of the chasm arose a light and curling vapour, partly hid from the sight by the buttresses of a single arched bridge thrown across the abyss, which, from the extreme lightness of its structure, had all the appearance of being poised in air, or, at all events, fully entitled to the appellation of the "Flying Bridge;" to which, as

well as to the chasm beneath, was attached a family tradition of considerable interest. At the foot of the fall, the still beautiful verdure of the herbage and evergreen scrubs richly contrasted with the barren and stern appearance of the distant downs, but more particularly with the rugged and broken asperities of the layers of rock, whose rugged and overhanging ribs seemed alone prevented from overwhelming the glen beneath, by the chains of ivy and other parasitical plants which clung to and bound their sides. From this spot the waters of the cascade glided amidst the level grounds towards the centre of the park, decreasing in velocity, but proportionably augmenting in width, until the enlargements of its banks gave it the appearance of a broad and graceful mere, on the borders of which stood the mansion itself. Hence it continued its course southward down the valley, its progress being traced by the sparkling wheels of numerous water-mills, or marked by the gleams of light shooting from under the arches of some distant bridge.

The travellers had scarcely arrived at the bottom of the declivity, which brought them near the antiquated iron-gates of the lodge, when their surprise was excited by the appearance of a large body of the tenantry, who had assembled for the purpose of welcoming their arrival; and it was with a heart overflowing with pride and delight, that Herbert took possession of the ancient abode of his forefathers.

To R R Carr!

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