

The Woman of Colour

By Anonymous

Transcription by Students and Staff of Marymount University, Greg Gillespie

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THE
WOMAN OF COLOUR,
A TALE.

"He finds his brother guilty of a skin not colour'd like his own."

COWPER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LIGHT AND SHADE," "THE AUNT
AND THE NEICE," "EBERSFIELD ABBEY," &C.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PACKET THE FIRST

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD TO MRS. MILBANKE

At Sea, on board the **.**

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LAUNCHED on a new world, what can have power to console me for leaving the scenes of my infancy, and the friend of my youth? Nothing but the consciousness of acting in obedience to the commands of my departed father. Oh, dearest Mrs. Milbanke! your poor girl is every minute wishing for your friendly guidance, your maternal counsel, your sober judgment! - Every day, as it takes me farther from Jamaica, as it brings me nearer to England, heightens my fears of the future, and makes my presaging heart sink within itself! You charged me to confide to you its every throb; and till it ceases to beat, it will turn with the warmest affection to my earliest and best friend; my governess, my instructress! - and I cannot help asking why am I sent from her? why was it necessary for Olivia Fairfield to tempt the untried deep, and untried friends? - But I check these useless interrogatories, these vain regrets, by recollecting that it was the will of him who always studied the happiness of his child.

My dear father, doatingly fond as he was of his Olivia, saw her situation in a point of view which distressed his feeling heart. The illegitimate offspring of his slave could never be considered in the light of equality by the English planters. Such is their prejudice, such is the wretched state of degradation to which my unhappy fellow-creatures are sunk in the western hemisphere. We are considered, my dear Mrs. Milbanke, as an inferior race, but little removed from the brutes, because the Almighty Maker of all-created beings has tinged our skins with jet instead of ivory! - I say our, for though the jet has been faded to the olive in my own complexion, yet I am not ashamed to acknowledge ym affinity with the swarthiest negro that was ever brought from Guinea's coast! - All, all are brethren, children of one common Parent!

The soul of my mother, though shrouded in a sable covering, broke through the gloom of night, and shone celestial in her sparkling eyes! - Sprung from a race of native kings and heroes, with folded hands, and tearful eyes, she saw herself torn from all the endearing ties of affinity, and relative intercourse! A gloomy, yet a proud sorrow, filled her indignant breast; and when exhibited on the shores of my native island, the symmetry and majesty of her form, the inflexible haughtiness of her manner, attracted the attention of Mr. Fairfield. He purchased the youthful Marcia; his kindness, his familiarity, his humanity, soon gained him an interest in her grateful heart! She loved her master! She had not learned the art of concealing her sentiments, she knew not that she was doing wrong in indulging them, and she yielded herself to her passion, and fell victim of gratitude! - But as her understanding became enlightened, and her manners improved, she was eager for information; my father yielded it to her from the rich stores of his own capacious mind; and while he poured into her attentive and docile ear, those truths for which the soul of Marcia panted, he made her start with horror at the crime of which she had been innocently guilty: and the new Christian pointed her finger at him, who, educated under the influence of the Gospel, lived in direct opposition to its laws!

My father felt the justice of the reproof; for though his offence was considered as a venial error by all with whom he lived, yet his conscience was not so easily appeased. He knew that the difference of climate, or of colour, made no difference in the crime; and that if the seducer of innocence was always guilty, the case must be greatly aggravated where benefit and kindnesses were the weapons employed against untutored ignorance and native simplicity. Marcia was not "almost but altogether a Christian!" - with the knowledge of her crime she abjured a continuance in it; with tears and sighs she confessed her love for her betrayer, at the

same time that she deplored her fall from virtue! The scholar taught her master - The wild and uncivilized African taught a lesson of noble self-denial and self-conquest to the enlightened and educated European.

Mr. Fairfield dared not combat a resolution which appeared to him to be almost a command of heaven. He loved Marcia with fervour; but the pride of the man, the quick feeling of the European, the prejudices which he had imbibed in common with his countrymen, forbade his making this affectionate and heroic girl his wife. Marcia's was a strong soul, but it inhabited a weak tenement of clay. In giving birth to me she paid the debt of nature and went down to that grave, where the captive is made free!

You will ask me why I recapitulate these events? events which are so well known to you. It is that I love to dwell on the character of my mother; it is that here I see the distributions of Providence are equally bestowed, and that it is culture not capacity, which the negro wants! It was from my father that I adopted this opinion of my mother - I caught the enthusiasm of his manner and learned to venerate the memory of this sable heroine (for a heroine I must call her) from the time that my mind has been enabled to distinguish between vice and virtue.

My father saw the sensibility of my disposition; he saw that it was daily wounded, at witnessing the wrongs of my fellow-beings; his wishes, and his principles, would have led him to reform abuses, but his health was daily declining, and he could not give the tone of morals to an island; he could not adopt a line of conduct which would draw on him the odium of all his countrymen: he contented himself, therefore, with seeing that slaves on his estate were well kept and fed, and treated with humanity, - but their minds were suffered to remain in the dormant state in which he found them!

I see the generous intention of my father's will; I see that he meant at once to secure to his child a proper protector in a husband, and to place her far from scenes which were daily hurting her sensibility and the pride of human nature! - But, ah! respected Mrs. Milbanke! in guarding against these evils may he not have opened the way to those which are still more dangerous for your poor Olivia?

I sometimes think, that had my dear parent left me a decent competence, I could have placed myself in some tranquil nook of my native island, and have been happily and usefully employed in meliorating the sorrows of the poor slaves who came within my reach, and in pouring into their bruised souls the sweet consolations of religious hope! - But my father willed it otherwise - Lie still, then, rebellious and repining heart!

Mrs. Milbanke, I yet behold your tearful eye - I yet hear your fond adieu - I yet feel your fervent embrace! The recollection is almost insupportable; for the present, I lay down my pen!

IN CONTINUATION

WAS my mind in any other state, I could be much amused and entertained by the novel customs of a ship's company, and the novel situation (to me) of a sea voyage. How wonderful is the construction of this vessel, which is now ploughing its way on the ocean! but how much more wonderful that Almighty Pilot, which steers it in safety through the horrors of the deep!

Mrs. Honeywood is all that your skill in physiognomy predicted. Separated from my beloved Mrs. Milbanke, I question if I could have met with a preferable *Compagnon du Voyage*. I fear that her native country will not restore her health; but I dare not hint an idea of the sort to her watchful and attentive son. Honeywood possesses all the enthusiasm of your Olivia; and when I hear his sanguine hopes of his mother's recovery, and his visionary schemes of long years of happiness to be enjoyed in her highly-prized society, I sigh with prophetic sadness, and, looking on the colour of my robes, I remember such was the fallacy of my own wishes!

Mrs. Honeywood seems perfectly acquainted with the particulars of my father's will, and frequently and studiously refers to my intended marriage with my cousin. If you will not accuse me of vanity, my dearest madam, I should be almost tempted to fancy, that she sometimes wished to remind her son of this; and yet there is nothing to fear for him. An unportioned girl of my colour, can never be a dangerous object; but in the habits of intimacy which our present situation naturally produces, confidence usurps the place of common-place politeness, and I insensibly talk to Honeywood as I should do to a brother. Had his familiarity any thing of boldness in it, was there any thing assuming in his manners, my sensitive heart would shrink, and I should then feel as reserved and constrained as I now do the reverse.

IN CONTINUATION

YOU bid me tell you every thing that should occur; and, in the absence of events and incidents, I must give you conversations and reflections, even at the hazard of appearing in the character of an egotist. I am just returned to my own little cabin, after a pretty long tête-à-tête with Mrs. Honeywood; I call it a tête-à-tête for though my faithful Dido formed the third of the party, yet her half-broken language did not bear a principal share in the conversation; but, as you well know, she will be heard on all occasions when she deems it right to speak. Honeywood had retired to study; he usually passes a great portion of the morning amongst his books: and that he reads with advantage and improvement, a more superficial observer than your Olivia would soon discover. He possesses a discriminating judgment, and a fine taste; and, without attempting at wit or humour, he never fails to please when he wishes it.

But to return to my proposed detail: - I was seated with my drawing implements before me, finishing a little sketch which I had taken from the Fairfield PLantation a few days before I quitted it; Mrs. Honeywood sat opposite to me, knitting; while Dido, ever officiously happy and busy about her "Missee," was standing behind the sofa (which she had drawn towards the table), and very assiduously watching for the colours I wanted, and rubbing them on the slab, pretending to be occupied, in order to retain her station; and at intervals I felt her removing and replacing the combs of my hair, and smoothing it gently down with her hands, then looking over my shoulder, marking the progress of my pencil, and exclaiming, "Ah, my goody Heaven! if my dear Missee be not making the own good Masseur's plantation, and all of dis little bit of brush, and dis bit of paper!"

Mrs. Honeywood lifted her head; looking at us through her spectacles, "I would give something to be able to take dat brush and dat bit of paper, Dido," said she, laughingly imitating her, "and paint your lady and yourself, as you are now placed before my eyes."

Dido grinned, while Mrs. Honeywood still looking at me, said, -

"I never view you on that seat, with Dido standing in ehr place of attendance, without figuring you in my imagination as some great princess going over to her betrothed lord."

"Iss, iss, my Missee be de queen of Indee, going over to marry wid de prince in England," said Dido, nodding very significantly.

"Such alliances do not very often turn out happily," said I, sighing.

"And how should they?" asked Mrs. Honeywood; "A total ignorance of persons can indeed be, in some measure, set aside by the painter, but the manners, the customs of different countries are so widely different, and there ought to be so many corresponding traits of character, to form any thing like comfort in the connubial state, that it is my wonder when any one of these matches turns out merely tolerable."

"You are looking grave, Miss Fairfield."

"Indeed, my dear madam, I am; and have I not cause? My manners, my pursuits, my whole deportment, may be stranger and disagreeable to him whom I have pledged myself to receive as a husband! and further, - oh, madam! - my person may disgust him!"

"No, not so, Miss Fairfield: your sensitive mind, and delicate imagination, lead you to see things in too strong a light."

"No light can be too strong to convey to me a knowledge of that wretchedness which would be my portion, were I to be beheld with disgust and abhorrence by the man whom I have sworn to receive as my husband!"

"Sworn, my dear girl?"

"Yes, madam, sworn!"

"You astonish me! - and could Mr. Fairfield, could your father extort such an oath, such a blind submission from you? - you, whose understanding he must have seen superior to the generality of your sex, - you, whose judgement could only have elected where it had approved!"

"My father acted from the best of motives. If he erred, madam; if the sequel could prove that he has erred, give him credit, I conjure you, for the best intentions; his whole soul recoiled at the idea of leaving me in Jamaica, or of uniting me to any of the planters there: for to them he knew that his money would be the only bait. In England, in his native country, he deemed, that a more liberal, a more distinguishing spirit had gone abroad;" - (dear Mrs. Milbanke, I thought a sceptical expression overspread the marked countenance of Mrs. Honeywood) - "a connexion with his own family, with the son of a dearly beloved sister, was what his most sanguine hopes rested on for the security of his Olivia's happiness!"

"Your father knew this nephew?"

"No, madam, only by report; and that that report was very liberal in praise of his accomplishments and virtues, I need not say, when my father resolved to hazard the happiness of his child to his care. Mr. Merton, the husband of my deceased aunt, is, as you may have heard, a wealthy merchant, and has maintained a character of strict honour and probity. Mrs. Merton died within the last two years; she always spoke highly of her husband, and expressed the most fervent fondness for her son, Augustus, whom she frequently styled, in her letters to Jamaica, the 'image of her dear brother.' It was easy to perceive that Augustus was the mother's favourite; and I fancy, that my father surmised that the elder young man ranked highest in Mr. Merton's esteem. Indeed, my dear madam, I must be tiring you with my details, and I frequently think, that I can talk as coolly, and with as little mauvaise honte of this intended alliance as if I was a mere state machine! - conveyed over the water at the instigation of political contrivance; yet believe me, my dear madam, I have a sense of my sex's more exclusive feeling delicacy. My heart revolts, it shrinks within me, as every day draws me nearer to the scene of my trial; and the anxiety with which I, at some moments await the period, is frequently changing into a desolating revulsion of every feeling, when I recollect that I must appear in so very humiliating a situation when I reach England!"

"No, not humiliating," said Mrs. Honeywood, "for every generous mind will feel for the peculiarity of it, and exert every art to win you to self-confidence. You have great powers of exertion, Miss Fairfield; your father knew the strength of your mind; he knew that it could bear itself up in circumstances which would overwhelm half the female world!"

"You are good to embolden me, madam," said I, "my trust is in Him who has promised to strengthen the weak-hearted. I hope the name of Fairfield shall never be disgraced by me."

"I am sure it will not," said Mrs. Honeywood, "but your ingenuousness invites my curiosity; on your side I perfectly understand the terms. You have promised to accept Mr. Augustus Merton as your husband. Has

a similar promise been received on the gentleman's part? not that I mean to infer, that there could be so undiscerning an Englishman found, as to refuse the offered hand off Miss Fairfield!"

"Do not say offered, dear Mrs. Honeywood; it sounds so - so very forward!" She smiled - "Ah, my dear madam, I know you pity me!"

"From the bottom of my heart!" said she with fervour.

"Pittee, no pitted," said Dido; "beauty lady - great deal monies - going marry fine gentleman as soon as she be come to England town; - me don't pitted dear Missee one bit - one bit!" But Dido covered my hands with tears, and kissed it a hundred times, while she said, she did not "pittee Missee one bit - one bit." Her manner affected me; she saw it, and, letting her hands fall on each side of her, she stole out of the cabin. I tried to assume cheerfulness: "I bear with me a dover of nearly sixty thousand pounds," said I, "which is to become the property of my cousin Augustus Merton on his becoming my husband, and taking the name Fairfield, within one month after my arrival in England."

Mrs. Honeywood seemed to look at me with the most painful and quickened attention "but if," said she, "he should, that is, I mean" -

"I know what you mean," said I, smiling; "if Augustus refuses to accept these terms, the whole fortune devolves to his brother, and my maintenance exclusively devolves on him also!"

"Strange and unheard of clause!" said Mrs. Honeywood, rising hastily from her seat, and turning to the window, her back towards me.

"You must see it, as I see it, dear Mrs. Honeywood!" said I, going to her, and taking her hand; "even though you do not see poor Olivia with her father's eyes, he thought that no one could refuse his girl!"

"And on one could, who knew her!" said Mrs. Honeywood, straining me affectionately to her bosom. "Sweetest Miss Fairfield, may your happiness be equal to your virtues! may your cousin properly appreciate your worth!"

"Thank you, - thank you!" returned I, with a voice almost too full for utterance. I then quitted this warm-hearted woman, and hastened to relieve myself, in my usual method, writing to you.

IN CONTINUATION

I HAVE frequently thought, ym dearest friend, that few young men would have resolution to refuse sixty thousand pounds; for the wife would be a very trifling embargo to most of our gay West Indians, - I can speak of the world only as I have seen it. - Mrs. Milkbanke, I do not wish to be uncharitable or harsh in my judgement; but did we not every day see matches made in Jamaica, for which gold was the only inducement? And why do I encourage my overweening expectations - why do I expect my cousin to be different from the rest of his sex? Conscious of my own inferior powers of attraction, to what can I impute his acceptance of my mind? Hope will sometimes whisper, that gratitude will ensure kindness - but the cold feeling which alone springs from a grateful principle - could my warm heart be satisfied with that? - Vain, weak Olivia! go to thy mirror, and ask what is it thou canst expect more?

IN CONTINUATION

WEAK and impotent beings that we are, we know not what we wish, nor what we hope. - I retired last night to my cabin in a frame of mind which I should vainly seek to describe. The conversation which I had with Mrs. Honeywood, had made a forcible impression on my mind. I fancied that I was hastening to England, to be immolated at the shrine of avarice; all the bright prospects of my youth seemed blighted; I was friendless - fatherless - forlorn - journeying towards a land of strangers, who would despise and insult me. Bitter tears coursed each other down my cheeks; I wrung my hands in agony together - my heart sank within me - I had no resolution - no confidence left - I believed myself the most forlorn of human creatures, and I thought that a cessation of being, would be a cessation of misery. Ah! my dear friend, I am proving to you what you have long known, that your Olivia is no heroine! I was awakened from this agonizing trance to the tumultuous waves, which hove the ship with boisterous violence; the wind rattled in the shrouds, and increased in violence with each moment, while at intervals it was drowned by the long and reverberating peals of deep-toned thunder, and my cabin was as frequently illuminated by vivid lightning. There was a noise of bustle and alarm on the deck, and the voice of the sailors was distinguished amidst the horrors of the storm. Dido, shaking with affright and terror, bust into my cabin, -

"Oh, Misse, we be going down - we be going sink in the very, very deep sea!"

Alas! I thought so likewise; and in this hour of real danger I prayed for a deliverance from that death which I believed I could have fearlessly met, nay, had almost courted, the preceding hour. This taught me how very short a progress I had made in self-knowledge, and while Dido rolled herself up and made a sort of pillow at my meet, I tried to collect my thoughts, and to lift up my soul to him who "walketh on the wings of the wind," and to beseech him to give me a patient and contented spirit. The tempest still raged with redoubled violence; a soft tap at my door roused Dido: - "Me be here" was answered by the voice of Honeywood.

"I could not be easy," said he, "without asking after your lady."

"Oh it be very bad terrible storm, sir; me be much fear'd we must go down to the bottom."

"Oh no, not so," said Honeywood, in the most soothing voice; "assure Miss Fairfield, my good Dido, that there is nothing to fear. Tell her I am now come from the deck, where I have been the last two hours; the captain assures me, the storm is abating, and I am now returning to my hammock: pray don't distress Miss Fairfield: I beseech you do not heighten her alarm!"

I heard every word, you find, my dear madam; and so friendly were they, so truly benevolent, and the manner, too, in which they were spoken, that I felt the utmost gratitude for his attention. The interest which he had expressed for me was grateful to my self-love, whilst my fears were allayed by his assurances of our safety. The storm did abate, and your Olivia is snatched from the horrors of the deep. I trust I shall not be forgetful of the mercy of that Being who has been graciously pleased to preserve my life!

IN CONTINUATION

"THEY that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the mercies of the Lord and his wonders in the deep!"

These words have been in my thoughts the whole of this day. The storm still rages in my mind's eye. How fearful, how tremendous - Surely, if "by night an atheist half believes a God," he must hear him, he must see him, in the scene I have so recently witnessed, and a doubt could never more find entrance in his soul!

Honeywood eagerly advanced to me as I made my appearance at breakfast and renewed his inquiries. I felt confused: this confusion seemed infectious; for, as I tried to express my thanks to him for the friendly interest he had evinced for me, he suddenly let go the hand which he had taken, coloured, sighed, and let me take my place in silence. Mrs. Honeywood at this moment appeared, and broke a silence which had succeeded, as if by a mutual inclination, to our first civilities. The first topic was, of course, the recent storm, and the sickly countenance and dimmed eye of the poor invalid, proved that a wakeful night was much to be dreaded for her. She congratulated me on my safety and said, -

"You were very courageous in not quitting your cabin. Fear, in general, renders us all sociable; and I expected every moment to may seen you come to me. I could not pacify Charles till he had gone to you; but I question whether you were much comforted by his assurances of your safety, as he is a fresh-water sailor."

I answered that I was; and Mrs. Honeywood, pursuing the subject, said, - "For myself, I had not much to regret in leaving a world to which an attenuated thread alone holds me!" Her countenance had that patient serenity on it, which gave it an expression which nearly comes up to my idea of celestial, and, though apparently talking to me, I imagined that she meant more particularly to address her son.

"Youth, beauty, talent, virtue, and riches, to be consigned at once to the o'erwhelming wave, would, indeed, be a sad contemplation," said she, "and even where death has long been anticipated, the thoughts of resigning life, by any other than the common lot of humanity, is appalling. If it please the Almighty to let me reach my native shores, I think I can summon fortitude to meet the stroke as a Christian!"

"My dearest mother, rive not my heart!" said Honeywood.

"Charles, you are not philosopher," said Mrs. Honeywood, attempting to smile, as she held out her hand to him; he took it, - never shall I forget with what an expression of love and reverence he held it to his lips in silence, then pressed it to his breast.

"If philosophy is to steel my heart against such feelings as these," said he, wiping off the starting tear with the back of his hand, "my mother, who shall teach it me? But Heaven, in its mercy, will long preserve to me a parent for whom alone I would wish to live!"

"When I am laid in the peaceful tomb, my Charles, your heart shall seek another being, whose life shall be sweetened, as mine long as been, by your cares and attentions. Your mother will be changed for the closer - the yet more endearing tie of wife. With a companion of your own age, whose pursuits are similar to your own, whose mind has been cultivated, and whose principles are good, you are formed, my son, to partake with such a woman the very acmé of human happiness."

The eyes of Honeywood sought mine, for a moment, with an expression which I cannot define; then hastily pressing his hand on his forehead, as if in pain, he rose from his seat, and said -

"Never, never! my dearest madam; you unman me quite!" and left the cabin.

"'Tis always thus," said Mrs. Honeywood; "nothing that I can say will open the dear boy's eyes to my danger; and, with his impetuous, his ardent feelings, I dread for him the shock of an event for which he will not be prepared! Talk to him, for me, my good Miss Fairfield; you have great influence over him; he will listen to you: tell him that he must make up his mind to resign his parent!"

"Alas!" sighed I, "I am ill qualified for such an office, - I that continue to mourn the loss of the best of fathers! - My loss is certain, my dear madam; Mr. Honeywood's is only in prospective - I feel the sad reality - he shudders at the supposition - how then shall I teach him that fortitude which I cannot practise myself? The loss of a parent can never be supplied to a child! - My father was my guide, my counsellor, my friend; he was the impulse of my life; he was the guide of my every action; almost the director of my thoughts! When I lost my father, I lost every thing which could make life desirable; and when poor Honeywood shall lose you, he will then know the wretchedness of my situation!"

IN CONTINUATION

WHERE there is any thing conciliate regard or esteem, how soon do we get attached! I already feel as if I had been known to Mrs. Honeywood all my life, and I regret that when I lose sight of her, and of her amiable son, on our landing, it must be among the chance events of the future, whether we may ever meet again.

I sat for two hours of the last evening on the deck watching the mildly radiant moon, and the thousand sparkling rays which were caused by her shadow on the tranquil ocean; no longer heaving with tumultuous waves as on the preceding night, but peaceful as the translucent lake. Honeywood attached himself to my side, his mother was apprehensive of the night air, and remained in the cabin -

"How still is the water!" said Honeywood; "how bright the lustre of that celestial orb! what a contrast is this scene to that which I last night witnessed in this place!"

"And how doubly are we interested in the beauty of this night from that very contrast which you have remarked!" said I. - "So it is in life, we recover from the dreadful shock of some fearful calamity, to those placid and calm sensations, which such a contemplation as this is calculated to produce: we remember when we have suffered, and we are doubly grateful to Him who has enabled us to endure afflictions, and caused the storm to pass over our heads!"

"You can extract good from every evil," said Honeywood, "morality from every passing occurrence - you can find sermons in stones, and God in every thing!" - He spoke this with enthusiasm. "Indeed, Miss Fairfield, I know of no one like you - you will shame our English ladies - or rather, you are going where your virtues will not be known or appreciated!"

"How am I to understand you?" asked I, willing to take the compliment that my moralizing disposition has extorted as applicable; "how then shall I account for the latter part of your speech without accusing you of vanity? Does Mr. Honeywood imagine that he only has discernment to discover those great and extraordinary virtues which I possess?"

"By no means," said he, answering gravely to my tone of raillery - "by no means; but the superficial characters of our modern females, their frivolous pursuits, their worse than childish conversation - oh! you will soon be sickened of them; and, if I do not mistake your disposition, the sensitive plant will then recoil, and never expand itself again, till drawn out by an assimilating look, or spark of sentiment!"

"Oh, what a fearful prospect!" said I, still affecting to trifle - "Am I then so very fastidious a being, Mr. Honeywood? Believe me, I look not for perfection in an imperfect state; my own faults are great and manifold and, I trust, I can behold those of my fellow-mortals with charity, and make allowances in proportion!"

"That you can do all, and more than this, I am well satisfied," said Honeywood; "but if your heart is not interested, I mean if no kindred emotion - that is - I believe," said he, "like many others who set out in discussing a subject, I have confused myself, and want somebody to explain my own meaning."

He then reverted to his mother's health, a topic which never fails to interest.

"When I consider," said he, "that her illness may be in some measure traced to a three years' residence in your warm climate (for though the latent seeds of the disease might have been in her constitution, yet it was there that they first burst forth), and that she undertook the voyage merely on my account, in order to gather up the wreck of a shattered fortune for my use, I know not how to estimate the sacrifice; and that affection which I feel for her, tells me that the independence which she has secured to me, has been too dearly earned for me to enjoy it, if bought with the price of her health, perhaps her life!" - He paused a moment as if to recover the power of articulation -

"On the other hand," said he, "I remember the anxiety with which this dear parent passed the lingering days previous to her setting out for the West Indies. I was brought up to the prospect of inheriting a large fortune, and was then too old to enter into either of the professions with advantage to myself. - She had seen enough of the world to know that a proud and a sensitive spirit struggling with adversity, was a most pitiable situation. My mother has had her share of sorrows - My father was not able to appreciate her worth or her uncomplaining fortitude - 'tis a sad story, my dear Miss Fairfield, one day you may perhaps hear it - for I cannot, I will not think," said he, taking my hand "that our acquaintance shall cease with this voyage!"

"I hope not," said I.

"Say it shall not," said he, with earnestness.

"We can speak with certainty of nothing," said I, "and you must remember, that from the moment when I set my foot on your land of liberty, I yield up my independence - my uncle's family are then to be the disposers of my future fate; and, though they can never teach my heart to forego its nature, or my mind its principles, yet in all irrelevant points, and in all local opinions, I must resolve to yield myself to their guidance!"

"If such be your determination; if you thus at once resolve to give up the liberty of action - farewell for ever when we separate!" said Honeywood with some asperity: "we shall never be allowed to prosecute our acquaintance with our interesting companion!"

"And why should you think so? why should you suppose that the family of Mr. Merton was illiberal or unjust?"

"I judge by myself - a fair standard you will allow," said he: "and I know that if I was in the place of these Mertons (you observe, my dear friend, he was too delicate to refer to Augustus only) I should be a monopolizer of the time, the conversation, even the looks of Miss Fairfield!" He reddened as he spoke these words; he probably thought he had said too much - I felt that he had, however - and sought Mrs. Honeywood.

IN CONTINUATION

I AM not without my sex's vanity, dearest Mrs. Milbanke, perhaps indeed I have a larger portion of it than generality, from the knowledge that I owe nothing to the score of my personal attractions; yet I must be blind if I did not perceive that Honeywood beholds me with a more than common degree of partiality. Were I a romantic beauty, in the noble compassion of my nature I should say that it would give me pleasure, on his account, when our voyage was ended - but I am not so far gone as this. I know that the charms of mind divested of a prepossessing exterior, can only captivate the judgment, not mislead the heart; and that a preference originating in reason, will be referable to reason for its extinction.

Honeywood is certainly a very estimable young man; I like his conversation extremely; and without feeling any thing more for him than I should for an amiable brother, I confess that I shall be much mortified if Augustus Merton is not a little like him in sentiment and principle. In this case, although you may laugh at me for such an idea, yet I really think the miniature of Augustus has been serviceable to me. When I have felt a more than common interest for HONEYWOOD, I have retired to my cabin, and spent some moments in contemplating the inanimate resemblance of him to whom I am affianced. I never behold the picture without emotion - the likeness to my dear father is so very striking, although the countenance is much handsomer, and there is a speaking sensibility in the eye which rivets my attention; for there I fondly imagine I behold all that I seek for of mind and sentiment in my destined husband - and yet perhaps, my dear madam, I do but flatter myself, as the artist has flattered his employer.

IN CONTINUATION

IT is the sweet bard of Avon, I believe who so well expresses an idea which runs in my head, but which my treacherous memory cannot clothe in his happy words. It is the dreadful pause between the expectation and the accomplishment of an apprehended event. Your better memory will recollect the lines from my remote reference, and you will know the inference I draw. A few days more, and we shall reach England. - Ah! the hopes and the fears of this beating heart.

That period will surely fix the fiat of my destiny. - I shall have your prayers - I shall offer my own; - and shall I not be encompassed by the guardian spirit of my father? - Oh! if it be permitted from the realms of bliss, to look down on these terrestrial abodes, the thought of a father's taking cognizance of the actions of his child, must infuse new courage into her soul!

IN CONTINUATION

WE are already in the Bristol Channel, and in a few hours shall expect to anchor in Kingroad. As Mrs. Honeywood heard this intelligence from our captain, a bright beam of pleasure illuminated her faded countenance. Dido rubbed her hands, and skipped about the cabin in ecstasy; and, as if she expected to do instantaneous execution, she had, within five minutes, put her large gold rings into her ears, which had been carefully laid in cotton during the voyage. I felt the blood forsake my cheeks, my legs trembled, and, standing at the moment, I was obliged to catch the arm of Mrs. Honeywood's chair, to keep me from falling. Honeywood saw my emotion, he rose hastily, and, placing me a chair, quitted the cabin.

IN CONTINUATION

WE are anchored, my beloved friend; already have the eyes of your Olivia rested on the shores of England! We are impatient of delay; and Honeywood has adjusted matters for us to row to shore this evening. The boat is already in view.

Adieu, my dearest Mrs. Milbanke.

IN CONTINUATION

Bush Tavern, Bristol.

I MOMENTARILY expect Mr. Merton; figure to yourself the nature of my present feeling. I write in order to divert my mind; for, to dwell on my own thoughts during this period of suspense, is agony. We came to this place last evening. Mrs. Honeywood, her son, and servant, myself, and Dido. What an evening it was! Surely nothing was ever so serenely beautiful; surely, nothing was ever more romantically picturesque, than the wooded cliffs, and the boldly gigantic rocks, on either side the river, as we swiftly glided along its surface! The moon shone with unclouded brightness; the air was soft and mellow; the nightingales warbled from amidst their leafy coverts; and, at intervals, a French horn and a clarionet breathed forth their shrill tones, softening as they issued from the tremendous heights above our heads; while the soft dashing of the oars, and the sparkling play of the waters in the moonbeam, made up this scene of enchantment. Spite of the conflicting emotions of my mind, I was wrapt in enthusiastic admiration. Mrs. Honeywood enjoyed the scene; while her son fixed his eyes alternately on me and on the water, with an expression of melancholy resignation in his countenance.

When we got nearer to the large and mercantile city of Bristol, - when I could distinguish the "busy hum of men," and could discern the traits of active life which even at the still hour of evening are to be seen on the quay's of this place, my heart seemed to be thrown back upon itself, and I felt that I was entering into a world of strangers. All resolution - all self-confidence was banished with this idea. I leant back in the boat, and sobbed with apprehensive sorrow. Mrs. Honeywood did not observe my emotion, and if her son did, he knew that at such moments as these the voice of consolation cannot be heard.

Honeywood carefully assisted us in landing; a hackney-coach was in waiting: for Mrs. Honeywood, long disused as she has been to any exercise, was incapable of walking the shortest distance. In less than ten minutes, we were set down at this bustling tavern, where the noise, the closeness, and the gloom of the apartments, exceed any thing that I could have imagined. We chilly beings, however, were soon seated around a cheerful fire. Dido walked off with Mrs. Honeywood's maid, in great admiration and surprise at every thing which met her eye; and in the tone and voice of affection, which a fond parent would have used towards a favourite child, Mrs. Honeywood took my hand in hers, and congratulated me on my safe arrival in England.

How grateful is the expression of kindness to the human ear! - "Alas!" thought I, "how do I know if this is not the last time when I shall call forth the sympathetic regard of another?"

As I made this reflection, I lifted her hand to my lips, and while I held it there, I almost bathed it in my tears.

At this moment, the master of the inn entered the room, and respectfully addressing himself to Honeywood, inquired if either lady's name was Fairfield: on being directed towards me, he presented me a letter which he held in his hand.

"This, madam, was left with me by Mr. Merton himself, and he has made daily inquiries concerning the arrival of the *** every day for the last fortnight."

My hand trembled so, that I let the letter drop from between my fingers. Honeywood picked it up, but he was infected by my tremor as he returned it to me. The landlord retired, and I read the following words:

"TO MISS FAIRFIELD."

"My dearest Miss Fairfield! We are waiting your arrival in England with the greatest anxiety; and that you may experience the least possible inconvenience at landing in a strange country, understanding that the ***, in which your passage was taken, is bound for the port of Bristol, Augustus and myself have taken a house at Clifton; and Mrs. George Morton, the wife of my eldest son, has kindly accompanied us from London, in order, if possible, to do away every feeling of embarrassment in your situation. On your landing be kind enough to send a messenger to me, No. - Gloucester-row, Clifton, and half an hour will bring to you, your affectionate relatives.

"I have the honour to be, dearest madam, your obliged friend, and uncle,
"GEORGE MERTON."

A faint sickishness seemed to overcome me as I read this letter: I mechanically threw it into Mrs. Honeywood's lap, and hid my face with both my hands. Mrs. Honeywood perused it, and returning it to me, said, -

"It is a very proper and considerate letter: and much as I must grieve that our separation is so near, yet I am pleased to observe the affectionate solicitude which Mr. Merton evinces towards you!"

"Our separation is near, certainly," said Honeywood; "but surely, madam, Miss Fairfield need not instantaneously make her arrival known to the Mertons; they may be abridged of her company a few short hours, just while she recovers from the fatigue of the voyage. Consider, from henceforth she will be always with them, while we -"

He stopped. - "Miss Fairfield must judge for herself," said Mrs. Honeywood with some gravity in her manner: "I will most readily be her chaperon, while she stays here, and shall be but too much gratified in her society. But -"

"But it would be extremely improper," said I, hastily interrupting her, "to let my uncle remain in ignorance of my arrival after to-morrow morning. This night, my dear madam," said I, "shall be passed here, and under your protection and vainly shall I endeavour to express my sense of your more than maternal care and attention."

Ah, dearest Mrs. Milbanke! -an elegant chariot stops at the door. I am summoned, - how - how shall I support this trying interview!

IN CONTINUATION

Gloucester-row, Clifton.

You used to like my description of persons and characters as they struck my eye; and I the more readily indulge my pen in being minute. Yes! I will write what I think, my dear madam, even a hazard of being thought severe; for you will not accuse your Olivia of ill-natured severity, and to no other will my remarks be open. You perceive that I have outlived yesterday, that I can even be a trifler to daym, and from these facts your warm heart will augur all that is good. I will try to be methodical. I reached the dining-room we occupied before my visitors; Mrs. Honeywood and her son offered to withdraw. I could not speak, but I motioned to Honeywood, and grasped the arm of his mother to detain her. Dido officiously threw open the door, and as my fearful eyes met hers, I could perceive a triumphant and consequential toss, which always designates her manner when she is particularly pleased.

"How fleet is a glance of the mind!" says our own dear Cowper: - immediately, there entered a very fashionable and showy looking young woman, leaning on the arm of a tall man, of a good though stiff figure. I was conscious that a third person followed them but I dared not look beyond. Mrs. Honeywood most kindly acted as mistress of ceremonies, and announced the trembling, agitated Olivia, as Miss Fairfield, while Mr. Merton said, as he advanced towards me, - "My dear niece, let me introduce you to Mrs. George Merton.

I believe I held out my hand, and that lady was very near taking it in hers; but I fancy its colour disgusted her, for she recoiled a few paces with a blended curtesy and shrug, and simpering, threw herself on a sofa. My uncle seemed to have no prejudices; he held me to his breast, and pressed his lips on my cheek; he then led his son to me, but again my eyes sought the carpet, though I was conscious of the trembling hand which held mine, he stammered out some words of pleasure and happiness. Honeywood was then introduced by his mother; the languid drawl of the fine lady, Mrs. Merton, detained him in conversation. My Merton paid me the utmost attention, and, in part, relieved me from my embarrassment. I looked up, and for the first time saw Augustus Merton: - he seemed to have been examining me with scrutinizing attention. -Alas! I fear it was but a melancholy contemplation in a double sense; for I thought I distinguished a suppressed sigh, as he hastily addressed himself to Honeywood!

No, my dear friend! The painter did not flatter! Were I to draw a model of manly beauty and grace, I would desire Augustus Merton to sit for the likeness. And yet, I do not know, that his face is so regularly handsome; but there is an expression in his eye of tender melancholy, which is irresistibly interesting; and his smile has more sweetness, if possible, than had my father's! The likeness to him is very strong, and his voice has the very tones which used to bless my ear! Can I, then, fail to listen, when Augustus speaks? His manners are elegant, without being studied or coxcomical. As yet he has not talked much, but I suspect the singular situation in which we are placed has been the cause of his taciturnity; for I have now and then observed an arch turn of humour, not quite free from sarcasm, when he has addressed himself to Mrs. Merton, but more of this hereafter.

I am not likely to lose my senses and fall in love, as it is called; but I freely confess to you, my dear Mrs Milbanke, that I think my cousin is a singularly prepossessing young man, - most probably his opinion of your Olivia is quite the reverse. But to proceed. -

After half an hour's conversation, in which Mrs. Merton and my uncle were the speakers, the latter proposed our departure, expressing his sense of obligation to Mrs. Honeywood in high terms of politeness. I could

only throw myself into the arms of this kind friend, whom, in all human probability, I shall never see again. My heart was too full for utterance, but she felt and understood its beatings. I tore myself from her, and giving my hand to Honeywood, I indistinctly murmured farewell; he pressed it to his lips, his "God bless you!" was fervently audible, and it drew forth the affected smile of Mrs. Merton, as she preceded us down the stairs with a languid careless step, which could not have been exceeded by the most die-away lady in the whole island of Jamaica.

My uncle was leading me; but, as if fearful that there should be any failure of attention, he said, "Augustus, assist Mrs. Merton." The son was obedient, and the lady's - "I do very well, I thank you," was said in a tone of restrained mortification.

Mrs. Merton would be thought pretty by any person who looks for feature only. She is very fair, and very fat; her eyes are the lightest blue, her cheeks exhibit a most beautiful (but I am apt to believe not a natural) carmine; her hair is flaxen; her teeth are dazzlingly white; her hand and arm would rival alabaster. Yet with all these concomitants to beauty, she fails to interest or to please your Olivia. And you must allow, my dear friend, that I am not usually difficult; and you remember that I have frequently told you, that I had not a greater pleasure, than in studying the countenance of a beautiful woman of our country. Whence, then, is this change of sentiment, you will say, in regard to Mrs. Merton? - Ah! Whence is it, indeed! for I am but too well inclined to behold my uncle's family with partiality.

I do not think this lady seems endowed with a more than common portion of feeling; this may be her misfortune, and not her fault: or rather, I should say, that too much feeling is to be considered as a misfortune to the possessor; therefore, on this score, I should be invidious and unchristian-like, to judge harshly of Mrs. Merton: but there is such a splenetic tendency in every word she utters, such a look of design, accompanied with so much self-importance, and so large a portion of conceit and affectation, with such frivolous conversation, that I seem hardly to consider her as a rational being; though she is a wholly inoffensive once to me, for I can never be hurt by the manners of a person whom I do not respect; and that she considers me as but one remove from the brute creation, is very evident.

So here, perhaps, we meet on equal terms. Mrs. Merton was a cit-yheiress, with a large fortune, which she thinks entitles her to a large portion of respect and attention; - and my good uncle administers it unceasingly. Perhaps he thinks it necessary to be doubly assiduous from seeing the carelessness of Augustus, who, without being rude (which I suspect is not in his nature), seems perfectly indifferent to all the imposing claims of his fair sister-in-law.

Mr. Merton appears about sixty years of age; he wears his own thin and grey hair, nicely dressed and powdered; his person is tall, but not graceful, for there is a stiffness in it which he cannot shake off, though he tries to divest himself of it by an invariable politeness and attention. His dress is plain, but remarkably neat; and his polished shoes, and silk stockings, are always in print. He treats me with the most studied regard, - "My dear niece, - my dearest Miss Fairfield, - and my beloved ward," - are the appellations which he distinguishes me by, - and could I suspect myself of so speedily inspiring regard, I should judge that he already felt for me a paternal affection; but while he addresses me in this style, to Mrs. Merton he is, on the other hand, as kind and as tender: - "My dear madam, my good daughter," and such pleasing expressions, are dealt in equal, if not larger portions to her; as, perhaps, he guesses that this lady would not be very well pleased to have a rival even in his favour. My uncle's conversation is formal and precise: he tries to be what is called a lady's man, but does not quite know the way to set about it. Subjects on which he talks to them, are not, I can easily perceive, those on which he is the most conversant. I suspect, that he devoted too many years to the counting-house, to make him an agreeable trifler. Yet his principles appear honest

and upright, and I dare say he is a man who has passed through the world, maintaining a strict character for probity and integrity as a merchant. As I have said before, I have seen too little of Augustus, to judge of his talents, or his qualities. Ah! my dear friend, a prepossessing exterior has oft been known to veil a deformed mind! Yet, surely, this cannot be the case here; - and if it were - if I were to make the fatal discovery, what should I gain, when a month, - a short month, will probably unite me to him for life: probably, I say, for it is optional for Augustus. You know, my dear Mrs. Milbanke, he has the liberty of refusing me, and when, at times, I perceive an abstraction of manner, when I see the melancholy expressions which overspreads his countenance, I am ready to spring from my seat, to fall on my knees before him, and to beseech him, not to make a sacrifice of his own and of my happiness; till called to order, by an address of his father, an application for his opinion, or a reference to his judgment, the smile plays round his mouth, and his whole countenance is illumined by an expression of sweetness and placidity which makes me a sceptic to my preconceived opinion.

IN CONTINUATION

IF I may judge by the servants, carriages, &c. which I see, Mrs. Merton and his son both live in a style of princely magnificence. There is something, I think, not very far removed from ostentation in the manner of Mr. Merton; he loves to talk of thousands and tens of thousands, in the indifferent careless way with which another would speak of pence. Persons who have risen to importance by their own means, often fall into this failing. I have frequently remarked it among some of our wealthy planters. I must proceed with my history when an opportunity offers, therefore you will have a packet of mutilated scraps.

IN CONTINUATION

THE first day was passed by my uncle in inquiries concerning the Fairfield estate, its situation, its produce, and other topics on which he thought I was conversant. I felt the kindness of his intention, and gave him all the information which I thought might entertain him: insensibly I lost the timidity of my manner, and became unrestrained and at ease. I am naturally of a communicative, and, I hope, of a cheerful temper; I felt that I could gain nothing by silence and seeming stupidity. I knew that my first appearance could not have been very prepossessing, and by gently sliding into my natural character, I should show my new relatives what they might expect; and, I confess, to be thought favourably of by them (ah! why should I deny it? by Augustus in particular) is a wish very near my heart. Mr. Merton, all politesse and attention, seemed much pleased by my remarks. Mrs. Merton affected to take no interest or share in the conversation, but played, by turns, with her little boy, about three years of age, and her pug dog: it would be difficult to say which was the greatest pet, if the partiality of grand-papa did not obviously turn the scale on the side of the child, who would really be a most lovely creature if mamma did not so entirely spoil him. All this is to be understood in parenthesis. Augustus said little: he seemed distrait and embarrassed in his manner, yet he occasionally roused himself; and more than once, when I bore honest testimony to the virtues of my father, which a reference to his estates, and their management, naturally produced from me, he seemed affected by my manner, and looked at me with an expression of solicitude which made my heart flutter, and my cheeks glow.

IN CONTINUATION

I CAN see that there is not a being in creation for whom Mrs. Merton had a stronger portion of contempt, than for myself: if her husband is of her disposition, how dreadful would be a state of dependence on such a pair! And yet, if Augustus Merton refuses her offered hand, such must be the situation of your poor Olivia! - Perhaps this city lady, whose ideas are all centred in self, and in money, as the grand minister to all her capricious indulgences - perhaps this lady might have no objection to become the protectress of a poor girl of colour, or to receive an acquisition of fortune at the same time; and for this reason she may be acting politically, by trying to infect Augustus with a portion of that distaste and antipathy which she invariably evinces towards me; thinking that she may thus induce him to forego his claim to me and to my fortune - but a generous mind would not thus be warped - Mrs. Merton foils herself. The very means she employs to humble and mortify me, excites the attention and the respectful consideration of Augustus. This inactive lady cannot leave her bed very soon of a morning. I had some time waited a summons to breakfast, when at least I ventured down stairs; Dido having assured me that Mr. Augustus's man had dressed his master more than two hours: however, there was no sign of breakfast below, and I returned to my own room, and wrote the foregoing page before the bell had sounded; but, in returning to my apartment, the door of a room being a-jar, my eyes caught the figure of Augustus Merton. His arms were folded, his head almost rested on his breast, and he looked the very image of melancholy despondence. - Alas! was I, then, the cause of these sorrowful reflections? was he meditating on the sacrifice he was so soon required to make? - A sacrifice, perhaps, of the cherished affections of his heart - a sacrifice of his happiness! - Oh, Mrs. Milbanke, how fraught with misery is the idea!

IN CONTINUATION

IN an elegant morning dishabille, Mrs. Merton reclined on an ottoman: she just made the morning salutation as I entered, and then relapsed again into the intent and important study (as it appeared) of "Bell's Belle Assembly, or Gallery of Fashion:" a modern periodical publication, where the ladies have coloured specimens of the costume and habits in which they are to array themselves every month. Mr. Merton was reading the newspapers, but he laid them down on seeing me; advanced - took my hand - made particular inquiries after my health - drew a chair for me - and placed himself next me. The urn steamed before her, but the fashionable fair did not notice it, till gently reminded by Mr. Merton with, - "Shall I assist you in putting some water in the tea-pot, Mrs. Merton?"

"Oh, by all means," said she, yawning, "and make the tea also; for it is a terrible bore!"

"I see you are engaged in an interesting study," said Mr. Merton; "you ladies employ every opportunity in rendering yourselves, if possible, more irresistible than you were formed by nature!" And the old gentleman very accommodatingly took the tea-chest in his hand.

"You must suffer me to do this, sir," said I; "I like the office; it is one which I have been accustomed to; and you see I am perfectly disengaged."

"I yield it with pleasure into abler hands," said Mr. Merton, bowing gallantly as he resigned it to me.

Augustus now came in, and paid his compliments in a cheerful, unconstrained manner. "So soon put in employ, Miss Fairfield?" said he.

"Oh yes, the lady is of an active turn I find," said Mrs. Merton, still meditating on the coloured print which she held in her hand.

A servant now entered with a large plate of boiled rice. Mrs. Merton half raised her head, saying - "Set it there," pointing towards the part of the table where I sat.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Merton.

"Oh, I thought that Miss Fairfield - I understood that people of your - I thought that you almost lived upon rice," said Mrs. Merton, "and so I ordered some to be got, - for my own part, I never tasted it in my life, I believe!"

Mrs. Milbanke, this was evidently meant to mortify your Olivia; it was blending her with the poor negro slaves of the West Indies! It was meant to show her, that, in Mrs. Merton's idea, there was no distinction between us - you will believe that I could not be wounded at being classed with my brethren!

Augustus coloured, and looked indignantly toward Mrs. Merton: his father tried palliate, by saying, if I would give him leave, he would help himself to a little of it; while I, perfectly unabashed, and mistress of myself, pretended to take the mischievous officiousness, or impertinence (which you will), of Mrs. Merton in a literal sense; and, turning towards her, said, - "I thank you for studying my palate, but I assure you there is no occasion; I eat just as you do, I believe: and though, in Jamaica, our poor slaves (my brothers and sisters, smiling) are kept upon rice as their chief food, yet they would be glad to exchange it for a little of your nice wheaten bread here;" taking a piece of baked bread in my hand.

The lady looked rather awkward, I thought, but she was doubly diligent in the study of the fashions; while Augustus offered me the butter, and my father's smile played round his mouth.

I am confident, that at this moment his countenance expressed approbation of your Olivia. Presently, little George came running into the room, and, without noticing the opened arms of his grandfather, he ran to his mother - "Oh. Mamma! mamma! look at poor George's face - that nasty black woman has been kissing me, and dirtying my face all over!"

"Hush, hush!" said Mrs. Merton, pretending to silence the child on my account, while the pleased expression of her countenance could not be misconstrued.

"No, I don't mean her," said George pointing at me, "but one much, much dirtier - so very dirty, you can't think, mamma! - Nasty woman, to dirty my face!"

"You must go to your room, George, if you do not hold your tongue directly!"

"Pray do not check him, Mrs. Merton," said I; "there is something bewitchingly charming in infantine simplicity. - How artless is this little fellow! his lips utter the sentiments of his heart - and those alone! - My love, you will soon lose that beautiful character of your mind, ingenuousness; for it is a sad and melancholy truth, that as we grow older, we grow acquainted with dissimulation."

"It is too true, indeed!" said Mr. Merton.

Augustus sighed deeply.

"Come hither, my little fellow," said I, "and I promise I will not kiss you!"

"Why, I should not so much mind if you were to kiss me," said he; "for your lips are red, and besides, your face is not so very, very dirty."

"Go to Miss Fairfield, George," said Augustus.

"With all my heart, uncle!" said he.

I took him on my lap, and holding his hand in mine, I said, - "You see the difference in our hands?"

"Yes, I do, indeed," said he, shaking his head. "Mine looks clean and yours looks not so very dirty."

"I am glad it does not look so very dirty," said I; "but you will be surprised when I tell you that mine is quite as clean as your own, and that the black woman's below, is as clean as either of them."

"Oh now, what nonsense are you telling me!" said he, lifting up both his hands in astonishment.

"No," returned I, "it is very good sense: do you know who made you?"

"My grand-papa said God," answered he.

"Oh, if you mean that, he is very backward in his catechism," said Mrs. Merton: "I am sure I could not pretend to teach it to him."

"So I should imagine, if you think Miss Fairfield put the first question of it to him," said Augustus, rather sarcastically.

"The same God that made you made me," continued I - "the poor black woman - the whole world - and every creature in it! A great part of this world is peopled by creatures with skins as black as Dido's, and as yellow as mine. God chose it should be so, and we cannot make our skins white, any more than you can make yours black."

"Oh! But I can make mine black if I choose it," said he, "by rubbing myself with coals."

"And so can I make mine white by rubbing myself with chalk," said I; "but both the coal and the chalk would be soon rubbed off again."

"And won't yours and hers rub off?" said he.

"Try," said I, giving him the corner of my handkerchief; and to work the little fellow went with all his might.

"George, you are very rude and troublesome to Miss Fairfield," said Mr. Merton.

"Not in the least," said I; "it is right that he should prove the truth of what I have been telling him, he will then believe me another time."

"Yes, that I shall," said he, sighing and resigning his employment, as if it had wearied him.

"What do you sigh for, George?" asked Augustus.

"I could wish," said he, looking at me, "that God had made you white, ma'am, because you are so very good-natured; but I will kiss you, if you like."

"Thank you for the wish, my dear child, and for the favour conferred upon me," said I, pressing his cherub lips to mine. "I am not a little proud of this as I consider it a conquest over prejudice!"

"Your arguments are irresistible, you find, Miss Fairfield," said my uncle, smiling.

"Prejudices imbibed in the nursery are frequently attached to the being of ripened years," said Augustus; "and to eradicate them as they appear, is a labour well worth the endeavour of the judicious preceptor."

"Suppose I proceed a little further," said I, "for at present I have gained but half a victor. - So you still dislike my poor Dido, George?"

"She is very dirty," said he, again shaking his head; but colouring, he said, "I mean very black."

"She is a poor negro, you know," said Mrs. Merton, in a most sneering and contemptuous tone.

"But she is the most faithful of creatures, George," said I, not deigning to answer his mother, "and I love her dearly!"

"Do you love her dearly?" said he, looking up in my face, with a very scrutinizing expression. "Only think grand-papa, only think uncle, Miss Fairfield says she loves the blackamoor dearly!"

"I dare say she has reason to estimate her," said Mr. Merton.

"Indeed I have, sir, as your grandson shall hear: - She was born upon my papa's estate," said I, addressing my attentive little hearer; "her father and her mother were slaves, or, as you would call them, servants to him."

"But these black slaves are no better than horses over there," said George, interrupting me; "for I heard the coachman telling one of the grooms so, in the servants' hall, last night."

"You should not go into the servants' hall, George," said his grandfather.

"I only went to ask about your black mare, sir," said the little fellow "you know you told me yourself that she was lame!"

There was no resisting this sweet and simple apology.

"Well, do not interrupt Miss Fairfield, when she is so good as to talk to you," said Mr. Merton, smiling significantly at Augustus; for Mrs. Merton now appeared to think the conversation as great a bore as making tea, and, walking to the further part of the room, she was patting her pug dog, and humming a tune at the same time.

"Those black slaves are, by some cruel masters, obliged to work like horses," said I; "but God Almighty created them men, equal with their masters, if they had the same advantages, and the same blessings of education."

"But what right have their naughty masters got to make them slave like horses? for I'm sure they can't like it - I shouldn't like to work like mamma's coach-horses, and stand shivering for hours in the wet and cold, as they do."

"There will be no end of this conversation, if we come to the right and the wrong," said I.

"It is beginning to wear an interesting form, I think," said Mr. Merton. "George, we shall have your sentiments on the abolition presently."

"Miss Fairfield's rather!" said Mrs. Merton.

"Mine will, I hope, be immediately understood; the feelings of humanity, the principles of my religion, would lead me, as a Christian, I trust, to pray for the extermination of this disgraceful traffic, while kindred claims (for such I must term them) would likewise impel me to be anxious for the emancipation of my more immediate brethren!"

"Born, as you were, in the West Indies, your father a planter, I should have imagined that you would have entertained quite the contrary side of the question," said Mrs. Merton, who now thought she had found a subject on which to attack me.

I slightly answered, "you did not know my father, madam!"

But I could not pursue my story with George; something swelled at my throat and I was obliged to leave the room, though little George took my promised vindication of Dido upon trust, and running after me said - "Miss Fairfield, if you are going to Dido, let me go with you."

I fear I shall tire you, my friend, by this prolix narration, but I was willing to give you a complete surfeit of Mrs. Merton, even though I may frequently be under the necessity of repeating the dose.

IN CONTINUATION

HOW many pages have I written without having mentioned the dear Honeywoods; but they have not been forgotten; their kindness and sympathetic attention will often force the unbidden tear to roll over my cheek, when I am retired to my own apartment, and to ruminatiion. Mrs. Honeywood promised to write to me, and I impatiently wait for the fulfillment of it; - but, alas! my fearfully foreboding heart tells me that we shall never meet again in this world! And thus may I be said to have lost my two only friends! - for, ah! what a wide expanse of ocean now lies between Mrs. Milbanke and her ever affectionate

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD!

IN CONTINUATION

ARE my letters to be constantly filled with sarcastic observations on Mrs. Merton? I must speak of what I see, and while she is my exclusive female companion, I fear I shall have but too many opportunities of noticing the - what shall I call it - give her behaviour a name, dearest Mrs. Milbanke - I would not willingly be too harsh; I ought not be so, for I suspect that the respectful attention which Augustus pays me, is from his witnessing the uniform negligence or insolence of this woman. - I mark the deep flush which crimsones his countenance, when a new instance of either kind falls under his notice, and the dexterity with which he contrives to evince his disapprobation without being personal to his sister, and the generous consideration which bids him respect my feelings - whilst his even-handed father goes on smoothly, looking to the right and the left by turns, now complimenting and now smiling, temporizing and glossing over, and never swerving from the rule which he has laid down for his conduct. And yet I think, that could I dive to the bottom of his complaisant heart, I should discover that I ranked pretty high in his favour. I walk with him arm in arm over the beautiful downs near this place; a favour which I shrewdly suspect Mrs. Merton never conferred upon him; for with regard to the use which she has made of them during the few days that I have been here, a casual observer might have been led to inquire, whether she had any legs; for she certainly seems to derive no manner of assistance from them! - You taught me activity, both mental and bodily, my beloved friend; and nothing more frequently excited my surprise, and I may add, disgust, than the languid affection and supine manners of some of our West Indians; but I never saw any one of them who could in the least compare with Mrs. Merton, who seems to have attained the very height of inaction. In our walks we are sometimes joined by Augustus, and to give you my reason for imputing his general conduct to his dislike of Mrs. Merton's behaviour to me, he is then thoughtfully silent, and leaves his father to keep up the ball of conversation without interruption on his part. - Ah, my dear madam! my heart flutters while I make this observation even to myself - a thoughtful, an abstracted companion, to one of my open - my communicative turn of mind - no confidence, no reciprocal interchange of opinions and sentiments! - What a blank! - what a chasm does existence appear, taken in this view! - It is in the mercy of my heavenly Father that I look for support through the trials which await me, and how thankful am I to my dear Father for implanting, and to you for nourishing, in my mind a strong sense of superintending Providence. If I was at this moment destitute of religion, I should be the most pitiable of human beings; for, indeed, my dearest friend, there are so many conflicting emotions in this poor bosom - I am transplanted into a scene so perfectly new - Mrs. Merton's manners are so different from any person's with whom the petted Olivia ever associated - and then, the short period which is allotted me by my father's will, ere I am to change my situation - with no friend into whose ear I can pour the presaging fears with which, at times, my heart is fraught - the delicacy of my situation - the seeming impossibility of my learning the real sentiments of Augustus - if, I say, it was not for my firm faith in God, how could I support myself? And, amidst every unpleasantry by which I am surrounded, it is an inexpressible source of satisfaction, to be in a country where the rites of religion are duly and properly performed. Our great distance from a place of worship, when at the Fairfield estate, was, you know, frequently lamented by us all. In England the "sound of the church-going bell" will always reach the ear on the morning of the Sabbath, and I trust that your Olivia shall never be unmindful of the pious summons.

IN CONTINUATION

YOU have frequently remarked, that I walk in a manner peculiar to myself. You have termed it majestic and graceful; I have been fearful that it carried something of a proud expression: but I believe it is very difficult to alter the natural gait, and I am too much above the common size, with regard to height, to walk like the generality of my sex. There must surely, however, be something very particular in my air; for I find I am an object of general curiosity, and many a gentleman follows to re-pass me, and to be mortified at his folly when he has caught a view of my mulatto countenance. I laugh at this, and tell Mr. Merton to observe them, while he most gallantly, retains all the fine things that he hears (or fancies he hears) on my shape and person, and very injudiciously has retailed them before his daughter-in-law, whose form being any thing but elegant or graceful, you may conceive that the old gentleman soon found out that he had been "all in the wrong;" especially, when, after hearing a remark of the kind, Mrs. Merton turned round with great nonchalance to me, saying, -

"Pray, Miss Fairfield, did you ever learn to tread the stage?"

"I am now learning, madam," returned I (but without any pettishness of manner, if I know myself), "to tread on the great stage of the world, and, I fear, I shall find it very difficult to play my part as I could wish."

"It is the peculiar province of real merit, to be diffident of its powers," said Augustus. -

"Even while its superiority is acknowledged by an admiring multitude," said his father.

"A tragedy-queen would suit you vastly, I should think," said Mrs. Merton, pursing up her lip.

"I should prefer comedy, both in real and artificial scenes," said I.

"But you have nothing comic about you," rejoined she.

"Except temper and inclination," said I. "I bless God, that will I had the misfortune of losing my dear parent, I was always one of the 'laughter-loving crew.'"

"How mistaken have I been in your character!"

"So I think," said Augustus, drily.

I never know when to lay down my pen, when addressing my earliest friend, but I must break off, as it is high time to attend to the toilette; for tonight I am going to the ball with Mrs. Merton, and Dido is almost out of patience with her "Missee."

IN CONTINUATION

YOU will expect an account of the first English ball which I have ever seen, and I will not tell you that I thought it an unpleasant one, for my partner was Augustus Merton. I never saw him so agreeable, so animated, or so attentive before; he gave me confidence in myself, his gaiety inspired mine, and, I believe, I danced with more than my usual spirit. I wore a black sarsnet, made in the mode, of course, and had no ornaments but a large string of corals round my neck. I could observe that I was an object of pretty general curiosity, as I entered the room. In such a place as this, the wealth of the Mertons makes them generally known. My colour, you know, renders me remarkable, and, no doubt, the Clifton world are well acquainted with the particulars of my father's will, and, seeing me leaning on the arm of Augustus, gave it general publicity; for Mrs. Merton, on stepping from the carriage, seized the arm of the old gentleman, and I was, consequently, thrown upon the protection of his son. But Augustus came forwards with the utmost promptitude; and this readiness on his part, gave me resolution to acquit myself in as unconstrained a manner as I could have wished. I could even listen, with much entertainment, to the remarks which escaped him from time to time, and became, in my turn, communicative.

Surely, my dearest Mrs. Milbanke, it is the fashion to be very affected, or very rude: there seems, in the generality of the people that I see here, to be no medium between these extremes. Some of the ladies, so mincing, so simpering, so lisping, and others so bold, so loud, so confident; all the same-facedness of the sex, which was once thought a charm by the wisest of men, seems entirely exploded: and the men - also believe me - they walked up in pairs, hanging one on another's arm, and, with a stare of effrontery, eyed your Olivia, as if they had been admitted purposely to see the untamed savage at a shilling a piece! While Augustus, was engaged in conversation at a little distance, I heard one of these animals say to another -

"Come, let's have a stare at Gusty's black princess!"

And with the greatest sand froid they slouched (for it could not be called walking) up to me; one of them placed his glass most leisurely to his eye, then shrugging his shoulders, as he looked, he said -

"Pauvre diable! how I pity him! - a hundred thousand wouldn't be enough for the cursed sacrifice! - Allons Alex. Let's 'keep moving.' I've had enough - no more - I thank you - quite satisfied, 'pon honour."

Then, touching the shoulder of Mrs. Merton, he said, -

"Ah, ma bella Merton, is this you? - What! you sport a native to-night, I find."

"I do, en vérité," said she, smiling, and appearing thoroughly to understand his knowing wink.

"In native elegance unrivalled!" said a gentleman, who stood at his elbow, and had, some minutes before, been attentively surveying me. "More grace, more expression, more characteristic dignity, I never yet beheld in one female figure!"

Mrs. Milbanke, you will not accuse me of any foolish vanity in retailing these hyperbolic compliments on myself.

"Monkland is ever in the sublime," said my quizzing beau. "Dear Monkland, now do fall desperately in love with this sable goddess, and strive to wrest the palm of victory from the enviable Augustus Merton!"

"No," said he, "I love Merton too well to envy him his happiness; but I will get introduced to Miss Fairfield immediately, for I must know if she is really what her countenance bespeaks."

"Exactly, believe me!" said Mrs. Merton.

Mr. Monkland, however, did not, or would not, hear; he was instantly introduced to me by Augustus. - Perhaps I was flattered by having overheard his favourable opinion of me; we entered into conversation, and I found him a pleasant though an eccentric and visionary being; he made sarcastic observations on every body he saw, and seemed to wield his talent for satire with no light hand. I was introduced to several more of both sexes whose names I have forgotten, for summon characters passing indiscriminately, leave no impression on the mind or the memory; but as I was standing in the dance; I was somewhat surprised to see Mrs. Merton led to the top of it by a gentleman, who footing it off with her at the moment when my eyes caught them, so forcible was the contrast, that I could scarcely refrain from laughter - Indeed I have a great taste for the ridiculous, and here I am likely to have it improved, - improved is a bad word for such a taste my dear governess will say, but she has been used to see the spontaneous effusions of her pupil's mind - so it shall pass. I have described the person of Mrs. Merton to you before, she is certainly not formed with the "light fantastic toe," but languishes, or rather glides, down a dance in the most careless and indifferent manner you can imagine. Her partner appeared to have nearly reached his grand climacteric, yet he had taken wonderful pains in trying to put himself back at least thirty years, by powdering and pomatuming his grey hairs, making his whiskers as large and as well shaped as possible, half closing his light green eyes, to give them an insinuating expression, though that expression was lost in the inflamed circles which surrounded their orbits; his nice cravat was well stuffed round his throat, his clothes were of the most fashionable and jemmy make, and the well turned leg was still an object of admiration, as it had been through many a revolving season, to its owner! His determined activity, his strict attention to the figure of the dance, to the step, to his partner; the smile which was always to be seen on his countenance, so self-satisfied, so conscious of unimpaired powers of attraction, the agility which he evidently laboured to exert, and his thin figure, were all in such direct opposition to the little fat formed and composed manner of Mrs. Merton, that I carelessly turned round to the lady who stood the next couple to me, and said - "Pray, ma'am, can you tell me the name of the gentleman now going down the dance?" "He is my brother, ma'am, Colonel Singleton" - the flippant answer of the lady arrested my attention. - Surely the Colonel and Miss Singleton must have been twin children! I never saw such proximity of character and manner as in this brother and sister: they must never marry, but grow young (for old they can never be) together. Miss Singleton's labours must be as arduous as her brother's, though her face looks at last, more weather-beaten than does the gallant colonel's. Her natural complexion is not far removed from your Olivia's, and I thought a white satin was a bad choice for a robe; and pitied her poor shrivelled and thin neck, which, with some of her brother's wadding, would have looked to more advantage, than adorned by her superb necklace of diamonds. Feathers of the ostrich were mounted in several directions from her head, while her bared ears, and elbows, and back, and bosom, gave to her whole contour, so freezing and so forlorn an appearance, while her volatility, and frisky and girlish airs, made her person so very conspicuous, that I could not help surveying her with the utmost curiosity, as a species of animal which had never before fallen under my notice. She was dancing with a boy, who aped the man, as much as his partner threw herself back into the girl: and the pleased attention with which she listened to all he said; the air of maiden consciousness which she adopted, while he held her minikin fan and she whispered into the youthful Adonis's ear; the tap which the said fan now gave him on the cheek - oh, Mrs. Milbanke, you could not have forgotten a scene so ridiculous! And then the captivating colonel holding his ungloved and white hand (so as to exhibit a ring of sparkling brilliants) at the side of his face, while Mrs. Merton spoke, as if to draw the attention of the company to something with which they must not be acquainted, and then holding his handkerchief to be perfumed from Mrs. Merton's

otto of roses! - You cannot wonder at my thinking of the line in the song, "Sure such a pair were never seen!" You will say I am very light-hearted to descant so largely on such frivolous subjects - and I should call myself so if I were sure that no splenetic feelings aided my pen; but I am disappointed in England: I expected to meet with sensible, liberal, well informed and rational people, and I have not found them; I see a compound of folly and dissimulation - but hold! let me not be harsh or hasty in my judgement, a ball-room is not the place to meet with the persons I expected, neither must I look for them within the circle of Mrs. Merton's friends. I can see that Augustus has an utter distaste to the general frivolity which reigns in these places; I suspect he will prefer my plan of a country life and retirement: but nothing has yet been said on the subject, and time steals on. Ah, my dearest friend! shall I ever more enjoy that placid happiness, that calm tranquility, which surrounded me at the Fairfield plantation? Heaven alone can tell - But in all situations, in all places, I am still, and ever shall be,

Your own affectionate and grateful
OLIVIA FAIRFIELD.

IN CONTINUATION

I HAVE not been able to write; my mind has been in too great a tumult to put pen to paper, and the time I usually employed in writing, my ever dear friend, has been spent in walking to and fro my apartment, with restless step and a perturbed heart!

The morning after I last wrote, I Received a formal message from my uncle, and, according to the summons, attended him in the room, which is appropriated to this morning avocations; he rose at my entrance, met me at the door, and, with his usual formal politeness, handed my to a seat. -

"Pardon the liberty I have taken, my dear Miss Fairfield, in requesting the favour of your company; but I wished to have your approbation with regard to settlement, &c. previous to giving my lawyer necessary instructions - Augustus refers entirely to us, to make arrangements as we think proper!"

I felt uncomfortably as Mr. Merton spoke - I could not answer him.

"Your late father's will," continued -

I started from my seat - "Full well I know its contents!" cried I - "Oh, Mr. Merton, I cannot, I must not refuse your son the fatal interdiction of my father! - a vow - an irrevocable vow, forbids me! But, sir, your son is not so bound, he has still the exercise of his reason, he is a free agent - surely then a fear of hurting my feelings (for I cannot for a moment imagine Mr. Augustus Merton to be actuated by mercenary views) will not lead him to barter his liberty and his happiness, and to unite himself to a woman who is not the object of his affection!"

I believe I appeared much agitated; and that I expressed myself with great warmth and energy!

Mr. Merton looked in silence for a moment, but with extreme surprise evidently depicted on his countenance, and then said, -

"My dear young lady, if my son is so unfortunate as to be beheld by you with disapprobation, I sincerely pity him; but am sure he will readily forego all claim to your hand, rather than you should unite yourself where you cannot love!"

Ah, Mrs. Milbnanke! had Mr. Merton understood the language of the looks, my emotion at this moment, my burning blushes, would have proclaimed another tale! I cast down my eyes to the ground in conscious confusion, they dared not meet his, but Mr. Merton proceeded -

"You may have seen another object prior to your introduction to Augustus, who may have gained an interest in your heart, Miss Fairfield - if so, I pity my poor boy!"

"No, indeed, sir, that is not the case!" said I, with eager warmth. -

"Then my interesting friend," said my uncle, taking my hand, "if it be not so, I greatly pity you - a state of nominal dependence (for such I trust would be the case if George Merton were your protector) would still be a severe trial to one, who has been educated as you have been. - Your father's will was singular, very singular; I make no doubt that he acted from consideration: but yet it has always struck me as not being the kind of will, which most men in his situation would have made - Well, let it pass, we cannot alter it, we must

even act by its authority; and I repeat my fear, that a state of wardship would be rather disagreeable to a lady of your liberal notions?"

"Servitude, salvery, in its worst form, would be preferable," said I, "to finding myself the wife of a man by whom I was not beloved!"

"My dear niece" -

"My dear sir, I know what you are going to say - You would say (though you might word it in softer terms), how can you expect to be the selected object of the affections of Augustus Merton, when he never knew you till within a few days? - Ah, sir! I too well know the impossibility of the thing to expect it - I am aware of my own person - I know that I am little less than a disgusting object to an Englishman - I know that your son (supposing for a moment that he could get over his own prejudices as to colour) would have to encounter all the sarcastic innuendoes and jeering remarks of his companions; it would be said with confidence, and with truth, that he had sold himself for money; he would feel that he had done so; he would never look at me without seeing the witness of the sacrifice. I should be neglected and despised!"

"My beloved Miss Fairfield, you are voluntarily raising up bugbears to disturb your happiness; the chimeras of your own imagination affright you, and hurt your piece of mind!"

"Alas! My dear sir, it is but too true, that every feeling of my soul is wounded in my present situation - Oh, my dearest father, my misjudging father, you could not foresee the humiliating state in which you placed your child! - Suing for the hand of a man, to whom she is an object of indifference, if not aversion!"

"Again let me entreat you to calm your emotions, my dear young lady, and to see things in a different point of view."

"I see them as they are, sir," said I, shaking my head.

"Not so, believe me, - through a prejudiced medium you now look - I am confident that my son admires and esteems you - I am sure that he will devote his life to the study of your happiness, and that you will never have reason to repent the choice which your good father has made for you."

Ah, dearest friend, esteemed Mrs. Milbanke! how could I say to Mr. Merton all with which my full heart was bursting? But if Augustus had entertained a common regard, even an esteem, for your Olivia, would he have deputed his father to have entered into this conversation, which he seems to have avoided with the most scrupulous care? In a few days, am I to unite my fate with that of a man, who has never said that it is his wish, that it should be so! As well might my fortune only have crossed the ocean, the nominal wife might still have remained in Jamaica - And, oh that she was still there - oh that Mrs. Milbanke, with kind counsel and friendly advice, was yet near her.

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD!

IN CONTINUATION

INDEED, my dear madam, I know not what to do; the reserve of Augustus increases rather than diminishes, I think, as time moves on - Good heavens! my dearest friend, how can I resolve to give him my hand, if he still retains this constrained manner? - A depression seems to hang on his spirits, melancholy clouds his brow. I think he strives to conceal this from his father and from me; but I cannot be blinded: and yet he is so interesting, his manners are so gentle, even his look of melancholy carries with it to me an air so touching, that I think to sooth his sorrows, to meliorate his afflictions, would constitute my happiness!

Do not despise me for my weakness my dear friend - to no other would I acknowledge it - and why not? Is it then a crime to love the man who is to become my husband? Alas! it is lowering to the pride of my sex to love where I am not beloved again.

IN CONTINUATION

AUGUSTUS referred to his father all matters of settlement; I referred them to him also: so the old gentleman is prime agent in this business. I believe he understands these affairs better than the affairs of the heart. But I cannot be easy, dearest Mrs. Milbanke; I must come to an explanation with Augustus - and he seems to avoid a tête-à-tête with me, at least I fancy so.

Diamonds and pearls have been brought to me for inspection, these are not the precious gems I covet; the pearl of my husband's heart would be preferred by me to all the jewels of the east! - Mrs. Merton's sarcastic remarks on the gravity and the absence of Augustus, are made in my hearing, and in order to mortify and to wound me; but no remarks of hers can now have the power to add to the poignancy of my feelings. - The agitation of my mind mocks description - I have no power to retreat - and yet to advance with such a cheerless perspective in view - how can I have courage?

IN CONTINUATION

A WEEK has elapsed since I had last the resolution of addressing my beloved friend. At length, then, I have ventured beyond the limits usually prescribed to my sex. I have sought an interview with Augustus Merton. Indeed, my dearest Mrs. Milbanke, reason seemed to totter on her throne, while I imagined myself in danger of becoming the wife of a man, to whom I was an object of aversion. But why should I weary you with a tedious recapitulation of fears and feelings, which, knowing the sanguine temper of your poor girl, you have long ere now imagined?

I tried to argue myself into something like courage, when I formed the desperate resolution of asking to speak to Augustus alone; but it all forsook me when he entered the room, and the trembling abashed woman stood before him. He saw, and seemed to sympathize in, my confusion; he gently took my hand, and, leading me to a seat, placed his own near it, and seemed to wait for me to speak, with a respectful, though by no means a composed air.

"Mr. Merton," said I, at length breaking a silence painful to both, "you know the respective situations in which we are placed by the will of my ever-to-be-regretted parent?"

He bowed his head in token of assent; a word would have emboldened me, but this forbidding silence struck like a damp upon my heart. I had lost all command of myself - I rose, and, clasping my hands together in a beseeching attitude, I stood before him, saying, -

"It is not too late for you to recede. Oh, Mr. Merton, think how much misery will be spared to us, if you refuse the proffered terms. You have the power of doing so. A tame acquiescence to the will of my father, will secure to you the enjoyment of his fortune, certainly; but can it secure your happiness, if it is to unite you to an object, for whom you feel no regard. Do not fear to mortify me by such a rejection; I have the common failings of my sex, but I am fully acquainted with the numerous disadvantages under which, as a stranger, and a mulatto West Indian, I labour here. The good qualities which I possess (I hope I have some, or barren indeed would have been the soil which experienced the hand of the skilful labourer for many successive years), - I say the good qualities, which I may possess, are not to be discerned in my countenance. The very short time, which, by the unfortunate tenour of my father's will, is to elapse before this matter is decided, will preclude your coming to a knowledge of my temper and disposition. Indeed, indeed, I shall not be offended, I will bless you for saying, that you cannot accept my fortune on the terms with which it is offered you, if such terms are to be the shipwreck of your happiness!"

I paused, - Augustus looked earnestly in my face, he heaved a deep sigh.

"You surprise and painfully astonish me, my dearest Miss Fairfield!" said he; "is it possible that you can for a moment suppose, that I feel no regard for you? Are you so insensible to your own numerous and unrivalled virtues and perfections? Heaven is my witness, that I am warmly, sincerely interested for your happiness! And that thought of your being, for one moment, a dependant on my mercenary brother, and his weak and envious wife, would give me the cruellest uneasiness! But as this is the alternative to which you reduce yourself, if you are resolved on refusing my hand," -

"I resolve to refuse your hand?" cried I, scarcely knowing what I said, "Oh, Mr. Merton how can you - If, indeed" -

"Ingenuous, interesting Miss Fairfield! it is, at this moment, that I feel my utter unworthiness of this precious treasure. -Oh! May you never repent your goodness!"

Well! I have repeated enough of this tête-à-tête. To show, my dear friend, that we came to an éclaircissement. And yet I am neither satisfied with myself nor with Augustus. I fancy that I must have appeared forward, and perhaps, have now obtained from his principles and his pity, what he must have ever denied from a stronger feeling. I am again at my old stumbling-block you will say; and I begin to suspect, that these womanish fears will be the very bane of my happiness!

I have, at last, received a letter from Mrs. Honeywood: it is written, like herself; - but, alas! it contains sad accounts of her health, though the spirit of piety and resignation which pervades it, would leave me nothing to regret in her being removed from this painful world, except the loss of her friendship to myself, and the overthrow of her son's happiness, for his mother is the acting impulse of his life. Her physicians have ordered her from London to the sea; a "forlorn hope," she terms it; and thus I shall lose the chance of ever meeting her again. I had agreed to Mr. Merton's proposition of going to London on ym marriage the more readily, as I had hoped to behold this dear friend once more. But it is not to be. The fleet sails to-morrow; I must, therefore, make up my large packet.

Adieu, my dearest Mrs. Milbanke! Continue to pray for one who must always pray for, and love, you,

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD!

PACKET THE SECOND

London, - My dear Mrs. Milbanke,

THE hasty lines which I wrote you on the morning that I quitted Clifton, and which you received with my packet, will ere this have informed you, that your Olivia had become the wife of her cousin! In that moment of confusion, I had no time for particularly, and the hurry and bustle which has ensued, has scarcely afforded me leisure for an hour of calm reflection. Yet, believe me, my beloved friend, I am happy; and the attention and indulgence of my husband exceeds my highest expectations. - And yet, I had formed high expectations of the character of Augustus Merton (Fairfield he is now become). If i can be instrumental to his happiness, I shall have reason to bless my father for my happy lot.

"And why that if, Olivia?" methinks I hear you inquire.

Ah, madam! I doubt myself; I doubt my own abilities; I sometimes fear, - I think, - I fancy a thousand things, when I hear the deep sigh of my Augstus, when, I observe the pensive cast of his features. You will laugh at me, - you will, perhaps, do more - you will chide me for giving way to these fears, which now I know to be foolish, if not criminal. But what will you say of your Olivia, your pupil, when you hear that she is become the victim of superstition also, of nameless terrors, of - alas! she knows now what; - but she has been used to recount all her weaknesses to her friend, and she shall have the recital!

It was settled by Mr. Merton, that our nuptials were to take place at Clifton, and that from the church door, we were to set off for London. The old gentleman stood in the place of my father; Mrs. Merton did not particularly wish to be my attendant, and her presence could give me neither confidence nor comfort; so at breakfast I took leave of her, and she promised to follow us to town, with Mr. Merton and the retinue, in less than a week.

A neat and new post-chaise drove me to the church door, accompanied by my uncle; Augustus was there in readiness to hand me out. The morning had been fine, but as I entered the church, I felt the most sultry and overpowering heat that I ever experienced. The clergyman was ready, - we approached the altar! I leant on the arm of Mr. Merton, but I felt resolute and collected. I was obeying the will of my father. I was acting in consonance with the impulse of my own heart. I believed the man to whom I was about to be united was worthy of my fondest regard, and I secretly besought the blessing of Heaven!

The ceremony began. I did not cast my eyes towards Augustus, till the priest was in the act of joining our hands, and had put to us the questions, and we had repeated the answers after him. - At the moment when I felt the hand of Augustus, a flash of vivid lightning came from the window over the altar; it was followed by a loud and tremendous peal of thunder. A cold sweat seemed to moisten the hand of Augustus, - it trembled in mine. I looked towards him, an icy paleness overspread his features - he leaned against the rails of the altar - his brow was rumped - his hair stood erect! - a deep sigh issued from his bosom! - Yes, my friend it is too true, - for it pierced into the inmost recesses of the heart of his wife! The irrevocable vow was, indeed, passed; it seemed, as if the Almighty had condescended to ratify it, - it seemed - a thousand superstitious fears stole over my soul! Augustus's disorder had infected me, and it was some time ere I could recover my former tone of mind. The remembrance will never be erased from it, - it was something so awful, so singular. - Oh, Mrs. Milbanke, how terror-stricken must I then have stood, if I had borne about with me the weight of any unacknowledged crime, at the moment when I had united my fate with that of my unsuspecting husband!

But, I will turn over a new leaf and get to a new subject; for, if this be half as frightful to you as it has been to me, you will long since have wished me to drop it.

IN CONTINUATION

I HAVE been rattled over this vast metropolis, and have seen sights and spectacles without number. There is something very striking in this wondrous pile of novelty. I have partaken of every species of amusement with much satisfaction; for I have been accompanied by Augustus, and his kindness and indulgence, in showing "this native" (as Mrs. Merton would say) all the places and the curiosities, which he has so often been fatigued with, has given me a pretty good idea of his patience, while his readiness in answering all the questions of my inquisitive mind, has exhibited manifest proofs of his good-nature. So you find, I have had a "double debt to pay;" and whilst visiting the London lions, I have been finding out the amiable qualities of my husband!

Mr. Merton's house, in which we are at present inmates, is fitted up in a style which proves the wealth of its owner. He is fond of showing off his own consequence; and the credit and high reputation of the London merchant, is his never-ending theme, - and a theme which cannot weary, while I behold, as I do in this city, their boundless liberality in providing for the distresses of their necessitous fellow-citizens!

Oh, Mrs. Milbanke, England is, sure, the favoured isle, where benevolence has taken up her abode! Here she dwells, here she smiles, while, toward my native island, she turns her "far surveying," her compassionate eye. She decries the sufferings of the poor negro, and promises benign assistance. - Yes! the cause of Africa's injured sons is heard in England; and soon shall the slave be free!

But think not that my visits have been wholly confined to places of public amusement and diversion; I have visited places of public worship also. I have been delighted and instructed, while hearing the words of inspiration explained by the lips of eloquence, combined with great ability and piety. And I have seen Westminster Abbey, with that enthusiastic awe which must ever strike a feeling mind on beholding this vast mausoleum of valour, genius, and worth! - While I read the inscriptions of heroes, and the epitaphs of poets, I could not help exclaiming, "Oh transitory state of human things!" I could not help reflecting on the nothingness of those, who were once the greatest on the earth. But, as the benefit of example is undisputed, it is right that their memories should be preserved by something more lasting than the evanescent praise of others, which is frequently carried on the fleeting breath of popular applause. Posthumous honour is coveted by all, and yet there cannot be a more uncertain distinction; we see it frequently refused to those, who, during their lives, were overwhelmed with praise. The son of genius and misfortune perishes unnoticed and unhonoured; his remains moulder at the side of one whom idleness and illiberality alone distinguished in life, but whose rich coffers, have, at his death, purchased for him the name of every virtue, which, surrounded by trophies of fame, are engraven on a monumental inscription of brass! How, then, can we covet these uncertain and indiscriminating distinctions?

Mr. George Merton is just what I had depicted him; fond of his own consequence, and anxious to increase it, by any unwearied application to the business of getting money; yet partial to the indulgences of the table, and tenacious of his opinion. There appears none of that sympathy of disposition and sentiment between him and his wife which we look for in the connubial state. He seems gratified at beholding her pretty face, set off by every expensive adornment, at the head of his sumptuous entertainments, dispensing the luxuries of the feast to their various guests; and she seems perfectly indifferent who is at the bottom of the table, provided it is filled with a large party. Her fondness for the admiration and the attention of the other sex, is very apparent; and she is weak enough to be flattered with the silly compliments of the vainest and most shallow coxcombs. There is no reciprocity between the two brothers; they are coolly polite towards each

other: but the confidence, which is usually and naturally induced from their relative affinity, is, from a total disparity of character, entirely done away.

My Augustus is, I can perceive, by no means fond of a London life; it is not at all consonant to my taste; and the sooner we can leave it, the better I shall be pleased. Perhaps the people have tainted my opinion of the place, for I am fatigued by the formal stiffness of Mr. Merton; I am sick of the affectation and vanity of Mrs. Merton, and disgusted at her selfish and mercenary husband. I long to be free from the restraints, and the dissimulation, which the common rules of good breeding impose in my behaviour towards them. My mind seems hampered, and I think I shall breathe more freely in the pure air, and amongst the sylvan scenes of the country. The plodding track of cent. per cent. and addition on addition, never suited the taste of Augustus; and, leaving his brother to accumulate thousands upon thousands, he is content to live on the fortune which my father's will bequeathed to him with his wife. The wise father, and the plodding brother, may laugh, but they cannot persuade him, that a "man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," when the Word of God, and his own heart, both teach him the contrary.

Yet, though I talk with pleased anticipation of the country, mistake me not, dearest Mrs. Milbanke; I by no means wish for perfect seclusion. I am not so vain as to imagine, that my society could form the exclusive happiness of my husband. No! I would fly as far from the extreme of solitude on the one hand, as from unrestrained dissipation on the other. Dissipation enervates the mind; it unfits it for every rational and domestic enjoyment; it deadens the feelings; in the vortex of pleasure, the heart is often corrupted, and the principles are sacrificed: - many very amiable characters have been ruined by the prevalence of fashionable example, the fear of being thought singular, and the dread of ridicule. "Who is sufficient for these things?" not your doubting Olivia! and, therefore she would

"Quit the world where strong temptations try, And, since 'tis hard to combat, learn to fly"

Seclusion sours the temper, selfish and illiberal notions are insensibly cherished; the manners lose their polish; the warm affections of the heart no longer expand in a full tide of benevolence, but return to their source, and freeze before the "genial current" of social intercourse.

I have got a fine Utopian scheme of domestic happiness in my head, and the country must be the birth-place of it. The conversation of my husband, a contemplation of the beauties of nature, the society of rational and well-informed friends; books, music, drawing; the power of being useful to my fellow creatures, - to my poorer neighbours; - the exercise of religious duties,- and the grateful heart, pouring out its thanks to the Almighty bestower of such felicity! Say, dear madam, is such a plan likely to be realized by your

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD!

IN CONTINUATION

London.

Dido, notwithstanding her admiration of the sights with which this justly famed city abounds, is not at all displeased at hearing that we do not intend to live here; and that we shall soon have a house and an establishment of our own; and that too in the country.

"Ah, my dear Missee," says she, "we shall be there again, as if we were at the dear Fairfield plantation, only that Dido won't see the dear little creatures of her own colour running about: - but no matter, God Almighty provides for his own, and it be very, very hard, if poor Dido cannot find some little babies and their mammies to care after, and to doctor, and to feed with goodee things, from her goodee Missee, go where she will!"

"Yes, that would be hard, indeed, Dido."

"Besides, Dido be greater there," said she, drawing up her head, with that air of pride which seems in some sort of nature to her character, especially when she feels a sense of injury - "Besides Dido be great there, and housekeeper to her dear dearest lady, to Massa Fairfield's daughter: although here she be "blacky," and "wowsky," and "squabby," and "guashy," and all because she has a skin not quite so white, - God Almighty help them all - me don't mind that though, do we, my dear Missee? But Mrs. Merton's maid treats me, as if me was her slave; and Dido was never slave but to her dear own Missee, and she was proud of that!"

But you know the honest heart of my faithful girl! Augustus treats her with that good-humoured kindness and freedom which is the sure way to win it; and she declares her new beautiful Massa is fit to bear the name of Fairfield, and to be the husband of the dearest Missee in the world.

[In the journal of Olivia, there is at this place a break of some weeks, which the editor laments; as her object in collecting the manuscript has been to portray the characters and the sentiments of the Woman of Colour; and hence she has purposely excluded the letters of the other characters in this work: but as, by introducing two of them here, she will be filling a chasm, and letting the reader a little behind the scenes, she makes no apology for their insertion.]

LETTER THE FIRST.

MRS. GEORGE MERTON TO MISS DANBY.

Clifton.

You will laugh at me, and well you might, had I no other motive than the apparent one, for doing my duty here; and being so pretty behaved with my papa-in-law, in order to chaperon this copper-coloured girl, that is sent over as the wife of the romantic Augustus - No! There are wheels within wheels, believe me, Almenia? I have planned, and shall in time accomplish, a most noble scheme of revenge - I shall teach this Mr. Augustus, that

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorn'd;"

And that the thought of revenge, glorious revenge, can give a new impulse to her soul - can stimulate her character, and urge it beyond ordinary bounds! Happily, my husband's ruling passion, a desire of unbounded wealth, will come to my aid; and he will go hand in hand with me, without guessing at the secret motive by which I am actuated. There must be much time, and patience, ere the master-stroke can be struck; this once effected, you shall felicitate me on the accomplishment of my designs, and acknowledge that the pains I have departed from my character - my wrongs have roused me to exertion, and you find I can even write a whole side of my paper. You ask for a description of this outlandish creature - She is very tall (I never could bear a tall woman), and holds herself erect; no easy lounge in her air; her eyes are, I believe, good, but black eyes are, in my opinion, so frightful; - her teeth, they say, are white, but any teeth would look white, I believe, when contrasted by such a skin! As to her manners, they are abominably disgusting; she is full of sentiment, and religion, and all that - and talks and expatiates, and is so firm and so decided - at the same moment that she would have it appear she she is all feeling and tenderness - such a compound! She has read a good deal I fancy; these bookish ladies are insufferable bores! But, daddy Merton is all upon the complimentary order with her, and has made sixty thousand bows for her sixty thousand pounds! - I do not think I could hold out the probationary month if I dissembled; but by showing how much I am disgusted with Miss Blacky, I draw out sensitive Augustus, and put him on his metal; as I slight, he is doubly diligent - he will marry her to rescue her from the "tyrannic fangs" of Mrs. George Merton! And I will - what will I not do? I have now raised your curiosity I know, for you were always one of Eve's genuine daughters - My dear friend, you may remain a long time on the tenter-hooks of expectation. So fare you well. Adieu!

LETITIA MERTON.

LETTER THE SECOND. AUGUSTUS MERTON TO LIONEL MONKLAND.

Clifton.

UNWILLING as I was to accompany my father to this place, and averse in bestowing any portion of my thoughts towards that clause in my uncle's will which referred to myself, I yet at this moment behold things in a very different light; and though the barbed arrow of misfortune still rankles at my breast, and can never more be extracted, yet I am more interested for Olivia Fairfield, than I ever thought again to have been for any human being.

"'Tis not a set of features or complexion,
The tincture of a skin, that I admire."

No, my friend, it is not; for I will confess to you, that the moment when my eyes were first cast on the person of my cousin, I started back with a momentary feeling nearly allied to disgust; for I beheld a skin approaching to the hue of a negro's, in the woman whom my father introduced to me as my intended wife! I that had been used to contemplate a countenance, and a transparent skin of ivory, were Suckling's expression of "even her body thought" might have aptly originated. I that - ah! why pursue the reflection? - that such things were, I too well know; else why this weight of sorrow which has so long oppressed my weary frame? A very few hours served to convince me, that whatever might have been the transient impression made by the colour of Olivia, her mind and form were cast in no common mould. She has a noble and a dignified soul, which speaks in her words and actions; her person is raised above the standard of her sex, as much as her understanding and capacity. In her energy, her strength of expression, in the animation of her brilliantly black eye, there is something peculiarly interesting. At one moment, I feel for her situation and pity her, - a stranger in a strange country, where she is more likely to receive contumely than consideration; at the next, I see in her a superior being; and again I behold the child of humanity, the citizen of the world, with a heart teeming with benevolence and mercy towards every living creature! - She is accomplished and elegant; but her accomplishments are not the superficial acquirements of the day, - they are the result of application and genius in unison; her elegance is not the studied attitude of a modern belle, but the spontaneous emotion of a graceful mind: while in her conversation there is combined, with sound judgement and reflection, a naïf simplicity, and a characteristic turn of expression, which at once pleases and entrances the observer. The decision and promptitude with which she delivers her opinions, though accompanied by an air of modest timidity, prove that she has a spirit which will never suffer her to yield her principles or her sentiments, where her conscience tells her she is right: and that, though trampled upon, she will yet retain her native dignity of character!

You will think me raving, my friend; and so I am nearly, when I think that it is I alone who must rescue her from a state of miserable dependence. It is on me that her future happiness depends: on me, who, like a shipwrecked mariner, have seen my heart's only treasure snatched from my longing arms, and am become a bankrupt in all I coveted on earth! - In what a cruel predicament am I placed by my uncle's will - yet can I refuse Olivia, and see her eating the bitter bread of sorrow and dependence under my brother and his wife. -Oh, Monkland! I have seen the "Tender mercies" of this woman! I have seen her cruel, her unfeeling treatment of a meek and unoffending angel! I know her equal to any species of tyranny, to any plot of low malice and contrivance: she is envious of all virtue and merit, because she possesses neither herself! - She has no heart, no mind! And shall the only child of my mother's brother, shall the polished, the amiable Olivia Fairfield be reduced to such a situation? - Better had she perished on the ocean, better had the tempestuous billows overwhelmed her, ere she set her foot on this inhospitable shore! Yet, what have I to offer her? Will a widowed heart, blighted hopes, and settled melancholy, will these be fit offerings for the rich prize of her affections and her love? Can I with these hope to secure her happiness?

How if I was to disclose to her the state of my heart - how if I was to divulge to her that secret which is known alone to you and to the grave? - I know the result of such a disclosure, - the generous Olivia would scorn to receive from my compassion what I could not grant from my love; her soul is too noble to bestow a thought upon selfish considerations, and she would not hesitate in preferring a dependence upon my brother, to laying an embargo on my principles, in which she would fancy my heart and no share. Yet, Heaven is my witness, inasmuch as I trust I am a lover of goodness and virtue, my heart, my soul is interested for this charming maid! My heart does not beat with the rapture of passion, - my soul is not overcome by soft emotions at her approach as heretofore. - Again am I giving way to useless retrospections. In hearing Miss Fairfield, in witnessing the chaste dignity of her manners, and the action which characterizes and enforces her expressions, I receive undissembled satisfaction; but sensible of our peculiar situation, whilst I could hang on every word she utters in company, and in her absence delight to recall them to my memory with the appropriate expression by which they were accompanied; yet, strange as it may appear, I fly from a tête-à-tête overcome by a weak fear almost unaccountable to myself. How can I assail her with professions of love, whilst conscious that my heart can never more feel that passion? How can I ask her to acknowledge herself interested for me, when I know that the silent tomb covers all for which I would have lived? and yet, how can I meet my wife, my affianced wife, and not enter into such conversation? My friend, you will pity me - to you, and to you alone, are my struggles and my sorrows known; with you I shall be acquitted of mercenary views, even though I should become the husband of Olivia - you will know that the same spirit, which once taught me to refuse a wealthy bride and to oppose my father's direct command, would have supported me in this instance also, if a stronger motive had not influenced me on the other side. - Farewell! Whatever may be my fate, to you I shall always lay open my heart, conscious of your friendship and fidelity towards

AUGUST MERTON.

PACKET THE THIRD OLIVIA FAIRFIELD TO MRS. MILBANKE

New Park, Devonshire.

AS I heard of no ship sailing for Jamaica, I have let my pen lie idle on my standish, my dearest madam, for the last three weeks, whilst I have been arranging my household, and making myself quite at home. In this, as in every thing, mr. Fairfield has acted with the greatest indulgence. Your Olivia has only to breathe a wish, and it is accomplished; so that, in fact, I have nothing left to wish for.

This house is situated in a romantic part of Devonshire, near a bold and noble shore; the hills and dales are beautifully picturesque, and the diversity of wood, and lawn, and down, is very striking. It is a highly cultivated country, and a populous neighbourhood; and while the little town of *****, about three miles distant, supplies our table with excellent fish, it promises also to supply us with society from its summer visitants; as I understand it is a place of genteel resort in the season. The house is not too large to be comfortable; it is calculated for sociability, more than for show and gives you an idea of a contended habitation, which some of the lofty villas of Nabobs, in the neighbourhood, cannot impress on the mind with all their grandeur.

Dido is delighted; it is like the "dear Fairfield estate," and she has entered into all the mysteries of housekeeping, and bears about the insignia of her office, in the bunch of keys at her side, and the important expression of her face. Already she has made acquaintances with some of the peasants in the vicinity, and she bids fair to rival her mistress in the favour of the little rustics. Never did a warmer heart glow in a human bosom, than in that of this faithful creature; She considers herself as the sister of the whole human race, and loves them with a relative affection.

And yet, I have seen none of my visiting neighbours, except the clergyman of the parish; I both saw and heard him at church: and if I may form an opinion of the man, from his discourse and delivery in the pulpit, I promise myself profit and pleasure from his acquaintance; his subject was well chosen, and well handled, - his manner was devout and impressive!

IN CONTINUATION

MR. FAIRFIELD seems to enjoy himself in the country, as much as your Olivia; never did I witness a more sensible alteration, than that which took place in him, when we had fairly turned our backs upon London. The insipid routine of a town life, where a man has no regular avocation, and is too far plunged into the ceremonials of the world to spend his time as he chooses, must surely be very irksome. Fairfield is of a contemplative and studious disposition; he has too much refinement and Christian benevolence in his composition to make, what is termed, a country 'squire; but he has sentiment, and a taste for the beauties of nature, to render him a rural though not a modern philosopher.

I was reading a paper this morning in one of your excellent periodical works, viz. The Tatler, when the following paragraph struck me as being applicable to my Augustus, that I will not apologize to you for transcribing it: -

"With great respect to country sports, I may say, this gentleman could pass his time agreeably, if there were not a hare, or a fox, in his country. That calm and elegant satisfaction, which the vulgar call melancholy, is the true proper delight of men of knowledge and virtue. What we take for diversion, which is a kind of forgetting ourselves, is but a mean way of entertainment, in comparison of that, which is considering, knowing, and enjoying ourselves. The pleasures of ordinary people are in their passions; but the seat of this delight is in the reason and understanding. Such a frame of mind raises that sweet enthusiasm, which warms the imagination of the sight of every work of nature, and turns all round you into picture and landscape." - Tatler, No. 89.

Mr. Fairfield has patience with me in all my wild strolls, and sees a beautiful view of the sea, a disjointed rock, or a lofty tree, with an enthusiasm which equals mine. He is also interested and entertained with the simple and untutored urchins of the cottages; and I daily perceive, with renewed delight, that our sentiments, our opinions, and our principles coalesce. I am thankful to Heaven, for my happy, thrice happy lot; and humbly pray, that my Augustus's happiness may be as perfect as my own. I sometimes fancy that there has been a time, when his spirits and his gaiety must have been greater than they are at present; for I observe, the bright flashes of pleasantry, the sudden corruscations of his wif, the "scintillations of a playful mind," while they sometimes gild his conversation, with a ray, bright and dazzling as meridian day, are instantaneously obscured, as if by a sudden recollection; and an uncontrollable feeling of sorrow imperiously absorbs every trait of hilarity. But these transitions are unfrequent, though, in general, the even tenour of his demeanor exhibits more the temper of patient resignation, than of undissembled happiness.

You will smile at my nice definitions; but be assured, that whilst he is as worthy of the best affections of my heart, as he is at present, I will not quarrel with my husband, because his cup of felicity does not overflow. Nay, such is the interest that he now excites in my bosom from imagining him to have felt the shaft of undeserved misfortune, that I am sure I love him the better for it. And if I have a wish ungratified, it is the possession of his entire confidence, not for the gratification of a low and unworthy feminine curiosity; but that I might offer him all the consolation and comfort in my power.

Adieu, for the present, my dearest madam! - to you, without reserve, I unfold all the feelings of my heart; I cannot blush to acknowledge its soft emotions; when awakened by so deserving an object. I can never forget, that when addressing you, I am writing to my most valued and tried friend!

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD

IN CONTINUATION

New Park.

LAST week was devoted almost exclusively to the receiving and paying of visits; I am not sorry that I now find myself a little more my own mistress; perhaps I shall discover many of my neighbours to be very estimable characters on a further acquaintance; but a succession of visitors, where all are equally strangers and the mistress of the house is expected to find conversation, and to make herself agreeable, where too (as in my case) she knows that she is viewed with no common curiosity, is not only fatiguing, but awkward. Augustus endeavoured to ease me of the burden, however, and succeeded in no small degree. He has wonderful facility in general conversation, and can adapt himself to the capacities and tastes of any, whom he condescends to entertain, except they should be of that class, which we used to call, the genteel vulgar, meaning those important shallow-pated beings, who have but one recommendation, viz. money! - We saw enough of these in the West Indies, where riches are speedily amassed, - and that disgraceful traffic, which hardens the heart, and deadens the feelings, while it fills the purse, was eagerly prosecuted by such characters!

But I digress from my subject, and should not find an excuse for such a desultory way of writing as I have fallen into of late, with any other than my own Mrs. Milbanke! I must not indulge in caricaturing; and yet you will, perhaps, think I am doing so, if I merely describe things as they appear to me. Is it, that I see through a magnifying glass to discover defects? - Heaven preserve me from such an unchristian-like vision!

Within two miles of us, situated on a fine eminence, which overhangs the sea, and overlooks the beautiful little bay of ****, stands the Pagoda, the newly-raised edifice of Sir Marmaduke Ingot. Every order of architecture has been blended in this structure; and Augustus not unaptly remarked the other morning as we viewed it at a little distance, that it wanted but the bells which usually decorate the Chinese buildings, from whence its name is derived, to obtain another which would be as appropriate, viz. the temple of folly! The eastern nabob seemed to have harnessed his fleetest Arabian coursers to his chariot, when he came to pay his compliments to us; he really cut an appearance quite magnifique, as his gay equipage and dashy attendants drove through the park; - we knew there could be only one family so dazzling in this neighbourhood, and were therefore prepared for the guests, who made their entrée.

My lady is a masculine woman; very hard-favoured, and of a forbidding countenance; her voice is nervous (I do not mean nervously weak, but nervously strong), her utterance clear, and her conversation vastly above the common level of her sex; so much so, that I understand she is the general terror of the females in the vicinity, as she usually engrosses a great portion of the conversation, and will make herself heard, if not understood. But Sir Marmaduke, having acquired a very considerable fortune at Bengal, and liking to keep a hospitable and showy table, and to have his house filled with company; of course Lady Ingot gets a few attentive hearers of both sexes; and the good dinners, the turtle, and the curries at the Pagoda, obtain for her ladyship general sufferance, if not general favour. It was a very sultry morning, but Lady Ingot was wrapped in a most superb oriental shaw, while a fine lace veil descended almost to the ground, in some measure softening the asperity of her features by its partial shade. Sir Marmaduke's countenance is neither interesting nor disgusting; his cheeks are distended by a perpetual smile, and the powder on his head, seems to be laid on with no sparing hand, to cover the depredations of time. Mr. Ingot, a youth of about fifteen years of age, entered with his parents; he also was wrapped in a shawl, and his delicate fingers were warmed in a muff of the finest ermine, almost as large as himself (for he is very effeminate and diminutive in his person). His head was adorned by a hat, turned up before, with a gold button and loop, and ornamented by a plume of

feathers; he is really a pretty looking stripling, if he was not made so mere a monkey of, and dressed in such a non-descript manner.

After the first compliments, her ladyship began, and, with facility of expression, and great choice of words, felicitated herself on the pleasure she anticipated in my acquaintance; assured me, that she very rarely met with any thing like polished or cultivate society in the uncivilized part of the world, in which Sir Marmaduke had fixed the Pagoda. The situation had some advantages, - that of air, for instance, which she allowed might be salubrious to those whose corporeal frames were formed to come in contact with it. - "But, my dear exotic," continued she, "my tender sensitive sapling Frederic, is nearly annihilated by its keenness. I assure you, Mrs. Fairfield, it requires all my maternal vigilance and precaution to guard him from the eastern blast, which beats against us!"

"And yet, ma'am, the young gentleman looks well."

"Hectic, mere hectic! pull off your shawl, and lay down your muff, my love, - recline a little on the sofa; Mrs. Fairfield will have the goodness to excuse you."

I bowed acquiescence, and her ladyship proceeded: -

"Again I must repeat the pleasing anticipations in which I fondly indulge myself, Mrs. Fairfield, on forming a confidential intercourse with you. - Alas! I have wofully felt myself thrown out of my level in this abstracted country."

"The country is a hilly one, assuredly, Lady Ingot," said Sir Marmaduke, who heard only what she had last said, and answered literally; and then resume a conversation into which he had drawn Augustus, respecting a project which he had in contemplation of turning the turnpike road to put it to a greater distance from the Pagoda, as the mail-coach can now be seen as it passes, from the *salle à manger* windows; and some days, the guard's horn can be distinctly heard, when the wind is in the south.

"We have but few southern breezes, have we, mamma?" said Mr. Ingot, lisping, as he lay recumbent.

"I mean to get an act of Parliament," said Sir Marmaduke, "if I cannot do it any other way. In India we manage matters more concisely; for there, we men in power have the law vested in our hands."

"A summary mode of proceeding, if justice be faithfully and impartially administered, has its advantages no doubt," answered Augustus; "but in the case you are mentioning, I should imagine you will easily gain the consent of Parliament, Sir Marmaduke, as I conclude that it can be easily proved, that the alteration in question will be a convenience to you, without inconveniencing the public."

"Oh, not a jot, sir," replied the knight; "the objections that are started, are merely childish, and I can easily discern from whence they originate: - the opposing and unsuccessful candidate for the borough of ***** as he could not oust me out of my seat in Parliament, thinks proper to exert all his interest, to get a protest against me. But let him try his utmost, I shall not mind a few more thousands in this contest!"

"What may be his plea?" said Augustus.

"Oh, that by turning the road, I shall make it two miles further for the mail-coach, and more on the ascent; and that the post master at ***, will be obliged to sit up half an hour later, and burn half an inch more of his farthing rushlight!"

"Upon my honour, papa, you make me quite laugh," drawled out, Mr. Ingot, - "talking of the half-inch of candle!"

"This is an inconvenience to the public, surely," said Augustus.

"By no means, sir, - by no means, my good sir," said Sir Marmaduke, with warmth. "All the innkeepers, from *** to **** are to a man on my side; and you will acknowledge them to be part of the public, - for are they not publicans?"

"Sir Marmaduke, how often have I told you that I cannot bear a pun," said Lady Ingot.

"You told him so the last time he said it, ma'am," cried young Hopeful.

"I will allow them to be a part of the public, certainly," said Augustus, "but I fear a very interested part; and that it is their interest to be paid for two more miles in a stage is obvious."

The knight's answer escaped me, -not so his reddened countenance. Lady Ingot seemed to think her husband did not shine; and therefore she called off my attention to herself.

"Believe me, Mrs. Fairfield, there is scarcely a female besides yourself in this neighbourhood, who has ever set her foot out of England. Conceive what narrow minded, prejudiced beings they must be? Not an idea but what was planted in them at their births and has been handed down by mothers and grandmothers, and great-grandmothers, through countless generations!"

"It proves," said I, "that those ideas are worthy retaining? and I confess, I think our mothers and grandmothers were sensible beings. I rather learn towards old customs, and old notions, and can trace one of my ideas as far back as the Old Testament, where a lady of some note, being asked, whether she would be spoken of to the king or the captain of the boat, answered, with true feminine modesty - 'I dwell amongst my own people!' It has always struck me as a most beautiful reply. Retirement seems the peculiar and appropriate situation of our sex; and, the enlargement of the mind, and the conquest of prejudice, is not always achieved, perhaps, by visiting foreign climes!"

"You speak like a perfect English woman," said Lady Ingot; "I see you have already imbibed our air."

"I thank your ladyship for the compliment," said I: "I do not consider myself as more than half an English woman, and, it has always been my ardent wish to prove myself worthy of the title!"

"Oh, you interesting enthusiast!" said Lady Ingot; "with that action, that expression of countenance, so perfectly extraneous, and talking of belonging to this yea nay clime, where the plants indigenious to the soil, almost to a woman, sit with her hands before them, bolt upright and neither verging to the right not to the left, -look as if they had creaked necks, and cramped joints."

"I have remarked a very different deportment," said I, "and seem to have hitherto seen only those who diverge to the contrary extreme, - neither stiffened joints, nor limbs have prevented them from reclining and lounging with an air of ease, which I thought quite 'the rage.'"

"Oh! there are some who have imitated us East Indians," said Lady Ingot, wrapping her shawl round her coarse limbs, in the style of drapery, and gradually inclining more towards the back of the chair on which she sat, - "we have had an opportunity of seeing the graceful languishment of Circassian loveliness,

unrivalled for voluptuous and attractive elegance; and these degenerate imitators of that luxurious ease, which they have never felt, are the greatest treat to us, who see the distorted barbarism of the likeness!"

My dear Mrs. Milbanke, you have had a long specimen of the Ingots during their first visit. You have gained by it (if no entertainment) a perfect insight into their characters; therefore, I will not tell you what I think of them.

Augustus calls me to the evening walk. Adieu.

IN CONTINUATION

New Park.

MRS. HONEYWOOD is no more! - I have just read the account of her death in the papers. I was preparing to write you a long letter, - but, alas! I cannot. I have been recalling to my grateful memory the numberless proofs of kindness, and of maternal consideration, which I received from this regretted friend during our long voyage. She was an excellent woman, and prepared for death. But was her son prepared to lose her? - Poor Honeywood! my heart bleeds for him. I know the acuteness of his present feelings, for I witnessed the strength of his affection; and I could only compare it to that which I felt for my father: but I received the benign consolations of my beloved Mrs. Milbanke!

Augustus saw my emotion, at reading the death of this worthy woman, - he kissed off the tear from my cheek, and lamented, that he did not know the address of Honeywood: - "For did I," said he, "I would avail myself of the title of your husband, and invite him to a dwelling, where he would find comfort personified in my Olivia?"

I pressed his hand with grateful emotion.

IN CONTINUATION

New Park.

THE long list of our daily-increasing acquaintance must be omitted; the characters will develop themselves, as many of them came forwards at a grand dinner of the nabob knight's, which we partook of yesterday; we wish to be on good terms with all our neighbours; and Augustus or myself have no partiality for what is called a feast, yet, being long-invited guests (or rather, I believe, this said feast being prepared on our account), we went. I need not describe my dress, you know I have one plain unornamented style. Augustus approves it, and of course I do not depart from it; but Dido bids me "be sure tell Mrs. Milbanke that I wore my new diamonds in my hair, which looked very pretty and charming." Oriental magnificence was in full blaze at the Pagoda. Except not a description of its splendour from the poor pen of your Olivia; she must refer you to fabled palaces of the genii, and to the gay castles of fairy princes, and other eastern knights. The party was a large one. Colonel and Miss Singleton were the only persons, except the inhabitants of the mansion, whose faces I recognized in the group; and with the most gallant air on the part of the colonel, and the most girlish vivacity on that of his sister, they both ran, rather than walked, up to pay their compliments. At the same moment that the hand of Augustus was seized by a lady, who, fixing her bold dark eyes full in his face, congratulated him on his marriage, and expressed her delight at this unexpected meeting. The colour faded in the countenance of my Augustus - I thought his lips quivered - he certainly looked confused and embarrassed - he let his hand remain in hers, without appearing to know that he did so - and the would-be interesting colonel putting his hand to the side of his face, and grinning till he showed rather more than he intended (viz. besides all his white teeth, two vacancies on either side), whispered, -

"The mutual pleasure evinced by a certain party, is evident enough, to call forth a disagreeable emotion on your part, if aught disagreeable could lurk under a form so tender!"

I had not time to answer this complimentary whisper, had I been prepared; for my tender form was at this minute presented by Augustus to Miss Danby, and I bent my flexible joints to her in a courtesy. Assuredly, there was much constraint and embarrassment in Mr. Fairfield's manner, even whilst he made this introduction; but with the assured ease of a girl used to the world, the lady stared at me with an expression of unbridled curiosity, which made my cheeks glow. -What was the cause of Augustus's confusion? My dear Mrs. Milbanke, I asked myself this question. The humbled and mortified Olivia could answer it only thus (for neither the manners nor person of Miss Danby could ever have been interesting to Augustus; of this I was well aware): My husband is, then, ashamed of me - he is ashamed of my person - he dreads my being seen by any of his former acquaintances as his wife; - I must then be still disgusting in his eyes - he yet has not courage to face the "world's dread laugh!" These bitter reflections passed in my mind, as I observed that Augustus escaped from the rude survey which Miss Danby seemed to be taing of my person, as though he could not stand the scrutiny. - I hope it was only for a moment that I suffered these thoughts to ruffle my tranquility! - Augustus, too, soon recovered himself; and Miss Danby offering him her hand with great nonchalance (on seeing the nabob take mine, to lead me into the dining-room), he gallantly lifted it to his lips as he took it.

"We used to be famous flirts, you know," said Miss Danby. "Even so, believe me, Mrs. Fairfield;" said she, nodding familiarly at me across the table.

"And we mean to resume our old habits, of course," said Augustus laughing.

"And will you not retaliate?" said Colonel Singleton, who seated at my right hand, threw his most agreeable smile into his face as he asked the question.

"I don't know how far it would be proper," said I.

"Would ladies of the present century always stop to consider of propriety before they venture on this retaliation, I think we should soon find a material improvement in manners as well as morals," said a grave-looking elderly gentleman, who sat towards the bottom of the table. "But you ladies do not give yourselves time for reflection." And as he said this, he turned his head towards Miss Singleton, who, arrayed in pink muslin, and adorned with pearls looked as gay and airy, as her very gay and very airy dress could make her.

"As to giving ourselves time, you ought to know that it is not at our own command," said she. "I protest to you, that, for my own part, from year's end to year's end, I have not a day which I can call my own."

"Oh happy you!" said Miss Danby; "What an enviable being!" said she, apparently spoke from her heart.

"Nay, do you really think so?" said Miss Singleton, simpering with conscious pleasure. "To be sure, society has imperious claims upon persons in a certain sphere; and I have a very large circle of acquaintance, which is continually expanding."

"The expansion of a circle: that is not badly expressed," said Lady Ingot, in a half-whisper, to Augustus.

"And a magic circle too!" said a young ensign, who sat on one side of the speaker.

"The colonel has also a great many friends," continued Miss Singleton.

"A charming, elegant man! I am sure, ma'am, he must have friends wherever he is seen!" said an elderly and highly-rouged window, who seemed to be particularly attentive to Colonel Singleton.

"A vast acquaintance my brother has, ma'am - and people who live in the world have such various claims upon them; what with dinner parties, routs, concerts, plays, balls, and suppers, at Bath in the winter, London in the spring, and at all the fashionable watering-places in rotation during the summer, I have not a moment, that I can call my own, of the twenty-four hours. My brother and myself seldom retire till three or four in the morning, as we can find no other period than an hour before we court repose, to talk over the adventures of the preceding day, and settle a plan of engagements for the next."

"Does this mode of life never weary?" asked the grave looking gentleman.

"We must never allow that pleasure can weary," said Miss Danby, with gaiety. "It would be a contradiction in terms. - But pray, Mr. Fairfield, do tell me, how is my friend Mrs. George Merton? Speaking of pleasure reminds me of her - she used to be a dear dissipated creature, you know."

"She is just as you remember her," said Fairfield; but again his features underwent an alteration. Miss Danby fixed her keenly-scrutinizing eyes on his face, and said,

"Pray, Mr. Fairfield, what is become of Miss Forrester?"

Here seemed the very climax of Augustus's embarrassment. Indeed, my dearest friend, I saw him start; his face was convulsed; the most deadly expression of anguish overspread his features. I was just going to put a glass of wine to my lips; I had bowed to Colonel Singleton, in return to his drinking my health; but

the tremulous movement of my hand obliged me to set the glass again on the table; and, without knowing what I was doing, I sought for my smelling-bottle, and, had I not checked the first impulsive movement of my soul, I should have handed it across the table to my husband, - and should, most probably, have drawn on myself, if not on him also, the ridicule of the whole company. Miss Danby does not appear to want penetration, however destitute she may be of feeling; I am sure that she saw my emotion, and that the disorder of Augustus did not pass unobserved, for she followed up the question with -

"Poor Angelina! I should really like to know where she is. There was something vastly good about her; and though I used to laugh at her, yet I loved, her. - Pray, do you not know where she is Mr. Fairfield?"

"She is in heaven!" sighed out Augustus in a tone of voice scarcely audible, and, at the same moment, letting his fork fall on the plate he hastily averted his head from Miss Danby, and filling a bumper of wine, he eagerly swallowed it. Even Miss Danby seemed intimidated from asking him any more questions.

Lady Ingot turned towards, me - said, "A very mal-à-propos question that of Miss Danby's - perfectly English! 'How is she,' and 'where is she'; expecting verse after verse, like Chevy Chase. Mr. Fairfield has very concisely given her the dénouement in four words: for my own part, I always hold it as a matter of conscience not to make inquiries after absent friends, lest I should wound the feelings of those to whom I am addressing myself. People are so very soon married, or dead, or buried, and gone Heaven knows where, that I think it quite a solecism on good-breeding; but in India we discriminate with great nicety on every point of sentiment and manners, and, instead of making our conversation assume the features of a Moore's almanac, or a monthly obituary, raise the lively idea, and point the brilliant repartee!"

That I heard this ridiculous speech is certain, because I am able to retail it; but, my beloved friend, you would have pitied your poor Olivia, had you beheld her at this moment, as much as she did her agitated Augustus; evidently Miss Danby had struck the chord which jarred through his frame! - This Miss Forrester, then - this Angelina - she was the object of my husband's warmest affections - I am sure she was - his sighs - his melancholy abstractions - they are all - all for Angelina - and - I was going to say, that I almost envied the shade of Angelina - But I will try to be more rational.

When the gentlemen joined us in the drawing-room, Augustus was in high spirits, or appeared to be so; they were either affected, or produced by his having taken more than his usual quantity of wine. He seated himself next Miss Danby; she laughed, and chatted, and unceasingly rattled; talked of her poor Mrs. George Merton, in a pitying contemptuous tone, which intimated, that though she was her dear friend, she had a most hearty contempt for her. She asked, how long Mr. George Merton meant to plod on at the cent. per cent.; wondered why Augustus had thought fit to quarrel with the world, and leave it in dudgeon, when he was so formed for its enjoyment!

"I have not quarrelled with it, believe me," said Augustus; "I am, just now, better pleased with it, than I have been all my life before: I live according to my notions of happiness! (and he looked with an expression of grateful satisfaction towards your Olivia): and can I call myself out of the world, when I have, at this moment, the pleasure of sitting next to one of its gayest belles?"

"Oh nonsense, agreeable flatterer! nonsense!" said Miss Danby. "I am merely a bid of passage. Lady Ingot was obliging enough to give me an invitation to the Pagoda, and entre nous, I thought I wanted a little bracing for the winter's campaign, and my father having eben overwhelmed by the host of faro, it was a scheme of economics for me to come here, rather than to be in hired lodgings at Weymouth, or dear delightful Brighton - But don't blab for your life. - I do assure you that I felt quite charmed to find that you

were in the vicinity, and mean to be vastly intimate with Mrs. Fairfield. I feel a very great predilection for her already. - Upon my honour she is not near so dark as I expected to find her, and for one of that sort of people, she is really very well looking!"

"She is one of that sort of people whose mind is revealed in the countenance," said Augustus, warmly, - "and hers is the seat of every virtue!"

I wonder I did not get up to clasp his hand in mine; and you will wonder, Mrs. Milbanke, how I could overhear this conversation, without standing confessed a curious listener: but, in fact, I appeared, at this time, to be attending to a most florid description which Miss Singleton was giving of the plumage of a fine bird of Paradise, which had been entirely spoiled by her feather-man, to whom she had sent it to be dressed.

During the whole of the day, I had observed that the elderly gentleman whom I have previously mentioned, had been very little regarded by the major part of the company, and that by the master and mistress of the mansion, he had been wholly overlooked; while Mr. Ingot had amused himself with making faces in derision at his back, and pointing out the unfashionable cut of his coat, and his silver buckles, to any one who would attend to him. A very interesting looking young clergyman tried in vain, by looks and mild persuasions, to deter him, but finding that he was wholly unsuccessful, he seemed in despair to give up the point, and to redouble his own respectful attentions to the old gentleman. Curiosity impelled me to inquire of her ladyship the names of these two gentlemen.

"Do you mean that antiquity?" asked she; "a relative of Sir Marmaduke's, I believe. His benevolence leads him to make the Pagoda almost a public receptacle. But as to collateral and genealogical descent, my dear Mrs. Fairfield, you will credit me that I never trouble myself about it; he may or may not be related: but I think his head is truly Grecian, and if it had the genuine rust, it would be invaluable. As it is, I like very well to see it at the table; it is of a good cast, a classical subject certainly."

"It bespeaks goodness as much as any countenance I ever saw," said I.

"I suspect you are physiognomist," said her ladyship; "I confess that I am no Lavaterian: my notions on the point of face-reading are deduced from the genuine Roman and Grecian antiques (of which I have some curious specimens in my cabinet of medals). As to the sublime and beautiful, and as to the grotesque and singular, I look at those for subjects of entertainment and laughter in this study."

"But there is a countenance," said I, "which, having neither a Roman nor Grecian, grotesque nor singular cast, is yet so interesting a one, that I cannot help asking your ladyship his name also?"

"His name!" repeated she, turning up her lips rather contemptuously, "he is a poor student of Salamanca, or, to speak, in a more common-place manner, he is an Oxford scholar, of the name Waller, who is here in the capacity of tutor to Mr. Ingot; though, Heaven knows what he teaches him, for I cannot find out that Frederic is improved by his instructions. His manners I fashion myself Mrs. Fairfield - that essential part of education, I told Sir Marmaduke, I must have the sole management of. I have read in some obsolete author, "Train up a child in the way he should go;" - now I could never bear to see the heir of Sir Marmaduke Ingot, stiffened and braced, to look as if he had been pulled out at a wire-drawer's. Ease and elegance are, in my opinion, terms nearly synonymous; hence I have made a point of letting him lounge, and loll, and curvet, in every interesting and careless attitude, from his cradle to the present period. OBSERVE my Frederic as he now lies serpentine on the carpet, Mrs. Fairfield - his form is symmetry itself - no ungraceful curve, no angular asperities of attitude - there reclines the true harmony of proportion!"

At that moment the young gentleman threw out one polished limb (commonly called a leg), as the old gentleman was coming near the part of the room where he lay; I saw the movement, and by an involuntary impulse sprang forwards, and, catching him by the arm, prevented him from falling.

"You are very good, madam," said he, "thus to prop an old man, from the mischievous tricks of an urchin."

Mr. Waller (the tutor) took the hand of Mr. Ingot, "Pray rise, sir," said he; "I am ashamed to see that you tried to throw your uncle on the carpet, and that you suffered a lady to assist him, while you continued in this lazy and disgraceful posture!"

"Uncle, indeed!" repeated he; "how often must you be told that her ladyship cannot bear that word, Waller? I assure you, sir, she will tell you it is the quintessence of vulgarity to use any of those appellations in good company!"

"I am not to be intimidated from speaking my sentiments, sir," said Mr. Waller; "and if the age and character of that venerable gentleman is no check on your impertinent behaviour towards him, I was in hopes that his relative claim might compel you to adopt a more decent mode of conduct!"

Mr. Ingot made a polite bow, smiled in Mr. Waller's face, and then reeled off to her ladyship, practicing the last new step; with great action he continued to whisper into her ear: she reddened and looked angrily towards poor Waller, who did not notice her I fancy; and the hopeful heir of the Ingots then fell back on the sofa, and amused himself with playing with the brilliant pendant which hung at her ladyship's ear. Mr Bellfield (for so is the old gentleman called), turning towards me, said -

"You have here, madam, a pretty fair sample of an only child! - Poor fellow! I pity him - but I doubly pity his misguided parents - what a store of unhappiness are they not laying up for themselves?"

I had nothing to urge in extenuation of so much folly, ostentation, and self-conceit, as the Ingots had displayed, but I contrived to change the subject, and found Mr. Bellfield a very sensible and entertaining old man, somewhat cynical in his opinions, and quaint in his expressions; his manners are not modeled from the present times, but they take their tone, from his principles, which are fixed and firm, and can stand against any modern innovations and refinements.

You will think I never mean to throw my pen aside. I must for the present wave the introduction of any new characters, to talk of myself, and of my dearer self, my husband. Augustus returned home dispirited and abstracted; I avoided inquiries; for, alas! I knew that Miss Danby had recalled those thoughts which oppressed him. Unsuspicious of my being acquainted with this, he yet felt it necessary to account for his alteration of manner, and complained of a head-ache. In my turn I dissembled, and feigned sleep, when the heart-piercing sighs of my husband kept me waking at his side, during the greater part of the night; my tears flowed in silence: and thus I was an unknown participator in his sorrows. Oh, Mrs. Milbanke, how happy, how blest would be the lot of your Olivia, if her Augustus would but repose his cares in her faithful bosom! I would console him, I would listen to him while he talks of her whom he has lost for ever! I would throw off the weakness of my sex, I would patiently listen to his animated description of her beauties and her virtues, and I would daily strive to bemoan like the object of his sorrowing heart! but while he retains to himself this secret suffering, while he denies me the blessed privilege of sharing and soothing his sorrows, I feel that I am not half his wife - I am the partner of his bed - but not of his heart! There is so much to admire in the character of my Augustus, every day discovers so much amiability, such benevolence, such commiseration for the sufferings of others, that my regard increases with every added hour; and his dead,

his lamented Angelina, could not, I am sure, have loved him with a more fervent affection. Adieu, dearest madam,

I am always your own affectionate child - your own
OLIVIA FAIRFIELD

IN CONTINUATION

New Park.

WHEN we returned from church this morning, I found Miss Danby seated with her netting, and seeming to be very busily engaged at it, as if she had quite forgotten that six days of the week were sufficient to employ so frivolously, without trespassing on a sacred commandment. - Lady Ingot was playing at "Colonella" with Mr. Ingot, who languidly caught the shuttlecock as he reclined on a sofa, letting his mother stoop for it when he missed, which happened more than nine times out of ten. I stated at seeing the party assembled in the breakfast room, and more, at seeing how they were severally engaged - for Augustus and myself had walked to church, which is not above a quarter of a mile distant, and had entered the house by a private door. -

"And where, in God's name, have you been these two hours?" asked Lady Ingot. "We found the mansion depopulated, we walked in at the hall door, made our way here, and have been unmolested by a human being!"

"Not a male in the house,

Not as much as a mouse?"

said Miss Danby.

"That is pretty true, I believe," said Augustus. "My olivia is not content with being good herself, she makes others so likewise, and all our male servants go to church on a Sunday: we leave one female at home, to see that the house is not run away with, - if some of our good neighbours (smiling) do not perform that kind office for us!"

"To church! and have you, in reality, been at church?" asked Lady Ingot: "I had forgotten that it was Sunday!"

"If Mr. Bellfield and Waller had not reminded you of it, mamma, by coming in their very best suits to breakfast - don't you recollect" - said Mr. Ingot - "I am sure the old gentleman's square-toe'd shoes were polished as highly as his silver buckles; and I believe the well powdered locks of Waller did not escape the ken of Miss Danby, for I watched her eyeing him most intently during the *déjeûné*."

"What spirits you are in mon cher Frederic!" said Lady Ingot; "you will exhaust yourself."

"His spirits run away with him," said Miss Danby, "the idea of my eyeing Waller is ridiculous enough, to be sure!"

"Nay, if you come to that, I have been eyeing him in church," said I, "and am not ashamed to confess it; there is something vastly prepossessing in the countenance of that young man; and his attention to the respectable Mr. Bellfield, and their mutual devotion, is a very pleasing sight. Piety, true fervid piety, is a delightful contemplation!"

Lady Ingot writhed herself into a new Circassian attitude, and putting as much softness as she could into her voice, said, -

"Pray, were you not very cold? I never set my foot in that church but once, and then I was absolutely starved to death. I told Sir Marmaduke it was hazarding the very existence of our tender one there (looking at her son), if he ever let him enter it, unless he could portion off a large space for our separate use, and have it well stuffed and carpeted, and a chimney built, and a good register stove put in; but it seems there are great difficulties, in the way to all improvements in country parishes: - what with their rectors, parsons, their graziers and yeomanry, who talk of 'my pew,' and 'mine,' with as much tenacity, as if one wanted to deprive them of any thing worth retaining. Sir Marmaduke has had so many things of consequence to attend to since we came to the Pagoda, that he has not had leisure to settle a plan for a little sequestration (as I term it); for his family's accommodation at church; and for my own part, I do not much trouble about it. My own religion, is the religion of nature! I can put up my aspirations, while walking in the fields or driving on the road, just as devoutly as if I was kneeling on the moist and humid pavement of some time-worn, superstitious structure, and catching a sudden death at the very moment I was praying to be delivered from it, - for nothing short of a miracle could preserve me!"

"The breaths of the greasy farmers is what I chiefly dread in these mixed meetings," said Miss Danby.

"But you used not to dread the infinitely more contagious atmosphere of a crowded assembly and rout," said Augustus.

Miss Danby coloured through her rouge at this well-timed rebuke, and in some haste began to unscrew her netting machine from the table.

"And what may you call this?" asked Augustus playfully.

"Now you know very well, Mr. Fairfield, that it is a vice."

"Oh, I don't approve the name at all, - never bring it here again of a Sunday, I entreat you, Miss Danby. These vicious pursuits must not be introduced into a quiet and pastoral country."

"I do verily believe that you are become a methodist," said Miss Danby; "you are so sarcastic too in your manner that I shall begin to be afraid of you, - and shall begin to hate you almost as bad as my friend, poor Mrs. George, does!"

"Oh, do not say so," said Fairfield; "let me not live to be the object of your hatred, fair Almenia!"

IN CONTINUATION

I DO not know why I have dwelt on the Ingots, except that, as they are to me a new species of animal, I feel my own curiosity, as well as pity, excited in analyzing them, and imagine that you will feel similar emotions. But today we will turn to a nobler and a more delightful inspection. The rectory would be frequently haunted by Mrs. Milbanke were she with her Olivia; (oh, that were!) Mr. Lumley is just the clergyman which my heart depicted him. I fancy he has known great trials and struggles in bustling through life, and endeavouring to bring up a large family in respectability; - and a conscientious clergyman is, of all characters, the one which is least calculated to do this; for as much as may be, he wishes to disengage his mind from all secular pursuits ("we cannot serve God and mammon"), yet this is wholly impossible, where few friends, and a scanty income, are the only reward for a life spent in the most noble of all causes. Mr. Lumley's long residence, and zealous administration of the duties of his office, as curate of this large and scattered parish, at length moved the heart of a man of some consequence in this neighbourhood, into whose patronage the living fell on the death of a rector, to whom Mr. Lumley had been, (during a long period of twenty years) curate; - and who had never entered his parish except to give his flock an annual shearing and sermon!

The living was presented to Mr. Lumley, who was truly worthy to be so preferred, which is deductible from the general satisfaction exhibited by his parishioners. Easy in his circumstances, with the means of forwarding his family in the world, the good man seems to be completely happy. You would admire his whole family, Mrs. Milbanke; the father, sensible, cheerful in conversation, eloquent in the cause nearest his heart, and making it the rule of his life; - the mother, unaffected and warm-hearted, ready to apply the balm of consolation, and the drop of sympathy, to every mourner within her reach; - the girls, frank, open-hearted, and innocent; - the boys, hanging and catching his sentiments to give the tone to their own!

Caroline Lumley is a sweet girl of seventeen; her beauty does not consist so much in feature, as expression: there is a native simplicity in her manner, which I have never seen equalled - and much mistaken if the eyes of Waller have not told a tale, which hers have understood. I have asked her assistance in forwarding a little plan for establishing a School of Industry in the village; this brings her more frequently to me, than I should otherwise, - her fear of intrusion withholding her from coming unbidden. She has frequently been my companion in my morning's ramble; and she is so sweetly grateful for my notice, that your Olivia could almost fancy herself a superior, instead of an inferior being, notwithstanding her colour! But, thank God, I am loved not feared by this child of nature, - my behaviour surprises and charms her, as being contrasted with the foolish hauteur of other strangers who have settled here, particularly the Ingots. Mrs. Lumley called on Lady Ingot, on her first coming to the Pagoda, - Sir Marmaduke returned it; and in an affectedly affable manner, which proved his mushroom pride and self-sufficiency, he invited Mr. Lumley to dine with him, excusing himself from including the females of the family, by saying, -

"Lady Ingot had a great many claims upon her in society. She was a highly-bred woman; it was necessary to draw the line of separation somewhere. She was sorry to refuse the pleasure of receiving Mrs. Lumley at the Pagoda; but if she did, Mrs. Notary and Mrs. Bolus might expect the same honour to be extended to them likewise; - thus the very canaille would be included in her ladyship's list of visitants, and her life would be subject to an eternal impost, from the levies of an inferior scale of beings!"

Mrs. Lumley has nothing of sarcasm in her manner, but she laughingly repeated this speech, saying, - "Verbatim, as it came from the courtly Sit Marmaduke; believe me, Mrs. Fairfield, though we all suspect that it was the florid composition of her ladyship, for it came off in rather too studied a manner to be

extempore. I courtesied, and was not much mortified at coming below the prescribed standard; and the good man there, in his own placid tone, thanked the Knight for the honour of his invitation, - but said, he was well aware that the hours and the society of the Pagoda would ill coalesce with his humdrum mode of life and obsolete ideas, and therefore desired to be excused likewise! - This refusal on his part seemed to be vastly well taken, and Sir Marmaduke is on the best of all possible terms with us. He always bows and smiles, inquires cordially after my health, asks after my little family, then how many children I have, and the age of the youngest, when he meets me; - passes the children one day, and makes an apology for forgetting them on the next; and when he, mounted on his dashy phaeton, meets me trudging along the lanes, he invariably stops to express his fear of my getting an illness by encountering so much dirt."

IN CONTINUATION

THE amiable simplicity and good-humoured frankness of the Lumleys, are well contrasted by the assuming pride and false consequence of the Ingots, in the little trait which I gave you yesterday. - Ah, my dear Mrs. Milbanke! if the little great would but behold themselves as they are viewed by those from whom they have departed under covert of Sir Marmaduke's "separating line," they would surely learn to despise themselves; but those beings who court popularity are beset with a train of parasites, of Danbys and of Singletons, who flatter, who compliment, and who laugh at them in a breath!

Even Augustus, - even your Olivia, who prides herself on her ingenuousness of character, even we are silent; and we would keep on a neighbourly footing at the Pagoda, we must not always express our real sentiments. And yet we purposely left the crowded haunts of the city, to escape from all the ceremonials of fashion and the tax which the arbitrary customs of the world has imposed so heavily upon reason and common sense. Yet they have followed us into retirement, and, unless we would really turn hermits, and entirely seclude ourselves from society, we must be content to pay the common levy; - for, to form a truly unvitiated and primeval neighbourhood of undisturbed truth, simplicity, and innocence, we must revert to the golden age, and to the rapt reveries of enthusiastic poets. Happy is it, when, with no overstrained fastidiousness, we can consent to take the world as we find it, when we endeavour to mend where it lies in our power, and firmly resolve not to make it worse by our own example. If I was to brace myself up, and with affected authority take upon me to correct the follies which I observe at the Pagoda, I should most assuredly draw down a great deal of odium on myself, and, to the other failings of her ladyship, add those of rancour and malice to her nearest neighbours.

We have heard nothing of Honeywood, or to what spot he has bent his course, in pursuit of consolation. I fear he thinks himself forgotten by your Olivia. Yet surely, he could not have appreciated her character so unjustly; rather should I suspect that he fears to obtrude on my happiness, with his grief! Yet that Power who has bestowed on me a happiness, for which I cannot be sufficiently grateful has also taught me to "feel another's woe."

Adieu, my dearest friend! My heart always turns to you with a sentiment of reverential affection, which I feel but cannot express.

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD.

IN CONTINUATION

IN the plenitude of happiness, we sometimes grow childishly fastidious, and are easily put out of humour. I feel ashamed to own, that this has just been my own case: but all my weaknesses shall be confessed to my beloved Mrs. Milbanke.

I have received a letter from Mrs. Merton; she is coming to pay me a visit. You know, my dear friend, that I do not love her. I confess, that I felt a pain at my heart, wholly unaccountable even to myself, as I read the intelligence. It seemed as if she were coming to disturb my halcyon felicity; it seemed, - I know not what. But you may suppose that I do not exaggerate my feelings when I tell you, that Augustus observing me, said, in a voice of affectionate inquiry, -

"No ill news, my love, I trust!"

This brought me to come sense of my weakness to call it by no harsher name. I had nothing to allege in my excuse. Indeed, I had not words to answer him, so I put the letter into his hands. - In his turn, Augustus seemed to receive a damp from the promised visit.

"Do as you like, my Olivia," said he, returning me the letter.

"We shall see Mrs. Merton, of course," said I: "you know we have no engagements."

"It is, of course," said he, "for you to forget that she invariably made you the object of her affront and insult. But your unparalleled sweetness and forbearance is what I must ever remember!"

"Oh, I am so vulnerable to praise from you," said I, "that I must receive Mrs. Merton's visit for even were I sure of experiencing similar treatment from her, I should now be doubly supported from the proud consciousness of your esteem!"

"No, my generous girl," said he, "her rudeness must never be repeated! I have now a husband's claim, and I will see that none injures my wife with impunity! - Yet hear me, whilst I conjure you, that from no false pride and punctilious delicacy towards me, you receive the visit of my brother's wife! God knows, that I have no relative - no affection for her of any kind. She has been my - Do not put a tax on your own feelings, to avoid wounding mine, my Olivia," said he, recollecting himself after pausing abruptly, and heaving a bitter sigh; - "for I protest that was she not the wife of my brother, I would never behold her more!"

"But as your brother's wife," said I, smiling.

"My Olivia will always have it her own way, and that way is always right," said he. "You must extend the invitation to my nephew, your little favourite."

"Most assuredly I will!"

And so ended this conversation; though I freely confess, that a gloom comes over my mind, which I cannot get rid of, when I think of entertaining Mrs. Merton as my guest. I do not fear her, Mrs. Milbanke; she cannot have power to harm me, blest as I am with my husband's protecting love. I do not hate her; for I trust I have attained that rule of Christian forbearance, which teaches us to "pray for those who despitefully use us." But I shall feel awkward and constrained, while performing the rites of hospitality, and apparently extending the hand of friendship, where I cannot respect or esteem.

Dido is as much out of sorts as her mistress; she does not like the idea of the tonish (or rather townish) Abigail, and the monkey footman, who treated her with so much sang froid, at Clifton and in London. "But here," she says, "thanks to my good lady, - Dido be Misse below stairs, and treated by all as if me was as good as another, for all me be poor negro wench!"

Ah, my good Dido, perhaps both your "good lady," and yourself, may find the difference of entertaining, and being entertained! Yet Dido is determined that nothing shall be wanting on her part, towards receiving our guest stylishly; and she has been in a prodigious bustle ever since I made her acquainted with the contents of my letter.

Augustus bids me make up my packet for Jamaica, as he can get it conveyed to Bristol by a gentleman now setting out. May every earthly blessing attend you, my ever dear friend! - so will always pray your affectionate

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST

THE WOMAN OF COLOUR

VOLUME II

PACKET THE FOURTH

New Park, Devon.

SCARCELY do I send off one packet ere I begin another, so great is my satisfaction in addressing myself to my dear Mrs. Milbanke, and so well am I acquainted with the fond reception which she will always give to them. I believe I have never told you, that at the entrance of the park there is a neat little cottage, which is nearly concealed by the venerable elms which are planted in order to mark the direct approach to the house, and are continued in a fine avenue, quite in the old style (although the place be rather unjustly termed New Park). There is something formal in this straight lined road, to be sure, but venerable in their formality. I am inclined to behold them with as partial an eye as Mr. Seagrove (the gentleman of whom we rent the place), and I would not willingly lop a branch, or disturb a rook's nest. I like to walk under the shade of those trees which were planted by the hands of those who have long lain in the dust. My mind is tinged by melancholy, but it is not of an unpleasing cast. I am carried back to a remote age - I unconsciously look up to those majestic trees, which form a canopy to screen me from the fervid sun, to inquire into the manners and history of "times, long ago." The wind, whistling through their branches, seems to waft me the answer in a long-drawn sigh. I echo it responsively, and my reflections end with supposing, that the human mind, always the same in its feelings and emotions, its pleasures, its pains, its virtues and its vices, life, in every æra of existence, had nearly the same proportion of weal or woe! - So you find that my solitary meditations, like those of other illuminators, end just where they began. - But I have widely strayed from the subject with which I began; namely, the little cottage. It has been shut up till last week: its present tenant is an entire stranger. We like to know something of a person before we form an acquaintance; and yet I think it would appear very fastidious and narrow-minded in me, if I was not to visit so near a neighbour - a female too!

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert-air.

The inhabitant of that modest tenement may have a million times more innate worth than the titled she of a certain colonnaded Pagoda. Fairfield chimes with me in thinking it would be iliberal not to notice this stranger; yet says,

"Stay a little, my Olivia; let not the generous fervour of your feelings carry you too swiftly along; hear Mrs. Lumley's account: she, as the clergyman's wife, will most assuredly" -

"Now," said I, interrupting him, and laughing, "you must forgive me, for reminding you of the table of the cat and the bell."

"I acknowledge the propriety of the application," said he, bowing.

IN CONTINUATION

I WAS this morning walking in the park with Caroline Lumley, when we perceived four persons approaching towards us - two of either sex - each lady supported by a beau. We soon discovered them, as they came nearer, for Miss Singleton, leaning on the arm of young Ingot; Miss Danby on that of Waller. The quick retreating colour of my companion announced the latter pair to me, previous to my own observation.

"Oh, what a morning of Ossian!" said Miss Singleton, throwing out her hands with an air truly theatrical, and making a truly Arcadian appearance, in a gipsy hat, tied with a pink handkerchief, and ornamented by a wreath of half-blown roses, a mantle of the same coloured sarsnet, hung over her left shoulder, while her short and thin drapery discovered her laced stockings and delicate pink kid slipper. Miss Danby, in rather a rougher and more assured manner than the languishing shepherdess, declared the day was charmingly fine, but that there was a softness and stillness in the air, which would wholly have incapacitated her from walking with Miss Singleton without assistance. -

"So I have absolutely pulled this book-worm from his desk," said she, "to make him my walking-stick! Hav'n't I, Waller?"

"Make me any thing you please," said he, with a bow, not ungallant.

"Pon my honour that's not so bad," said Miss Danby; "I shall make something of you yet, I believe - He'll do yet, Mrs. Fairfield, when I can cure him of 'Ma'am,' and blushing at every word," for the eyes of Waller had met those of Caroline, and the colour rose in his cheeks at the moment when it forsook hers.

"A stick! - Waller, a stick! That's a monstrous good one, Miss Daby - I am sure I shall make mamma laugh at that - I am sure her ladyship will enjoy the new use to which you have put my tutor, Miss Danby."

"Talking of her ladyship," said I, for I had scarcely patience to listen to the impertinence of this young puppy, "I am reminded to express my surprise at seeing that she has given you leave to walk out, Mr. Ingot, this melting day."

"He is, indeed, composed of the most melting materials!" said Miss Singleton, looking at him with eyes of admiration.

"Perhaps you fear that he may dissolve," said Miss Danby. "Pray, Miss Singleton, don't let your blooming Adonis slip through your fingers!"

"Lady Ingot is not afraid of the heat, 'tis the cold she dreads for me," said Ingot, lisping out every word; "and most of all, a thaw - her ladyship calls a thaw the check to every genial emotion, and to all animal circulation!"

"Oh, 'tis a most terrible feel - pray don't talk of it!" said Miss Singleton, affectedly shivering.

"Pray, Mrs. Fairfield, have you yet seen your new neighbour, the fair incognita, at the cottage?" asked Miss Danby.

"No, I have not," said I. "Is she, then, fair?"

"That remains to be proved," answered Miss Singleton; "but the colonel, who has a truly quixotic spirit, where a female (and, moreover, a young, and, as it appears in this case, a concealed female) is engaged, swears by his gallantry, that he will get a peep at her, and then we shall have his opinion; for I assure you, the colonel is allowed to be some judge of beauty!"

"A gallant, gay Lothario!" said INgot; "is he not, Miss Singleton?"

"Why, to be sure he is gay;" said Miss Singleton. "But what can be said when a man is in the zenith of life, spirits, gaiety, and fortune, and every female heart falling before him? I talk to him a little seriously now and then, when I can find time, but he is so charmingly insinuating, and such an agreeable devil, that I'm sure if he had not been my brother, I must have been one of his victims!"

"Not his victim," returned Miss Danby; "you must, you would have been the selected she; for I think I never saw two persons more alike than yourself and the colonel, both in manner, sentiment, person, and conversation."

"Now, don't flatter me," said Miss Singleton, "though I must own we have frequently been found out for brother and sister." By this time, you are tired of antiquated folly, dearest Mrs. Milbanke; believe me, I was heartily so before we got to the end of our walk, and I could see that Caroline Lumley felt awkwardly constrained before these high-flown belles, who noticed her not quite as much as they would have done a dog which they had met with me. When the quartetto was fairly gone, and we were seated quietly at our work, Caroline said, -

"I think, ma'am, Miss Danby has something very bold in her look and manner - do you not agree with me? She may be a very well-bred lady, for I am not acquainted with many of those - but she is not at all like you in her manners."

"She has seen a great deal more of the world than I have, Caroline," said I; "and is much admired in its circles, I make no doubt."

"But do you admire her, ma'am?"

"That is not the question," said I. "Does Mr. Waller admire her?"

I said this with meaning - the crimson tide covered the neck of Caroline - her face was bent over her work; but she answered with a vehemence, which rendered her almost breathless, -

"No; I am sure he does not!"

"And I am sure of it too," said I. "Waller has a better taste - the meretricious allurements of folly cannot draw him aside from the contemplation of virtuous simplicity! - Waller loves you, Caroline."

"Oh, madam!" said she covered her face with both her hands.

"Be not ashamed my love, at having raised a virtuous passion in the bosom of virtue - I speak not from motives of idle or unfeeling curiosity, but from a real wish of assisting you - deal ingenuously, then, with me, sweet girl, and tell me if my conjectures are not right?"

"They are, madam. Why should I conceal any thing from you? Why, indeed, when my parents are both acquainted with, and approve, the mutual passion which subsists between Waller and myself? Mr. Waller came down here a stranger, as tutor to Mr. Ingot; there was little chance of our getting acquainted with him, as the nabob's family were placed at a height so far above us, that we neither wished an intercourse with it, nor would have been allowed it if we had; but Mr. Waller's constant and zealous attendance at church - his respectful attention to Mr. Bellefield, the uncle of Sir Marmaduke (a worthy old gentleman, whose story reached my father's ear) - these circumstances first conciliated in us an interest for Mr. Waller; - and then, when my father had a long and severe fit of sickness, he stepped forwards, volunteered his services, and officiated as minister of his parish nearly three months - no persuasions of my father could induce him to accept any pecuniary reward!"

"But he had his rich reward in your love, Caroline?"

"Ah, madam," said she, "I felt that I could not withhold it from him - My good parents soon perceived our mutual partiality - they sought not to restrain it - but they saw the imprudence of our thinking of any thing further, till better prospects should open to Waller."

"Has he expectations, then?" asked I.

"Alas! madam, I hardly know what to call them. A dependence on the word of Sir Marmaduke Ingot is, I sometimes fear, the slightest of all probabilities. He is, you must see, a man who ever pays court to the 'rising sun;' who would help to lift those who are already exalted, if, in any way, they could conduce to his own exaltation, but who would be more likely to crush than to succour the fallen."

"I fear that you have drawn too just a picture of a selfish man, Caroline."

"Waller submits to the dreugery that is imposed on him at the Pagoda (and papa often compares him to Jacob serving for Rachel), because he does not like to leave this neighbourhood; but there is no chance of his pupil's improvement, and this is of itself sufficient to depress the spirits and the exertions of a young man of talent and genius. He feels that the instructor can never derive any credit from the instructed; and though he does all in his power to give Mr. Ingot's mind a right turn, and to form it to laudable pursuits, and to plant into it just notions, yet his labours are daily subverted by the false and ridiculous theories and systems of his refined mother, and the overweening and worldly maxims of Sir Marmaduke. Mr. Ingot is any thing but a classical scholar; and, as to study, I have frequently heard Waller say, that it is impossible to fix his attention to any one subject for half an hour together; and when he has complained, at his first coming to the Pagoda, of the inattention of his pupil, her ladyship said, -

"That learning was never to be thrummed into the head of any one; that true genius caught it at intervals, when the glow of enthusiasm stimulated the breast; that she was a decided enemy to all innovations on the liberty of the human mind; that measuring out the classics by the hour and the rule, might do in a large school, where there was just ten minutes for the teacher to appropriate to each boy; but that, where the exclusive attention was to be directed to one, it was the duty of the tutor to watch for the auspicious moment - to follow the youthful mind in all its variations - to watch it with never-ceasing vigilance, and eagerly snatch the golden opportunity when it panted for information and instruction!"

"The golden opportunity has never arrived, and Waller, in following his pupil in all his whimsical and childish vagaries, frequently compares himself to the butterfly-hunter."

"But Sir Marmaduke, surely, he must be a very weak man, to suffer his son to go on in such a manner!"

"Sir Marmaduke has not had the advantages of a liberal education himself," said Caroline, "but he does not find that he is received the worse on this account since he has made his fortune, and assured that his son will inherit these advantages, he is very easy on the subject of his mental improvement, although he would fain have it believed, that he is of a very studious turn himself, and is fond of talking of his "literary avocations," though his studies never extend further than the newspapers, the army list, the court calendar, the court calendar, and the acts of parliament concerning highways and turnpikes; - but I must put a check on my tongue," said she, "Waller would not be well pleased to hear me revealing the secrets of (his) prison house!"

"I don't think he could be displeased," said I, "with the artless picture which you have drawn of his disagreeable situation. But such, I fear, are frequently the trials which genius, talent, and virtue have to undergo, in a world where the trials are always proportioned to the strength!"

I cannot say how much I admire this ingenuous girl, or how deeply I am interested in the loves of this youthful pair. For the present, adieu!

IN CONTINUATION

AUGUSTUS heard my recital of Caroline's artless tale with an interest as deep as my own; his strenuous exertions will not be wanting, to render them happy as they deserve to be. - Oh! how do I glory in a husband, who thus forestalls me in every benevolent intention!

IN CONTINUATION

AUGUSTUS brought Waller home to dinner yesterday, on a more familiar footing than he has hitherto been with us. We saw him to greater advantage; he has a courage in speaking his opinions, and an independence of sentiment, which pleased us both; for it proves, that, though placed by fortune in a subordinate situation, he will not crouch nor temporize with his own principles to please his superiors. He gave us an outline of poor old Bellfield's life -

Blow, blow, thou winter's wind!
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude!

Mr. Bellefield was a merchant of some consequence, and bore an irreproachable character both in regard to his commercial and relative connexions. His only sister married, was left a destitute widow with a small family, and it was wholly to the generosity of her brother, that she was indebted for her own and their existence. He sent the eldest boy to India, with strong recommendations; he returned Sir Marmaduke Ingot, a nabob, with an overgrown fortune: he found his uncle reduced by unmerited misfortunes, and labouring under difficulties in the decline of life, from which he had been exempt in the meridian. The hand of protection was most ostentatiously thrown out, not the hand which should have lifted Mr. Bellfield to his former situation, and strained every nerve to keep him there with his original credit! No! the nephew offered an asylum at the Pagoda, and the uncle was driven to an acceptance of it. His pride, his sense of ingratitude he had met with, were silenced by his necessities; - an offer from which his spirit would have revolted, his imperious exigence obliged him to accept! - "my poverty, but not my will, consents!"

Daily getting nearer to that grave, where "the rich and the poor meet together," in that contemplation Mr. Bellfield apparently looks beyond the unpleasantries which he daily encounters at the Pagoda. No tempers can be so dissimilar as Mr. Bellfield's and Sir Marmaduke's; "sanction, countenance, and favour," are the favourite words of the great man - while through his whole mercantile proceedings, Mr. Bellfield was invariably sanctioning, countenancing, and favouring in silence, experiencing true pleasure only, whilst benefiting his fellow-creatures. Though unhappily reduced to a dependent situation in the house of his nephew, yet he studiously maintains a freedom of opinion which does him honour, and which Sir Marmaduke finding to be impregnable, after a few useless discussions on his first coming, has ceased to attack, seldom entering into conversation with Mr. Bellfield; and thus he avoids showing him how widely different are their sentiments on most subjects. The old gentleman is suffered to pursue his own plan of amusement, and to walk over the grounds alone and unmolested, like an old horse, that "having borne the burden and heat of the day," is just suffered to exist by the master whom he formerly sustained on his back! - Lady Ingot feels an utter contempt for Mr. Bellfield, he has never been at college or in India, and hence he can be no companion for her. - She never checks Frederic in his facetious remarks on "old quiz," and "old square toes," and the duty and respect which the age, the affinity, and the worth of Mr. Bellfield ought to command from him, are thus converted into ridicule and insult! Waller is particularly attached to Mr. Bellfield; and I rejoice that there is one feeling being at the Pagoda, who will try to ameliorate his hard lot. The story of this unfortunate gentleman is interesting, my dear Mrs. Milbanke; it shows us how differently things are in reality, from their estimation in the world. By the world, Sir Marmaduke and Lady Ingot are praised and applauded for their kindness and benevolence to an unfortunate relative - We, who know the preceding and existing circumstances, see where their "tender mercies" tend. God bless you - so will ever pray

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD!

IN CONTINUATION

MRS. Merton is arrived; so obliging, so amiable; her "dear sister," her "charming Mrs. Fairfield;" I really fear I shall forget myself, I am so overwhelmed by civility; the park, too, is so beautiful, "she shall be strolling in it continually!" (by this you are to understand she has found her legs since I last saw her): then "we look so well, so handsome, we do so much credit to the air of Devonshire; Augustus is grown quite fat. She even longs for the day when she may prevail on Mr. George Merton to follow her example, and retire to such another elysium!" This rhodomontade, convinced as we must be of its insincerity, is rather teasing - Augustus can scarcely sit in: he never liked Mrs. Merton, and he is of too ingenuous a disposition to conceal his marked surprise, when he hears her thus boldly avowing sentiments in direct contradiction to her practice.

IN CONTINUATION

YOU will not have much added to my packet, as I shall devote my whole time to my guest during her stay. - I must appear deficient in professions when measured by her standard; I must therefore make up, by acts of attention, for these deficiencies in words: To-morrow we are to have the party from the Pagoda to dine with us, the Singletons, &c. - Mrs. Merton may talk to the delights of the country, but I know she would soon weary of our domestic meals, if they were not enlivened by a few new faces, - while I grudge every day that is passed otherwise than in rational conversation, and a parity of sentiment. In my husband's approving looks, in listening to the ingenuous remarks of Caroline Lumley, I find my highest pleasure; and I daily pray to Heaven, that, in the midst of this abundant happiness, I may not forget that I enjoy all through its benign mercy! I pray to have my heart more and more softened towards my fellow-creatures, that I may look with an eye of compassion on their failings, as well as their wants, that I may see my own deficiencies of conduct, and not suffer myself to be so puffed up by prosperity, as to forget my God! - Adieu, my beloved friend! Remember that I must always be your affectionate

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD!

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A long, long chasm appears in my journal! - Ah, my dear Mrs. Milbanke! I have sometimes feared that you would never again see the hand-writing of your Olivia - I have feared that the attempt to portray my tale of sorrow would unnerve my brain - Yes, Mrs. Milbanke, sorrow! Your Olivia, your late happy Olivia, she who prayed that the Almighty would not suffer her to be puffed up by prosperity, - it is she, who, bowing, humbling herself to his chastising rod, would now fervently beseech him to enable her to struggle with adversity!

IN CONTINUATION

THE bitterness of death is past - the climax of my fate is sealed - I am separated for ever from my - Oh, Mrs. Milbanke, I must not write the word! To weeks of agony of despair, is now succeeded the calm stupor of settled grief; - the short, the transient taste of perfect happiness which I lately enjoyed, has rendered the transition doubly acute. - Oh, my dear, my misjudging father! why did you not suffer your poor child to continue in Jamaica? - there, there was respected - for your sake, she was respected by all - while there, one dear, dear friend loved her for herself! Mrs. Milbanke would always have loved her, and cherished her, and there she could not have known the misery which is now her portion! - The prejudices of society which you feared for her there, have here operated against her with tenfold vigour; for it appears to be considered as no crime to plot against the happiness, to ruin the peace and the character of a poor girl of colour! - Ah! let me recall my worlds, - they are not written in that true spirit of Christianity which the benevolent Mr. Lumley would teach me. He is a true friend, Mrs. Milbanke - he feels for your Olivia; he pours his consolations, the consolations of religion, into her ear, and at the throne of mercy he prays that she may receiveth that support of which she stands so much in need! - "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy!" said the good man, and these words sank deep into my heart - oh, may they bring forth the fruits of piety and resignation! Crying and wringing her hands, my faithful back, my poor Dido, beseeches her "dear Missee not to write any more about it to Mrs. Milbanke, till her dear lady the better." I must take her advice; I grow faint, my hands tremble; six weeks like those which I have recently passed, must have unnerved the strongest frame!

IN CONTINUATION

IT is a long story, my dearest madam; yet you will be impatient to get it: and I must try to give you a minute relation.

What tranquil, what unalloyed happiness preceded Mrs. Merton's visit to New Park! It is only by recalling this bright picture to your memory, that you can form an estimate of the soul-harrowing reverse, - it was a picture of primeval happiness, of paradisiacal bliss! In Eden, our first parents were happy till the serpent - I dread to pursue the comparison - it was necessary to my happiness should be destroyed, I had too long enjoyed that situation which - Oh, Mrs. Milbanke! my soul shudders, my heart sickens, at the recollection of those happy days which are gone by for ever! - But of what avail are useless retrospections, perhaps they are even criminal, perhaps - Alas! If I will ever let you into the melancholy history, it is necessary that I should be more methodical!

All civility and harmony, Mrs. Merton appeared to be the happiest of the happy, and the gayest of the gay, on becoming our guest. She was delighted at seeing Miss Danby, and seeing this, of course I pressed that lady to be with us as frequently as possible; this she acceded to: the Singletons also, drawn by the magnetic attractions of a London lady, were daily at the park. We formed constant walking parties, and Mrs. Merton's languor and ennui seemed have been left in London: she was more pleasant than I had ever seen her; perhaps she smiled like Judas, to destroy more surely! The incognita at the cottage, her mysterious seclusion, had frequently been the topic of conversation; in vain had Colonel Singleton essayed every means for getting a peep at her; but her impervious solitude could not be broken in upon by any method he had devised. The ladies were all anxious to know something of her, and we frequently took our evening walks near the cottage, and directed our looks to its Gothic easements, vainly trying to glimpse the object which had excited our curiosity! Mrs. Milbanke, do you remember the night of the seventeenth of - ? With you it might have been calm; with us it was tremendous beyond expression! - No hurricane that I ever witnessed in the West Indies equalled it! The continued flashing of vivid lightning, the almost uninterrupted peals of thunder, the torrents of rain, - it seemed as if Heaven was pouring out its vengeance on our heads - every individual of the family arose: from my windows I saw the oaks rifted from their trunks; - I saw their branches hurled along the avenue; the whole park exhibited a scene of ruin and desolation! Mrs. Merton's shrieks rent the air, for she had no command over herself, while a cold damp struck at my heart, which I never felt but once before. That once, - oh, Mrs. Milbanke! it was before the marriage altar! - Yet I was soothed by the voice of my husband; I hoped, I trusted in the Almighty, and I thought of and prayed for those who were exposed to the "pelting of the pitiless storm!" The morning at length broke, the sun rose with unclouded majesty, as if to smile at the devastating influence of its precursor, night. We all congratulated one another on our safety; Mrs. Merton was as much exhilarated, as she had been depressed on the preceding night; and my Augustus - mine did I say - oh, Mrs. Milbanke! Mr. Fairfield, ever anxious to be of service to his fellow-creatures, proposed my making a tour of the cottages, and inquiring what injuries their poor tenants had sustained, in order that he might relieve them.

"The lady at the park gate must have been dreadfully alarmed, I should think," said Mrs. Merton.

"Indeed she must," quickly returned Augustus. "Olivia, my love, you never stand on the formal punctilios of ceremony, when it is in your power to be useful; we will go by the way of the park gate, and you shall approach the house, and send in your message to its inhabitant."

An unusual animation seemed to overspread the countenance of Mrs. Merton, as she announced her intention of accompanying us in our errand of mercy.

"The park is very damp," said Augustus, who, I believe, did not much wish to have her witness of his acts of beneficence; as he usually fulfilled the law of Revelation, and suffered not his left hand to know what his right hand had done.

"Oh, you have taught me to laugh at my foolish fears concerning damp and cold!" said Mrs. Merton.

Miss Danby and Miss Singleton then walked in, and began to give a history of their affright during the storm. The cupola of the Pagoda had been carried away; Mr. Ingot ran into a dark closet, and her ladyship had been employed in trying repellent experiments to keep off the electric fluid, after stuffing her son's ears with cotton, to prevent his hearing the thunder. On hearing whither we were bound, the ladies, with one voice, declared they would be of the party; we could not refuse, but we contented ourselves with a very cursory view of the little cottages in the village, Mr. Fairfield giving private instructions for those persons to call at the house, whom he judged in most need of assistance. We at length reached the park gate by a circuitous route; for frequently had our progress been impeded by the interposing branches of the oaks, which, rent by the storm, lay entangled under our feet, while the rain had washed off the grassy turf, as though it had been inundated by a whelming flood, and the trees were entirely divested of their verdure; the poor sheep seemed to herd together, as if not yet recovered from their affright; and the birds flew about in circles, their nests entirely destroyed. I hinted to the ladies, my companions, that I thought it better to advance to the house alone; but, impelled by curiosity, they proceeded, and only halted a few paces, whilst I applied my hand to the knocker. At the moment I did so, a violent shriek from within saluted my ears. The door was burst open - a female rushed out. She sprang by me, crying, "Save, oh save me! - Augustus, save me!" - She sank on the turf at the feet of Mr. Fairfield. - Colonel Singleton followed from the cottage. He tried, in some confusion, to account for his appearance; but I heard him not - I saw Augustus only. - Astonishment and surprise were the expression which momentarily overspread his features, - but to these appeared to succeed, fear, apprehension, anxiety, love! - Yes, love, Mrs. Milbanke! - He held the inanimate form of the lady to his bosom; he conjured her to open her eyes, to awake - he called her his wife - his best-beloved, his lamented Angelina! - He saw, he heard me not, even while I frantically knelt at his feet, and conjured him to tell me the meaning of the words he uttered!

The three ladies expressed their wonder and their surprise in terms suitable to their respective characters; but I remember that both Mrs. Merton and Miss Danby seemed to recognize the lady: they called her Angelina - Miss Forester! - Too well I remembered these names - I felt the stroke of anguish - it seemed to pierce my heart - to fire my brain! - I, too, fainted in my turn! How long I continued in this state, I know not; when I came to my recollection, I found myself in bed; Caroline Lumley and Dido sitting one on either side of me. I spoke, but I had no idea of the occurrence that had brought me there.

"Blessed be our good God!" said Dido; "I hear my dear Missette speak yet once more again!"

While Caroline kissed my hand in silence, a tear dropped on it. The traces of memory were now busily returning; they threatened to unsettle my brain! - I passed my hand before my face, and then said, -

"Oh, Caroline! was it a soul-harrowing vision that I saw? or did Augustus clasp another to his heart?"

"Do not agitate yourself, my dearest Mrs. Fairfield!" said Caroline; yet her own voice faltered, as she pronounced the last two words. "You must not think - every thing depends on your being tranquil!"

"Must not think!" said I - "Alas! I see, I feel there is some dreadful calamity fallen on my defenceless head!"

Caroline sighed - Dido fell on her knees - she collapsed her hands together, and turning up her eyes, so as to show only their whites, she muttered some words with a fervency of supplication, which convinced me that her honest heart was bursting for her mistress!"

"Who was that lady, whom I saw in the park?" asked I.

"Pardon me, - I must not, cannot answer you!" said the gentle Caroline.

I referred my questions to Dido with my eyes.

"Oh, accursed, accursed wretches!" said Dido; "they that contrived so black a plot! - Oh, my dear Missee, we will go back to our own good country! - we will pray to a good God Almighty, to teach you and me to forget that we was ever set foot on England land! My poor Missee was happy in our own dear Jamaica; there every body knew she was Mr. Fairfield's daughter - good Massa's child - and, not a blacky of them all would have touched one sacred hair of her head, but in the way of reverence and affection!"

But here - oh, could the poor good Massa speak out of his grave, he should cry shame and vengeance on 'em all! - Ah, my dear lady; you be too good to stay here!"

It was in vain that Caroline Lumley besought Dido to be pacified; her heart was relieved by pouring forth all the bitterness of her spirit!

"Where is Mr. Fairfield?" asked I.

Caroline spoke not; she averted her head.

"Where is your master, Dido?" asked I.

"Dido has no master - Dido's poor old Masee be in heaven!" said she; her lip quivering, and turning pale from passionate emotion as she spoke.

"The uncertainty under which I labour, will unsettle my returning reason," said I. "Caroline, if you expect mercy at the day of judgement, tell me who was the lady I saw at the park gate? Was she - is she - or is she not? - speak, I charge you, speak, if you will not have me die before you!"

"She is - she is" - Caroline's tears fell down her cheeks - "she is Mr. Fairfield's - "

"You shall not say it - you dare to say the word in Dido's hearing, before her dear Missee!" putting her hand before Caroline's mouth.

"His wife - his wife!" cried I, "is it not so? Great God! then what am I?"

"An angel, a sacrificed angel!" cried Dido, again falling on her knees. "Ah, Missee! dear, dearest Missee! exert your own self - struggle - live - to show them all, that you be Mr. Fairfield's daughter!"

"Oh my father, my beloved, my regretted father!" cried I, "if you had lived, this had not been! - Yet I would not recall thee from happiness."

"Oh no, no - we must not, we cannot!" said Dido, sobbing convulsively.

"And where is Augustus?" asked I, Caroline was again silent: even Dido was so likewise. "Where is Augustus?" repeated I.

"He is at my father's," said Caroline. "Alas, Mrs.-! alas, madam! he is greatly to be pitied!"

"Oh, soften not, but steel my heart towards him, Caroline!" said I. "I must not think of him - of the destroyer of my peace - my fame - my happiness!"

"But hear his justification, dearest madam."

"Never, never!" said I; "never must I see him more! Better that I should believe him guilty, than to dwell on his virtues, to contemplate on his perfections, and to think of the felicity which once was mine! - Oh, Caroline, I am awakened from a dream of bliss, as short as it was delightful!"

"And my good, my dear Misse, too, who was so kind to every body - she who was every-body's friend - she to be so cruelly used; they think the poor blacks have no hearts; but I believe they have more heart and soul too than some of the whites - God help them all!"

Oh, Mrs. Milbanke, I have written till my eyes are nearly blinded. As I retrace my sufferings, it seems, that to have existed under them, I must have had a harder heart than the white ones, as Dido calls them.

IN CONTINUATION

WHAT a day was the one I have been describing! - Towards the evening, Mr. Lumley came to visit me; he feelingly entered into my distress, and while he lamented its cause, he pointed my thoughts towards heaven, for consolation; plainly showing me that all other hope was fled. I inquired for Augustus; my soul was upon the rack to hear of him; my heart (my variable, my fluctuating, but my still doating heart) was longing to hear his exculpation, even though he could be nothing more to me! I longed to know that he had not designedly planned my destruction; that he had not voluntarily caused my irremediable wretchedness!

"He is greatly to be pitied," said Mr. Lumley; "his distress is but little inferior to your own. To know himself the cause, though the innocent cause, of your ruin, is no common affliction; and his sensibility is too acute, his regard for you was too fervent, to let him bear it with firmness!"

"But how could he be in ignorance of the existence of his - "

"Alas! there is the mystery," said Mr. Lumley; "a mystery, as yet undiscovered: but I trust, that Heaven, in its own good time, will bring to light the projectors and the executors of an almost unheard-of cruelty. Mr. Fairfield has nothing to accuse himself of, except his concealed and clandestine marriage; a mode of proceeding altogether wrong, for, though existing circumstances may sometimes appear to acquire it, yet, in my opinion, it ought never to be adopted: disguise and concealment invariably hide or lead to something wrong; and the consequences have frequently been fatal!"

"Fatal indeed!" sighed I. "Oh, Mr. Lumley, had Augustus but confessed to me that he had once been married - had he only breathed a hint of the kind, and of his uncertainty with regard to the fate of his wife - "

"He felt no uncertainty," said Mr. Lumley. "To Mr. Fairfield her death appeared certain; and, much as he loved her - tenderly as he mourned her loss, I heard him aver (and, with what sincerity, his whole countenance testified) that he had rather, much rather, have had her lain for ever in the tomb, than by her sudden re-appearance and restoration to him, have thus caused the desolation of your happiness! Even Angelina, though supposing herself abandoned by a faithless seducer, even she would have been contented to remain in her disgraceful privacy, rather than have caused such an excess of misery by her re-union with her husband! - She seems an amiable and pitiable young creature; the faults of her husband were hers likewise; she should not have suffered her passion to overcome her principles, by yielding to a clandestine union. - Three estimable persons are thus made wretched for the present, though time - "

I hastily interrupted him.

"Time cannot cure a broken heart, Mr. Lumley!"

"Ah, my dear lady, I expect great things from you; this is an arduous struggle: but I firmly believe your strength of mind is equal to it. You must exert your courage - your fortitude - and that excellent understanding which you possess; moreover, you must lean on that Rock of support which will never fail you, - remembering, that these 'light afflictions, which continue but for a day, will work for you a far more exceeding weight of glory!'"

Ah! Mrs. Milbanke, if I had not felt consolation from such words, I had been unworthy the name of Christian!

IN CONTINUATION

AT length I begin to rouse myself from that state of inactive despair which had overwhelmed my faculties. For more than six weeks have I been confined to the house; during that period Augustus has continued the guest of Mr. Lumley, fearing to invade the delicacy of my situation by appearing here; and scrupulously avoiding from visiting at the cottage, lest he should hurt my feelings. To tell you the various plans which have agitated my mind, during this painful period, is impossible. I have applied to Mr. Lumley for his advice, and he has been the bearer of daily messages, of the most generous kind, from my - alas! I was going to call him - my Augustus. He has entreated me to continue at the Park - to consider it as my own; he has offered to remove to the utmost extremity of the kingdom, that, if possible, I may never be reminded that he continues in existence. - Alas! I can never forget him, Mrs. Milbanke; I can never forget his virtues - his kindness - his attention to your poor child! Wherever I go, the remembrance of these will break in on my tranquility, and by the strong force of contrast, blight every present prospect. I am not ambitious, my dear friend; you know, I never was. Retirement always suited my disposition, and the turn of my mind; - now, the obscurest nook, the most retired cot, would be my choice, where I might hide my head, and my sufferings together, and ponder over them unmolested. But yet, in privacy, I pant for independence! You, Mrs. Milbanke, are fully acquainted with the strange tenour of my father's will. By a wonderful transition of fortune, I am now, once again, likely to be dependent on the generosity of Mr. George Merton. Yes! my dear friend, it is even so; - this has been the point to which his wife has aimed. Heaven forgive me, if I wrong her by my suspicions; but I fear she has played a black part in order to rob me of that fortune which I did not value! A scene of distress, like that which was exhibited here, was, I find, too overpowering for the weak nerves of Mrs. Merton; she left the park, at a period, when one victim of her machinations lay stretched, in a state of insensibility, on a sick bed; - when another was nearly wrought up to a state of phrensy by his opposing feelings; - and a third, who had long been an innocent sufferer, experienced only a variation of suffering from the recent discovery. Ah, Mrs. Milbanke! do you think that creature deserves the name of woman, who voluntarily deserted persons whom she professed to esteem, at such a period.

Eager to exculpate himself, and to convince me, that he had not been actuated by any mercenary motives, in forming an union with me, Augustus, at his first return of recollection, sent for a lawyer, and though he left himself, his wife, and his child, (yes, a child, a beautiful boy of two years of age), entirely destitute, he made a formal renunciation of all claim to my property. Not so, his brother: - by the earliest post which could arrive after Mrs. George Merton's return to London, her husband wrote to Augustus, and said,

"That a recent discover having proved, that he had no claim or right to any part of the late Mr. Fairfield's fortune, he demanded its restoration, under the second clause of the will - and that if it was not voluntarily yielded, he should have recourse to legal means."

Stabbed to the heart at such an irrefragable proof of mercenary selfishness, feeling acutely for my situation, and disdaining that any interested motive should, for an instant, attach to his character, Augustus as hastily disclaimed all pretensions to my fortune, in a letter to his brother, as he had previously done in one to me. Mr. Lumley read me a copy of the letter - Ah! Mrs. Milbanke, what indignation at his brother's turpitude - what disdain at his false accusations - what pity - what compassion - let me say, what affection towards me, did it not contain?

"That God who sees my heart," said he, "knows that I married Miss Fairfield from the best, the purest intentions! It has pleased him to let our secret enemies triumph over the demolition of her happiness, for whom I would have yielded my life with cheerfulness. Oh, brother! let not avarice - let not any ambitious

or inhuman instigations of those around you, prevail on you to rob an orphan of her dower, even though the law should make it yours. Remember, that here, law and justice must be at variance; any dispassionate person must see the meaning of the clause annexed to my uncle's will in your favour. Your name will be held in contempt, and every tear of the forlorn and helpless Olivia, will be measured against your cruelty at the awful day of retribution! What has she now left which can reconcile her to life? Despoiled - fatally despoiled of her name and title in society, it is by benefiting her fellow-creatures, that a mind like hers can alone experience consolation: and would you deprive her of the means of exerting the benevolence of her disposition - the ever-active impulse of her pious soul? Oh, George - George! it is I, it is your brother, who has been the innocent means of ruining this angel's happiness! It is I, that on my knees entreat you, whilst scalding drops of agony blister my paper, - it is I, who beseech you to act with consideration and humanity towards the most unfortunate, and most estimable of human beings!"

Ah! Mrs. Milbanke, what a heart is this? How did I pride myself in the consciousness of possessing its tenderest regard! "Farewel, a long farewel," to all my dreams of happiness.

I find I must dispatch this packet. I grieve to think how I shall be distressing your affectionate heart, by the communications which it will bring you! - but I should feel a traitor to your valued friendship, if I were to conceal my grief. From your advice - from your sympathy, it is, under Heaven that I shall draw my consolations. I feel something of comfort tranquilizing my mind, when I reflect, that my distresses are not deducible from my own misconduct; that I can meet the maternal and inquiring eye of my best friend, and fearless say, "I am still your own

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD."

PACKET THE FIFTH

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD TO MRS. MILBANKE

Cliff Cot, near ****, Monmouthshire.

MUCH has been done within the last fortnight, and your Olivia is now addressing you from a very humble cottage in a retired part of Monmouthshire! When I found that I was considered by Mr. George Merton, as living at his expense, during the time I continued at New Park, it required little resolution to form the determination of quitting it as soon as possible. I made my intention known to Mr. Lumley and desired him to bring Augustus acquainted with it. Mr. Lumley attempted to dissuade me - I was not to be moved.

"Hear me, my good friend," said I, "and you will agree with me in the propriety of my resolve. To be indebted to the ostentatious generosity of the Mertons, for such a situation as this, is impossible! I believe the law might give them my fortune, and I have a spirit which disdains to enter into a litigation: - and without him, who, once cheered every scene to me, this house would be a gloomy prison! - Ah, Mr. Lumley! that cottage at the park-gate, that little cottage, would contain the love of Augustus; and that would be a palace of content. But I must drive such vain ideas from my mind! Am I not acting a very selfish part, Mr. Lumley, by remaining here? I am the barrier which separates Augustus from his - !" (I could not utter the word); "because misfortune and irremediable suffering have overtaken me, shall I continue to blight the prospects of all those around me? No! - I trust I have a better heart. If I cannot be happy myself, I will not retard the happiness of others!"

I sighed deeply, and weak "womanish tears," almost blinded my eyes, at the moment when I made these (I trust) virtuous resolves. My tears were infectious; the good rector wiped his eyes.

"Oh, come here, ye prejudiced, narrow-minded beings!" said he, apostrophizing from the feelings of the moment, and entirely losing the idea of my presence in them: - "Oh come hither, ye advocates for slavery! - ye who talk of the inferiority of reason, which attends a difference of colour, - oh, come here! and see a woman, - a young - a tender woman, who, in the contemplation of her own unparalleled misfortunes, and with a heart almost broken by affliction, yet rises with unexampled pre-eminence of virtue! - See here a conquest over self, which ye would vainly try to imitate!"

"Ah! my good sir," said I, "I know what is right, and I trust the Almighty will support me in the due performance of it. I had a glorious example in my mother, Mr. Lumley. - My mother, though an African slave, when once she had felt the power of that holy religion which you preach, from that hour she relinquished him, who had been dearer to her than existence! And shall I then shrink from a conflict which she sustained? Shall I not go on, upheld by an approving conscience, and the bright hope of futurity?"

IN CONTINUATION

I HAD seen a cottage advertised to be let in Monmouthshire, which seemed to meet my wishes, with regard to the retiredness of the situation, and its size, which, from the printed description, was diminutive enough; thither I wished to bend my course, and, previous to the above conversation with Mr. Lumley, I had written to make inquiries concerning it. In the interim, I understood from him, that Augustus had received a very angry letter from his father, accusing him of the most criminal intentions in concealing his former marriage, and pointing to this as the cause of all the distressing events which had ensued. Mr. Merton ended, by disclaiming all interest or connexion with him; and he bade him seek that maintenance for his wife and child by his own exertions, of which he was justly deprived in every other way.

I also received a letter from each of the Mr. Mertons. My uncle condoled with me in a very polite and complimentary style on my "recent distress:" - talked of my fortitude and strength of mind, and offered me all the service and advice in his power, and subscribed himself, as usual, my very affectionate uncle! The professions of Mr. George were a vast deal more diffuse (I shall enclose both the letters); it was plain that he considered himself as the master of my future fate, and after bidding me not to despond, but to be reconciled to my misfortune, he ended with almost commanding me to come to London, and to place myself under the protection of Mrs. George Merton!

Disdaining to receive even pretended favours from such hands, I did not answer this letter; but replying to my uncle, I made him acquainted with my intentions in regard to my future mode of life, and voluntarily relinquished all further claim to my father's fortune, if he would secure to me, from his son, fifty pounds every three months. This, I said, would secure a maintenance for myself and Dido, and I wished for nothing further.

The earliest post brought me a fifty pound bank note, as an advanced quarter, from Mr. George Merton, with his promise of remitting the like sum every three months. The account of Cliff cottage was satisfactory; I settled to take it by letter; and ere we mentioned that we had fixed on a place of residence, Dido had privately began to pack up my wardrobe. The jewels which had been presented to me on my marriage by Mr. Merton, it was my firm resolve to give to Mrs. Augustus Merton; I had also a great curiosity to see her, and I resolved to be the bearer of them myself!

In the course of my melancholy tale, I feel that I hurry over some occurrences, while on others I am unnecessarily diffuse; but you will impute these seeming inconsistencies of style to their real cause. But as I am not sat down in one unvaried routine of solitude, and as writing employs my time, if it does not amuse it, I will endeavour to be as particular in my narrative as I can.

God bless you, my dear madam ! - till to-morrow I must throw aside my pen.

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD.

IN CONTINUATION

WITH the approach of misfortune, my summer friends flew off. I imagine that Miss Danby had given out at the Pagoda, that my fortune was forfeited to Mr. George Merton, - and to trample on the fallen, is no new trait in the character of the Ingots. I received a pompous and pedantic note from her ladyship, where, after condoling with me on my reverse of fortune, she advised me to go out to the East Indies, where, with my accomplishments, she doubted not but my colour would be overlooked, - and, by a feigned name, I might soon form an advantageous matrimonial connexion.

I should imagine that the crimson was the predominant colour in my cheek as I perused this vile scroll, which finished with an offer of protection, and letters of introduction at Bengal, from Sir Marmaduke, if I approved the plan. I threw the note into the fire, and sent word to the servant who brought it, that it required no answer. The next piece of penmanship I shall transcribe verbatim:

"My dear Madam,

"NONE of your friends have more sincerely sympathized with your feelings on a recent occasion than myself, and I should not have contented myself without personally offering you compliments of condolence, had I not been informed that you were still confined by indisposition to your room; but, lest you should engage in any future plan which may prove an obstacle to my tenderest wishes, I avail myself of this method of offering you my protection. I have been for some time in quest of a companion who could interest my heart; fate has now propitiously blessed me with an opportunity of offering my adoration at that shrine, where my warmest admiration has been attracted, since I had first the honour of being introduced to your acquaintance. Your own terms shall be mine - our connexion shall be kept an inviolable secret from the whole world if you wish it, through, for myself, I disclaim all the prejudices of society, and should not scruple, a moment, to avow myself the warm admirer of a Woman of Colour! I remain, most unalterably,

"Your much attached, and Devoted servant,
"ROLANDO SINGLETON."

Not even to Mr. Lumley could I prevail on myself to relate this insult. - Alas! I feared not for myself; but had Augustus heard of it, his indignant spirit would have fired, and the consequences might have been dreadful. Silence, a proud silence, I have observed on this disgraceful subject, except to you. I feared even to put my resentment into words, in addressing the colonel, lest by any means it should transpire; and I trust this sapient hero will construe the silence of the Woman of Colour into utter contempt. -

But, oh! how slight do these insults appear from the proud and the unprincipled, when contrasted with my real source of distress! The whole world is to me as nothing; its applause or its censure would alike be disregarded by me: though I trust I shall ever retain strength and resolution to act, so as not to deserve the latter, though I may not inherit the former!

IN CONTINUATION

EVERY thing was prepared for my journey into Monmouthshire, I had not revealed my determination to a single person, save my faithful Dido. I dreaded the persuasive entreaties of Mr. Lumley; I dreaded the affectionate sorrow of Caroline and of Waller; I dreaded to hear of the distracting emotions of Augustus!

The evening preceding the day of my departure at length arrived. I resolved to walk across the park, and to visit my innocent rival; perhaps there was something of romance in this resolution, but I had determined on it; I longed to behold this (to me) most interesting of females; I wished to show her that I retained no illiberal prejudices against her; therefore putting the casket in my pocket, which contained my intended present, and flinging my shawl round my shoulders, I sallied forth. My soul seemed tamed with a gloomy sort of resolution; the evening was in unison with the feelings of my mind, it was cold and stormy; the quick receding clouds as they passed above me, now illuming, now shading my way, presaged a coming storm. The park was damp, the branches of the trees lay on the ground; it seemed as if even the inanimate objects had felt the recent shock which had shattered my nerves, and were mourning the wreck of happiness: the wild thought was soothing my soul, yet i felt that my recent convalescence prevented my walking with my usual step- now firm, now unsteady and feeble. I more than once tottered to a tree, and held by it to support me, while I recovered breath to proceed; when, turning to cast a look at the house, from a point of view where Augustus and I had always been used to admire it together, I heard a hasty and approaching stemp, from a copse of underwood which was near me; - the little gate fell, and Augustus stood before me! - pale, wan, his hair dishevelled, his whole form forcibly proclaiming the extent of his late sufferings! - I started on seeing him.

"Oh, best - most injured of women!" said he, clasping his hands wildly together, and flitting by me as he spoke. -

"Augustus!" said I, for my resolutions returned with the pressure of the moment; "Augustus! And do you then fly me?"

"And can you for a moment bear my hateful presence?" asked he, quickly returning, but his countenance evincing the agony of his mental conflict.

"Yes, I thank God that I can!" said I, "though I did not seek this interview; yet will I not shun it, but rather rejoice in the opportunity which is thus accidentally afforded me, of assuring you that I feel not the slightest spark of resentment towards you; that I will fervently beseech Heaven for your future happiness, and pray that you may forget that there exists such a being as myself!"

"And can you do this? Incomparable creature! can you do this?" said Augustus, as he threw himself on his knees before me, and frantically seized my hand!

"Yes," cried I; "I can do more than this, if you will not unnerve my resolution, by thus giving way to the excess of your feelings! - Pray, I entreat you, rise Mr. Fairfield."

"Fairfield! - alas!" said he, "I no longer bear that honoured name; I am unworthy to bear the name which belongs to you!"

"Whatever name you bear," said I, "I shall always consider you as friend, - you shall always be regarded in my memory with esteem."

"Kill me not by such kindness; reproach, accuse, revile me; call me base destroyer of your fame, your peace, and I will plead guilty to it all - but in mercy spare me from those words of softness, which are sharper, which cut deeper here," laying his hand on his heart, "than pointed arrows!"

"Rise, pray rise!" said I; "this posture ill befits me to allow, or you to retain - Pray, Augustus, exert yourself, re-assume your self-possession; fancy you are talking to a friend from whom you are going to be separated for a long period; a friend who takes this opportunity of lamenting, that the transitions of fortune prevent her from demonstrating her regard in any stronger way than words." -

"The transitions of fortune!" repeated he, stamping his foot with vehemence on the ground, "say, rather, the hellish machinations, the sordid avarice of perfidious fiends of malice! - Oh, Olivia, amiable, revered Olivia! how may you regret the day when you left your native island! - better to have been landed on a savage shore of barbarians, than to have found, as you have done, your bitterest enemies, in uncle, brother, husband! those names which, in the common lot of human life, are associated with all that is affectionate and tender!"

"Oh!" said I, the tears rolling over my face, and wringing my hands in agony, "let me entreat you to leave me Augustus, if you will thus add to my distress. I thought I had acquired fortitude to sustain any trial, but, indeed, if you will thus give way to useless recrimination, you will make me as frantic as yourself!"

"Oh, pardon - pardon!" said he; "I know not what I do, or what I say!"

"Come with me," said I, once more reassuming some appearance of composure; "come with me."

"Whither?" asked he.

"I am going to visit your Angelina!"

Augustus staggered as he held my hand - his cheek was blanched - he looked at me - never can I forget the expression of entranced admiration and surprise, which his features underwent.

"Can you be serious, Olivia - Do I touch your hand? do I feel your throbbing pulse? or are you not a being of ethereal mold?"

"Alas! a very mortal!" I exclaimed; "but, anxious to behold your Angelina, to love her for your sake, to look at your little boy - and to tell your wife, that I will pray for her and your felicity - I have determined on going to her, and let us go together, my friend!" - The big tear rolled down his cheek.

"I have not seen - I have not been at the cottage since that day - that never-to-be-forgotten day."

"I know it," said I; "Mr. Lumley has acquainted me with your self-command and forbearance, and it is your example which has excited my emulation - Come, you cannot refuse to go with me - but remember, that though you have seen me overcome by the sight of your self-upbraidings, together with the sudden surprise of this interview, I am not going to overwhelm Angelina with a picture of my sufferings, and enhance a sacrifice to her, which I am constrained to make. - No! I am going to speak comfort to her, by telling her that I hope soon to regain my own tranquillity, and that it is my earnest hope that her re-union with her husband may be lasting and uninterrupted."

"Where could you acquire such heroism, such generosity of soul?" asked Augustus; "from whence do you service such unexampled magnanimity?"

"When the mind is thoroughly impressed with the consciousness of a super-intending Providence," said I, "it is taught to submit patiently to all its chastisements. 'Sweet, are the uses of adversity,' if it teaches us to amend our lives!"

"Amend!" said Augustus, "how is perfection to be amended?"

"Ah!" said I, "flatter me no longer with praise which I must never more hear - perhaps, even in this instance, I have erred - perhaps, I was too much elated by your approbation - perhaps, in the redundancy of my happiness, I forgot that this was not my abiding place; and by timely chastisement I shall be brought back to a knowledge of myself!"

"If you can thus find any reason for self-accusation," said Augustus, "what must I feel, who am conscious that it was owing to my clandestine concealment of my early marriage, that my enemies plotted my ruin, and cruelly produced this desolation?"

"That your secrecy in this respect was wrong," said I, "must be allowed; but by the faults of the past take a warning with respect to the future!"

"I can hardly ask it" said he; "but if at a future hour, I should have resolution to write down the events which led to this sad catastrophe, will you deign to read the history with candour and lenity, for I feel that to the character of Angelina Forrester I owe this explanation!"

"I will read it with all the indulgence you can wish," said I, "for I have already acquitted you in my mind."

"Generous - generous Olivia!" said he. -

"The Lumleys will always know my residence," said I; "to them you may safely consign the packet -"

"The Lumleys?" returned Augustus; "and must I then remain in ignorance of it? - will you seclude yourself from me? shall I never be informed of your health, of your welfare? - shall I constantly be accusing myself as the destroyer of your peace? - shall my tortured imagination be eternally haunting me with the remembrance of your misery?"

"Pray talk more rationally," said I; "a correspondence with you must be declined for both - for all our sakes; the sooner you forget me the better; the sooner I -" I stopped, I checked the unbidden sigh, I wiped off the involuntary tear and proceeded - "Augustus, you have not yet learned to know me. It is part of my religious duty to endeavour to resign myself to the all-wise dispensations of the Most High. I scruple not to own to you, that, as my husband, I loved you with the warmest affection; that tie no longer exists, it is now become my duty to force you from my heart, - painful, difficult I acknowledge this to be, for your virtues had enthroned you there! But this world is not our abiding place. I look forwards with faith and hope to that eternally happy state where there is neither 'marrying nor giving in marriage,' where there shall be no more sorrow, and where 'all tears shall be wiped away from all eyes!'"

"Heavenly, heavenly Olivia!" said Augustus, "I could now reverence thee as a beautified spirit! - Oh, how weak must I appear in your eyes!"

We had now reached the cottage door - Ah, Mrs. Milbanke! with what different sensations had I last approached it! I involuntarily shuddered as the hollow sound of the knocker reverberated as before, through the little dwelling - My feelings, as I entered the parlour, where sat Angelina at work, her sweet little boy playing at her side on the carpet, it would be impossible to describe; or to portray the conflicting emotions, and the animated transports, of the re-united wife and husband! While the gentle, the trembling Angelina hid her face, and poured her tears into her husband's bosom, I caught the innocent resemblance of Augustus to mine, and poured my caresses on him, that I might not appear as though I grudged them their happiness. The gratitude, the bashful timidity of Angelina, her dove-like eyes, her transparent complexion, the delicacy of her fragile form, all rendered her a most interesting object. She seems peculiarly to require the assistance and support of the lordly creature man, and to be ill-calculated for braving the difficulties of life alone. The speechless astonishment with which she received my present of the jewels, I shall never forget. I could have said, "These radiant gems which banish happiness but mock misfortune, I can easily relinquish" - but I contented myself with plainly desiring her to convert them to any purpose which she should deem most beneficial, and lamented that I had nothing better worth her acceptance to offer; then turning to Augustus, I said, "That your father will relent, and again receive you into his favour, I do not doubt, else should I be sorry that I had stipulated only for a maintenance for myself out of my father's fortune; but you know the delicacy of my situation, and will see that, with propriety, I could not assist you."

"I know that you always act with consistency, with unexampled feeling, and consideration," said Augustus.

I feared that he was again going to forget himself; I started up, I placed the little Augustus in his father's arms, then taking his tiny hand, and joining it with both his parents, I said, "May heaven protect, and bless you all! May my fervent prayers be heard for your happiness!" and before any thing reached my ear, save the sigh of Augustus, I had quitted the house, and was once more in the park! I do not take any merit to myself, my dear Mrs. Milbanke, from having made this exertion - I was in some sort actuated by a romantic and curious spirit, and I felt relieved at having seen Angelina, and having beheld in her a woman who was likely to form the happiness of the husband who I must for ever relinquish!

IN CONTINUATION

A FORMAL parting with the Lumleys was not to be thought of; I wrote my adieus, my grateful thanks for their kindness. A note I wrote also to the good Mr. Bellfield, in which I lamented that my reverse of fortune prevented my exerting myself in the behalf of Waller and his Caroline; and said, "that it had been the sanguine wish of Augustus, as well as myself, to see them happy in each other." I thanked the good Bellfield for the friendly sympathy he had evinced for me, and told him, that from his example I would learn a lesson on heroism! These painful duties over, I knelt at the throne of mercy; I besought the Almighty to give me courage to bear the stroke of adversity, and to arm my mind with a portion of his divine grace!

At an early hour in the morning, a hired chaise drew up, and, followed by the weeping Dido, I entered it. All the servants stood to catch a view of me as I walked across the hall; they revered my sorrows: but I heard their whispered prayers and blessings as I passed. I waved my hand in token of my thanks, and hurried into the carriage: there I gave way to the oppressive feelings of my heart, while Dido wrung her hands together, and sobbed at my side. The park, the lofty trees, the little cottage, its happy inmate, every animate, every inanimate object, added to my distress. I saw the little school which I had projected - the children which I had clothed - the peasants whom I had assisted. I recollected all the plans of long years of peace and comfort which I had laid, and, shuddering at my own temerity, I felt as if the Almighty had said to me those awful words, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" For was it not early so? was not my husband my heart's idol - my bosom's sovereign? - Oh, Mrs. Milbanke! perhaps I loved him too much - perhaps "it is good for me to have been thus afflicted!"

You will accuse me of having formed a harsh judgement, in having condemned Mrs. George Merton, without a proof, in the beginning of this narration; but, assured of her long and irreconcilable enmity to them, Augustus and Angelina, are convinced that she has been the prime agent of this plot against us all. Disappointed vanity, and craving ambition, two powerful incentives in the mind, where they are encouraged, urged her to work their ruin. But though this is completed in her idea, and though she may revel and smile on the money she has thus unjustly gained, yet their happiness is not dependent on outward circumstances; it is seated in their minds, and in their mutual affection, which she cannot deprive them of: and when she hears of their humble content, she may make the comparison between it and her own restless grandeur.

IN CONTINUATION

INDEED, I could be very happy in this little cottage did I not remember "such things were, and were most pleasant to me;" and did not Dido constantly bewail the change in a loud and clamorous grief, which, entirely viested of self, on my account will not be appeased. In vain I tell her, that if two courses were before me, I should prefer our boiled mutton; - she cries and shakes her head. I assure her that my little parlour is quite large enough. She asks if I recollect the "nice large rooms at Fairfield estate, and at Kingston?" She still pines for the "flesh-pots of Egypt" but not herself, but only for "Dear Missee."

"For Dido would live upon salt herrings and rice all the long year round, if she could see Mr. Fairfield's daughter served any way like herself."

And the Monmouthshire girl whom we have hired as a drudge, is taught to consider me as a princess, at least, and must not dare to enter the parlour on any account, or to answer the bell, on pain of losing her place; so that, quite scared when she sees me, she drops fifty courtesies in a minute, and runs into some corner, with her back pinned against the wall, to let my high mightiness pass along. With the earliest dawn poor Dido leaves her pillow, in order to see my breakfast prepared for me as I have been used to have it. The various ways that she tries to allure me to eat; the various cakes and little dainties which she prepares, without my knowledge, to tempt my palate, would make you smile, who know my always-temperate appetite. But how can I be angry with this well-meant and affectionate attention? The body and mind of poor Dido are, however so unceasingly engaged, that I hear her strength will fail - and miserable in the extreme should I be, if I lost my faithful girl, and was conscious that she had been the victim of her attachment to her mistress.

IN CONTINUATION

MINE is a very snug habitation; it is a thatched cottage on the side of a hill, which commands a noble view of the Wye, and the picturesque country which adorns its windings. I understand that this country is not so retired as I had imagined; many gentlemen's seats are dispersed about the neighbourhood; their owners attracted by its wild and romantic scenery. An humble inhabitant of a lowly tenement like mine, is, however, likely to pass unnoticed, and a woman of colour will not be a courted object. I wish to be unobserved - I do not want society - for although there is no real disgrace attached to my very peculiar situation, yet there is some appearance of it. I do not conceal my name; I contemn all mystery: and I never can voluntarily relinquish the beloved, the honoured name of Fairfield! - Believe me, my dear Mrs. Milbanke, I do not resign myself to a state of fruitless and blameable despondency. - No! I thank God, I keep myself employed; I endeavour to interest myself in my pursuits; I work in my little garden; I walk where I see a retired hut of poverty, and I try to do a little good to my fellow beings, even in my present narrow sphere. The blessings of constant employment I take to be a secret as well worth knowing as the philosopher's stone; it is a remedy for most of the evils of life. Had I the instruction of youth, my first, my last words should be, "rational employment;" for what ills, what mischiefs, daily spring from idleness!

I brought my books with me. I have scrupulously avoided opening one of a melancholy cast, while those of a cheerful and heart-inspiring turn I have selected for my parlour companions. I feel my sallow cheek glow with satisfaction, knowing, that in this description of myself, I am pleasing my maternal friend. It is by her precepts that her Olivia has been enabled to stem the current of adversity; and the grateful child of her forming, must always rejoice in her affectionate approbation of her conduct!

IN CONTINUATION

I HAVE had a letter from Caroline Lumley; her style is as affectionate as her heart is sincere. She tenderly reproaches me for leaving New Park without seeing her; yet acknowledges that the pain of separation was spared to them all. She slightly glances at Augustus; and tells me, he has for the present taken up his residence at the cottage: that it is rumoured that Mr. George Merton means to retain the park as a summer residence.

"I hope not," says the ingenuous girl; "for indeed, my dear madam, such a neighbour could give us no pleasant ideas."

With the utmost simplicity she tells me, that her walks have never extended beyond the boundaries of her father's glebe, since I have quitted the neighbourhood. I understand from this, that she has not yet lain her prejudices aside, and visited Angelina, as I desired she would. Augustus has sent regularly to the rectory, to hear if they have had any tidings of me; and they had sent him the intelligence of my safe arrival at my new residence.

I have thus given you the heads of this affectionate girl's letter. It is delightful to be esteemed by those who are worthy, and I feel much comfort in the friendship which follows me with so much kindness into this retirement!

No incident occurs, worth relating, the monotonous life which I lead at present, yet I shall not cease to scribble my dear friend.

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD

[As the journal of the ensuing month does not offer any thing which requires insertion, we shall omit it, and go on to a period more material.]

IN CONTINUATION

CAROLINE LUMLEY writes me, that Augustus has been sent for, express, to London. That it is reported that his father is dying; that he has taken Angelina and his boy with him; and that the cottage is shut up. May the Almighty soften Mr. Merton's heart - may his forgiveness reach the ear of his son, and pave the way to his own forgiveness reach the ear of his son, and pave the way to his own forgiveness from a heavenly Father - and may he provide for the innocent Angelina and her unoffending offspring! I shall be most anxious to hear the result of this visit. I wrote to Caroline by the return of the post, and charged her to give me the earliest intelligence which should reach her. Surely my uncle will be reconciled to Augustus - surely he will make a provision for his son!

IN CONTINUATION

DID I not tell you, some time ago, that my poor Dido looked wan and dispirited, and that I attributed it to the effects of dher zealous and arduous exertions for me? To-day she is all cheerful hilarity. She walks about with her head erect, as is usual with her when labouring with any pleasing intelligence, of which she chooses to make a temporary concealment. Were you to observe her mysterious, yet consequential looks, you must be diverted; for, in spite of the solemnity which she tries to assume, I perceive that she is constantly pursing up her thick lips, to prevent their widening into a smile of satisfaction. I see a pleasing surprise is in store for her dear Missee; perhaps a fine dessert, or some favourite flowers: whatever it be, I must try to evince my gratitude by a pleased reception of her favour.

IN CONTINUATION

OH, Dido, Dido! my faithful, yet mistaken girl, into what a situation hast thou put thy mistress! and yet I cannot chide thee. - I will recount to you, dearest madam, the surprise, and the conflicting emotions which I have just experienced. Devoid of curiosity, and wishing to live unknowing as well as unknown, I had not inquired the names of my nearest neighbours; all were alike strangers to me: and consequently a mere name could afford me neither knowledge nor information. Dido, I suspect, had been more inquisitive: she had more than once spoken of a "sweet, pretty house near the cliff," and had told me there was "one good gentleman in Monmouthshire." I usually answered her, that I hoped there were many here, as well as in other parts of the world, and I never indulged her loquacity, in point of local communications; feeling a satisfaction in maintaining my ignorance, which was an undefinable sensation even to myself. Dido has no small portion of superstition, and has laid up carefully all those signs and omens which she has gleaned from the English servants while in Devonshire. She has several times seen a stranger in the fire, and a friend in my tea-cup; I used to smile at her simple predictions, knowing that I was expected to notice them: but little imagining that, by these predictions, she was in reality preparing me for the reception of a visitor, and one, too, of her own inviting!

Yesterday morning, Dido seemed usually officious at my toilette; she would attend it through, although I several times told her I did not need her assistance; and when I came into the parlour, I thought it looked unusually decorated with flowers. She several times remarked, that it was a very fine day, and sweet, pleasant weather; and I guessed that she wished to lure me to a walk: but not feeling inclined to go out, I seated myself at my work, and, I will freely confess, had engaged in a train of rumination which had wetted it with the tears which fell from my eyes, when I heard a treble, but soft, rap at the door of the cottage. Though an unusual sound, it did not alarm me, as the villagers do not understand the different gradations of a rap, like a London footman, till I heard the stifled whisper of Dido in the passage, and in the next minute saw her open the door of the room, and usher in Mr. Honeywood! Though much altered, paler, thinner, and in deep mourning, I could not forget him. - But, alas! I could not receive him as once I should have done; my emotions nearly over-powered me, and I sat down on the chair; my trembling limbs refused to support me; I covered, my face with my hands, and burst into tears! Honeywood's agitation seemed very little inferior to mine.

"My friend," said I, now resuming my courage, "it is not for us, narrow-sighted beings as we are, to inquire into the dispensations of an all-wise and all-just God! Afflictions fit us for another world - for a state of enjoyment; they make us eager to quit these scenes of transient sorrow, and to go to the regions of eternal bliss!"

"And there," said Honeywood, with enthusiasm, "if superior reward be the allotment of superior virtue, there, in transcendent happiness -"

He stopped abruptly - "No," said he, "my heart refuses to complete the picture - it would still chain thee to earth! Olivia, talk not of dying! What! the tender maid, who lately crossed with me the world of waters, - that time of ever-to-be-regretted felicity, - she whose spirits, whose health, whose youth, whose genius, whose fortune, whose situation, whose connexions, - all promised long years of happiness, - she to turn already to the grave, as to her only resting place? Oh, it cannot - it shall not be!"

"No," said I, "I am content, even now, to wait my allotted time on earth without murmuring; but, my spirits depressed; my health weakened; youth prematurely flying away; my genius (if any I had) entirely damped;

my fortune changed; my situation strangely singular, and isolated from my connexions; you must allow that life has not much to hold out to me."

"Oh! I know - I know it all, - I feel it here!" said Honeywood, laying his hand with emphatic fervour on his heart; "and, since I lost my parent, 'tis the bitterest pang I ever felt!" - and he walked round the room in wild disorder.

"Mr. Honeywood," said I, calming my emotions, "you have sought this interview; and the sympathy which you indulge for me, assures me of your friendly regard: then hear me assure you, that you see my sufferings in too strong a light. Overpowered by surprise, and the rushing remembrances which visited my heart at the moment of your entrance, I gave way to a transient weakness; but, believe me, I do not usually yield thus supinely to my feelings. I thank God, that the knowledge of my own innocence, and that of - of him, from whom I am separated for ever" - I sighed, - my sigh was echoed by deep-drawn one from Honeywood - "and the comforts of religion have supported me, and do continue to support me, in patient cheerfulness. I am not without my resources or my avocations; I can find employment, and I visit my poor, though I pass by on the other side of my rich neighbours. I have a sufficiency for all my wants."

"A sufficiency!" interrupted Honeywood, "the nightly depredator is not so base a plunderer as is George Merton; he steals from strangers, from aliens whom he knows not - whom he cares not for. But Merton, the robber of the orphan - of his nearest relative - of a young - a tender female, - curses light on his head!"

"Oh, I must not hear you talk thus," said I; "rather my repentance visit his heart! But you know me not, Mr. Honeywood, if you think that the mere loss of my property has given me a moment's uneasiness. - Alas! in the bankrupt of the affections, in the entire desolation of the tenderest feelings of the heart, a pecuniary thought could never gain entrance into the mind, when he - when he too suffers poverty, I am well contented to be not rich."

Honeywood looked at me, for a moment, with the utmost surprise; his whole frame seemed to experience a revulsion; his agitation was excessive; he advanced eagerly towards me; he seized my hand,

"Olivia! dearest, beloved Olivia!" and he sank at my knees, "oh, forgive the question! pity my despair, - my agony, and answer it - I conjure you answer me with your known candour! you loved - you loved Augustus?"

"More than my life!" answered I, with emphasis. "Yes, Mr. Honeywood, I glory in the acknowledgement; for he possessed every virtue and every quality to interest the heart!"

Honeywood clasped both his hands together; then he seized mine - he bathed them in tears.

"And do you try to conquer this imperious passion?" asked he, looking earnestly, and with a scrutinizing expression, in my face.

"Assuredly I do," replied I, "as much as is possible. I drive from my remembrance the few months of happiness - the fleeting months I passed in Devonshire; but there are times when 'busy meddling memory' returns with barbarous power, to give a new edge to prevailing retrospections!"

"But with no reciprocation of attachment, no congeniality of sentiment, could your delicate, your sensitive mind be satisfied with a widowed heart, with - "

"That the warmest affections of Augustus were lain (as he believed) in the tomb of his lost wife, was true; but in the tender friendship of Augustus Merton, I had nothing to lament. I, - but why - why draw me into this needless recapitulation - into this strange confession? Sacred were my feelings; why - why disturb them, with unhallowed hand?"

"Why, indeed!" said Mr. Honeywood. - "Oh, Olivia! vain would I have concealed from you at this interview the purpose with which my heart is fraught; but, forced as it is from me by the tumultuous sensations of the moment, hear me say, - that I love you beyond all earthly beings! - Hear me tell you, that on board the ****, while daily present with you - while listening to your melodious voice - to your noble sentiments - to the delicate purity of your conversation, I drank deep draughts of a passion which was violent as it was hopeless. Vainly did reason and reflection urge me to break my bonds; I loved my fetters, and, to contemplate on your dear idea, to turn with retrospective eye on those blissful hours of friendly intercourse was my utmost pleasure; even when I knew that you were to become the wife of another; even when I knew that duty and propriety bade me fly your presence! The loss of my ever-to-be-lamented mother, though it plunged me in sorrow, did not erase your image from my heart; I still remembered how you had, in the soft voice of friendship, tried to prepare me for this cruel stroke; and on retiring to this sequestered country, you were still the sylvan goddess of the shades I visited, - you were the benign genius of all my avocations! My fortune was greatly increased by a most unlooked-for circumstance; but of what use to me were this world's goods, isolated from her, who only could give them a charm? I heard of your happiness - of your felicity; I breathed fervent prayers for its continuance. - I hope I did not envy your husband. Think, - oh judge, then, my astonishment, my wonder, let me add, my sorrow, when I met your faithful black, and heard her tale of woe! - Olivia, Heaven is my witness, that in sympathizing in your afflictions, not a thought of self introduced at that hour. But now, oh dearest, amiable Olivia! if a life devoted to your happiness; if a fortune devoted to your service; if a love, a reverence, an admiration, unbounded as they are sincere, can move you to pity, oh, hear my suit! - deign, oh deign to pity me! forgive the seeming impetuosity of this declaration! feelings such as mine are not to be controlled! You are free, you are unfettered; - I may now, with pride; with glory, avow, that I doat on you to distraction; that your recent trials in the hard school of adversity have heightened (oh, how highly heightened!) you in my esteem; and that the pity of Olivia Fairfield would be more precious to me, than the love of any other woman!"

This rapid address, so unexpected, delivered with such enthusiasm, such fervour, bewildered and astonished me. I seemed to gasp for breath, and could only find strength to interpose at this moment.

"My pity, believe me, you have: sensible as you appear of the indelicacy of your present avowal, I will forbear to make any comments upon it. You have frequently told me, that mine is a decided character -"

"Oh stop, look not so determined, have mercy, gentlest, sweetest Olivia!" cried he, almost distractedly seizing my hand.

"The skilful surgeon," said I, "probes deep, the more speedily to heal the wound. I now, and to the last moment of my existence, shall consider myself the windowed wife of Augustus Merton!"

Honeywood let go my hand; he let his head rest on the table, hiding his face.

"My good friend," said I, "exert your resolution, nor let a woman be your superior in this quality. I have suffered, Mr. Honeywood, but I have struggled to sustain my sufferings with fortitude, and with consistency of character. Consider my situation, impartially and coolly, and see if I should not suffer in your opinion,

were I to act in any way but the one I have fixed on; that one which my judgement approves, and which my heart must ever ratify!"

"Cruel, inexorable Olivia!"

"Not cruel," said I; "more cruel would it be to give you hopes which I could never realize."

"But surely, then," said Honeywood, after a silence of some minutes, "you will allow me your friendship - you will let me try to be instrumental to your happiness - you will let me renew our former delightful intercourse? Here, in this sequestered nook, let me try to cheer your solitary hours, to guide your steps in the evening ramble, to follow your benevolent impulse in your charitable visits to the neighbouring cottages!"

"Surely, Mr. Honeywood, you forget what you were asking me; - your reward for me is, I am sure, of a disinterested nature!"

"If I know my own heart!" said he, laying his hand upon it.

"Then," said I, "you will rather deny yourself a trifling gratification than injure my character. Consider the appearance that it would have, if I were to admit your visits, secluded as I am from all other society."

"The appearance! - and does Olivia regard appearances? She whose conduct could stand proclaimed before men and angels - shall she become the victim of a name - a nothing - shall she - ?"

"Pray stop, Mr. Honeywood; in your eager warmth, you forget that you are arguing only from the disappointment of your own feelings; for, believe me, my ease and comfort would depend on my not being subjected (or rather in my not subjecting myself) to the malevolent sarcasms of the world!"

"If you so lightly hold my friendship - if you can so coolly forbid my visits," said he - "Oh, Olivia! could I but make you sensible of what I suffer at this moment, when I hear you refuse every thing that I propose - when you will not let me be of service to you - when I have not the power of evincing the sincerity of my professions!"

"I believe them all," said I; "and they make exactly that impression which they should on a woman, who has plighted vows of eternal fealty to another! - Honeywood, farewell! Take with you my thanks - my gratitude - my sincere esteem!"

"You drive me from you?" said he. - "Oh, Olivia! who can resist your commands? - May heaven bless and preserve you! May peace revisit your bosom! May your heart never experience those pangs, which now are piercing mine!"

Then, suddenly lifting my hand to this heart - to his lips - and to his forehead, he let it fall on my lap, and rushed out of the house.

IN CONTINUATION

FOR a few moments I gave way to all the weakness of my soul. Compassion for Honeywood, gratitude for his warm regard, were, you may believe, blended with other conflicting emotions. I even regretted that the punctilious decorum of the world prevented me from enjoying his society, till I recollected, that, by such an intercourse, I should be tacitly giving encouragement to hopes which I could never realize. Tears still stood on my cheeks, when Dido bolted in; a wise grin on her face, her black orbs sparkling like diamonds -

"What! my dear Missee crying? Ah! how glad me be to see dearest Mr. Honeywood once again! Dido did always like Massa Honeywood; and me be so glad he lives but just here, for now my dear Missee can see him every day - every day - and he be living in so nice grand house! - Oh dear, dear! what fine gardens there be, Missee, at Massa Honeywood's! - But ah, Missee, Missee!" tapping my cheek with her hand, "it be your own house, if you do like it; - me do know it be - me do know it be!" and she clapped her hands together, and danced around the room with marks of the greatest delight, in her manner.

"Dido," said I. It was of no use to speak; Dido heard me not.

"Iss, iss, me think it be very pretty house, indeed, - it be like the dear Fairfield plantation! Iss, iss, and me shall be housekeeper again, and have my bunch of keys at my own side! For here, God help Dido, there be nothing to lock. Now, be then good Missee, my own Massa's daughter!"

"Dido!" said I again, in rather a louder key. Dido turned round. "Dido, do you love your mistress?"

"You know Dido loves her Massa's own daughter, better than she loves her own self."

"And you can be happy where your mistress is?"

"Oh iss, iss! - Where Missee be happy, Dido be so too,"

"When we shall both be very comfortable here."

"Not here!" said Dido, and her arms fell lumpishly down at her sides.

"And why not here?"

"Massa Honeywood's be very fine house!"

"Very likely I shall never go to see it."

"Never! - Oh, my dearee Missee!"

"Never, Dido!"

"Oh, my good God almighty! me thought - Dido did think - but 'tis all of one - me know nothing in this England town, but disappointments - me will never believe any thing that me sees again, - no, that me won't; for me cou'd have well sworn, that when Massa Honeywood comed here, this very morning, that he wou'd have asked my dear Missee to come and live to his house; for me was sure - me thought - that my Missee was his own very sweetheart!"

"But, Dido, were you as certain that your mistress would go and live with Mr. Honeywood, if he had asked her? Did you think your mistress could so soon change the object of her affections? Do you think she has already forgotten her husband?"

"Husband! he be no husband of my dear Misset's."

"Dido, I consider myself, I always shall consider myself, as his wife! Talk no longer to me on this subject - you pain - you grieve me to the heart!"

"Me would not grieve dear Misset for all the world - me would not!"

"I believe you, my good girl; I know you are my friend - I look upon you as such - I talk to you as one - I will confide to you, Dido, that Mr. Honeywood did come on the errand you imagined!"

"He did, he did!" cried she; "me thought he did, me thought so all along!" and she kissed my hand in delight.

"That I could not listen to him, I have told you," said I. "Ah! what sentiments could so ill accord with my feelings? Generous and candid, he was convinced by my reasoning - and I shall see him no more!"

"No more!" said Dido, "see him no more! and this little bit of a nut-shell of a house for my own dear Massa's daughter?" -

"Dido, how often must I tell you, that happiness is independent of situation, and that in a palace I should be more unhappy than I am in this little cottage, because I should not have him to share it with me?"

Ah, my dearest friend! why tire you with a longer recapitulation of this conversation? why recapitulate the conflicts which this visit from Honeywood has occasioned me? - I will resume my pen when I feel more fit to be your correspondent.

IN CONTINUATION

"MR. MERTON is no more: Augustus is still in London."

So says Caroline Lumley, in a letter just received: It is reported that he has died without a will; if so, his immense property will be equally divided between his sons. Pray heaven that it may be so! and pray Heaven that Augustus may know many, many years of peace and happiness with his Angelina!

IN CONTINUATION

HONEYWOOD continues to absent himself from the cottage, but by a thousand delicate and different attentions I am reminded of his proximity. I know not how to act: by affecting not to discover, I am tacitly approving his attention, whilst, in refusing them I shall wound his already bruised heart. A fine bouquet of flowers on my mantle-piece; an aromatic heath on my window; a newspaper, or new pamphlet, on my breakfast-table; a pineapple, brought in by Dido, as a dessert! - oh, Mrs. Milbanke, what can I say to Honeywood for such well-meant kindnesses? Why should I put a construction on his behaviour which should hurt his feelings? And yet the consciousness of what these really are, the knowledge of his contiguity, operates as a check upon all my actions; and I am absolutely as if spell-bound, a prisoner in this little cot, and my smaller garden, when, because I would range free and uncontrolled, a tenant of the air, I chose this situation! Dido too, poor, affectionate, and simple-hearted girl, loving Mr. Honeywood for his attention to a mistress on whom she doats, though she puts a check upon her tongue, and never names the name of Honeywood, yet has it always in her thoughts; and her looks convey that sort of tender reproof which I cannot express, not unaccompanied by exultation, either when she sees me notice any thing which is just arrived from Elm Wood (for this I find is the name of Honeywood's place) - .

IN CONTINUATION

CAROLINE LUMLEY gives me one piece of information, which you will rejoice to learn, as much as I did; for, thank God, in the desolation of my heart, it yet can glow with satisfaction to hear of another's happiness. - A great nephew of Mr. Bellfield's has lately discovered him: a very young man; liberal in principle, and of much goodness of heart. He has heard of his dependent and unworthy situation at the Pagoda; and, contemning the treatment of Sir Marmaduke, he has written to make a proffer of any part of his fortune to his uncle; and has done it in the most noble and handsome manner: at the same time that he refuses to introduce himself to Sir Marmaduke Ingot, his own uncle, by whom he would be certain of a welcome reception, as his recently acquired fortune would be a certain passport to the Pagoda.

Caroline says, that tears coursed each other down the rugged cheeks of the good old man, as he made this generous offer known to Waller, but that he steadfastly refuses to accept any pecuniary gift from his relation; though he is going to pay him a visit immediately, with a determination of residing with him during the remainder of his days. His sorrow at leaving his young friend, Waller, he expresses in a manner very flattering to the worthy young clergyman, "Who would find his own situation insupportable, he says (Caroline prettily and modestly inserts), if it were not for his being in our vicinity."

IN CONTINUATION

AT length, my dear Mrs. Milbanke, your Olivia has received the long anticipated acquittal of Augustus Merton. Conscience has pricked the heart of Mrs. George Merton. She was seized by a violence and alarming illness, a few days previous to the decease of her father-in-law, and, while contemplating the near approach of death, the world, its pleasures, and its riches, faded from her view, and the whole weight of her unacknowledged crimes lay at her heart, she sent for Augustus, who, luckily, was come to town, and, in the presence of her husband, made a full confession of all the malicious plans by which she had contrived to circumvent his happiness. She produced proofs of her guilt, in letters to and from the agents of her machinations, which made the truth of her relation but too apparent. These letters Augustus has transmitted to me for perusal. I cannot transcribe so black a scene of guilt! - Neither can I transcribe Augustus's letter to myself: and, let me own the weakness of my heart, neither can I part with it. - Ah! Mrs. Milbanke, such a heart as is there laid open - such nobleness of sentiment - such respect - such consideration - let me add, such tenderness towards your Olivia, who but would be proud of keeping such a memorial of his esteem!

I will try to form a little narrative of these letters, and the confession of Mrs. Merton; and give to you, my beloved friend, the necessary information under that form. There will you see the fatal effects of female vanity, and of disappointed pride. There will you see - but I must not forestal myself. - All that can now be done in the way of reparation has been effected. Mr. Merton made a will, and has divided his fortune equally between his sons, on Mr. George Merton's foregoing all claim to, or interest in, my fortune; and this has been formally relinquished to me by him, in the same packet that brought me this very pleasing and unlooked-for intelligence. - Yes! my friend, Augustus received the embrace, the affectionate blessing of his dying parent! He is now enabled to provide for his Angelina and his child, and your Olivia, is now contented! - She is more - she is grateful to that God who has melted the heart of the poor sinner; and, from the bottom of her own, she can forgive Mrs. George Merton; and, in full confidence of the undiminished regard of Mrs. Milbanke, continues to sing herself,

Her affectionate and grateful child,
OLIVIA FAIRFIELD.

THE NARRATIVE

You are not to be informed, that Mrs. George Merton was the only daughter of Mr. Manby, who, from a very obscure and plodding tradesman, through industry and good luck (as it is called), rose to be a wealthy merchant in the city of London. Without the advantages of a liberal education, and rising from the very dregs of the people, his notions were illiberal, his principles sordid and confined. The poor man, if he possessed every virtue, and a title, was an object of contempt and opprobrium; the rich, if the most worthless benign in creation, and a chimney-sweeper, would, from him, have received attention and consideration. His wife, whose ideas were nearly as confined as his own, was yet assailable to the great tempter of her sex, vanity; and while Mr. Manby talked of thousands and ten thousands, she would enumerate on the thousand and ten thousands of fine things which could be purchased by them. The mere hoarding of guinea upon guinea was the first pursuit of the one; the desire of making a show with their riches, was the first wish of the other: but nothing could persuade Mr. Manby to diverge from the beaten track. The front of his large premises in **** Lane was taken up in warehouses; and the small back parlour, to which he tired every evening, could not, with all Mrs. Manby's attempts, be converted into any thing of a fashionable or dashing appearance. She was obliged, therefore, to content herself with showing her riches on her large and portly person; and when she sallied out on the Sunday's walk, to the park, attired in all the colours of a rainbow, with her real lace veil, she was frequently gratified by hearing some of her quondam friends in **** Lane, whisper, as she sailed along, "streaming, in the wind,"

"Look there! that is the rich Mr. Manby's wife."

An only child smiled on the union of this couple; she soon became the idol of both her parents: and, while the father carefully instilled into his offspring the value and the consequence of money, and taught her to distinguish a guinea from a shilling, before she could articulate; the mother, equally in character, dazzled her infantine eyes with finery, and laboured earnestly to decorate her little person in the costliest garb, and in the most becoming manner.

At an early age Letitia Manby was placed at a boarding-school a few miles from the metropolis, where the conductress of the seminary knew how to fall in with the dispositions of her employers. She had penetration to discover the ruling passion of the parents who committed their children to her care; and that discernment, which, if it had been applied to the discovery of the different traits in the characters of her pupils (to the encouragement of their virtuous, and to the correction of their vicious propensities), would have qualified her for the discharge of the office she had undertaken, being wholly turned towards the failings of their parents, and to making them subservient to her own interest; it may be presumed that those young ladies, who were ushered into the world, formed under her auspices, were likely to come forth with all the follies inherent to their sex, and to their different dispositions.

Miss Manby was by nature vain; she was also jealous of her own consequence, and frequently vaunted of the great wealth to which she was sole heiress! Her father could not be prevailed on, even when she returned from school - "mistress of every polite accomplishment," and "her education complete," - as the subtle governess notified to Mrs. Manby, - not even for the sake of this darling child could he be prevailed on to relinquish his old habits, and his accustomed mode of life. The back parlour in **** Lane could not be forsaken for a house with a veranda (or weranda, as Mrs. Manby termed it), in one of the squares at the west end of the town - but every thing else that his dear Letty liked, she should have: and when Miss Manby declared, that she could not live without a friend, that she must have a friend, for that she had always been used to an intimate friend at school, but that not one amongst all of her very particular friends would have

visit her now she was come back to odious ***** Lane, Mr. Manby told her she should have a friend - and the only sister of Mr. Manby, who had married a clergyman (whose whole subsistence had been derived from a curacy in Northumberland) being about this period carried off by malignant fever, which reigned in the neighbourhood, and to which her husband has previously fallen a victim, Mrs. Manby thought there would be something very benevolent in taking her orphan daughter for Letty's friend.

Mrs. Forrester had been a different woman to her sister; she had naturally good understanding, and a rightly turned heart; and marrying Mr. Forrester, a man of probity and worth, she had, in the retirement of Northumberland, cultivated those talents, which had hitherto lain dormant in her mind; and, with the assistance of her husband, had become an accomplished, as well as an amiable, character. They had one child, and to the little Angelina had been transmitted all the beauty and the softness of her mother; all the intelligence and magnanimity of her father. This amiable girl knew neither sorrow nor care, till, by the fatal event which has been previously mentioned, she lost both her parents, and was restored, from the very brink of the grave, to behold herself alone and friendless, thrown on the wide world, a destitute orphan at the early age of seventeen! When, therefore, her aunt wrote her a letter of condolence; and offered her an asylum in ***** Lane, to become the "friend and company-keeper of her Letty," the gratitude of this child of nature was unbounded, and she eagerly accepted the invitation, and lost no time in going to her kind relatives!

The transition from the pure air of Northumberland to ***** Lane, from wide heaths expanded lawns; from mountains and vales, where nature in her "wildest works is seen," to the close atmosphere of the most combined part of the metropolis, was very striking to poor ANgelina. The manners, too, of her new friends, - Mr. Manby so short, so quaint, so odd in his expressions - Mrs. Manby so fond of dress and finery, her whole conversation turning on the riches of her husband, and on her daughter's beauty - the vanity and self-consequence of Letty, the air of authority and imposing command which she assumed towards her friend, was so perfectly novel to Angelina, that she would have felt her situation beyond endurance, if her recent and irreparable afflictions had not paralysed her feelings, and rendered her almost impervious to any thing which might succeed to them. Religion had been firmly planted in the mind of Angelina Forrester, and to "bear and forbear," which is, perhaps, the hardest duty which the Christian fulfils (especially if endowed with great sensibility of disposition), in that palsy of the mind which she experienced at her first introduction to London, she practised without much difficulty; and when her feelings resumed their wonted station, her reason returned also, and she did not deviate from a conduct, which she found was the only one she could adopt, with a probability of comfort, in her present situation.

Miss Manby considered Angelina, "Lin" (as she abbreviated the name) as an inferior being; Mrs. Manby thought she had done a noble action in receiving her niece in ***** Lane, and in making her the "company keeper" of Letty; and Mr. Manby would not have increased his family circle for a useless member, and one who brought him no profit, except to please "his girl!" - The pleasure which Miss Manby derived from the society of Angelina would be rather difficult to define. She seemed to take a delight in showing her finery, in pointing out the difference of their situations - "But I am so different from you, Lina" - "that gown is well enough for you, I could not be seen in such a one." Angelina was made the companion of the young lady when she could get no other, but when a more dashy girl appeared, "I do not want you now, Lina," was said with all the air of an arbitrary and supercilious mistress. Of a dull day, when Miss Manby had the vapours, Lina was to read full six hours at a stretch in the most silly novel which could be procured from the next circulating library; for, unless there was a great deal of love, and a long account of the hero and the heroine's person, Miss Manby usually pronounced it a "stupid, dull thing;" and Lina was dispatched eight or nine times in a morning till she could hit on a book, glowing with the description of beauty, and warm with the declaration of passion. Mrs. Manby usually sat by to hear the novel, and if the heroine was fair, with blue eyes, the description always was the exact resemblance of her dearest Letty.

Mr. Merton and Mr. Manby had some dealings together with regard to commercial business; in which, added to the great riches of the father, Mr. Manby discovered such readiness in, and application to his one thing needful, in George Merton, that he came home delighted with the young merchant; and, after calculating Mr. Merton's fortune over his bowl of punch in the evening, he suddenly seized the ladle, and filling a bumper, said, "Here's George Merton to you, little Letty, and may God send you such a husband!" This roused the curiosity of Mrs. Manby; she knew that the Mertons were considered as the very first people in the mercantile world, and "Law! Mr. Manby, then you must make an entertainment, and introduce him to our Letty," quickly followed Mr. Manby's toast.

"I don't want a husband - I couldn't abide a husband of pa's choosing - I know he can't be handsome or genteel," said Mis Manby, affectedly turning up her lip!

"Now I can tell you Letty, he is both one and the other," replied the father; "I never saw a likelier young fellow in my whole life: and as to calculations, why he is fit to meet the prime minister for the loan!"

An invitation was given and accepted, and Mr. Merton, accompanied by his two sons, dined in **** Lane. George Merton, tutored by his father (who liked the idea of getting old Manby's fortune into his family), was all politeness and attention to the young heiress, while Augustus, perfectly undesigning and unconscious, sat near the modest and innocent Angelina; and perceiving the disregard of the rest of the party, he was the more respectful and attentive, pitying her situation; as, at the first view, he perceived that she was a superior being to those with whom she was placed. George Merton might have been called a handsome young man, but the redundancy of youth, the animation, the brilliancy which at this time played on the countenance, and sparkled in the eyes of Augustus, made him an object of greater attraction than his brother to Miss Manby. She could scarcely conceal her vexation when she saw him bestowing that attention on Lina, which she would fain have engrossed to herself. More than once, with a commanding air and an authoritative voice, she ordered Lina to fetch her handkerchief and her smelling-bottle, in order to send her out of the way; but the malicious expression which sat on her features, effectually disgusted Augustus; he saw through her contemptible jealousy, and, on the fair orphan's return to the company, he beheld her with that commiseration which her situation inspired. Augustus Merton was the very personified hero of Miss Manby's fruitful and impassioned imagination; she immediately fell violently in love with him, and told pa and ma, that she liked Mr. George Merton well enough, but he was not to compare with Augustus - Augustus too, sounded so well - so novel-like - 'Augustus and Letitia, a novel, founded on facts,' would be delightful! Mr. Manby had none of his daughter's reasons for preferring Augustus Merton to his brother; he had never read a novel in his life; and with regard to beauty, "handsome he, that handsome does," was his maxim. Augustus had thrown out one or two severe innuendos, in contempt of that spirit of hoarding which Mr. Manby had displayed, and he plainly saw that George was his father's favourite - but swayed by his wife, who assured him, that, "Letty would pine herself into a consumption if crossed in her first love," he at length consented to break the matter to Mr. Merton.

Mr. Merton had long seen that Augustus did not follow up his schemes of business with true mercantile avidity; there was an open-heartedness, a manly generosity in his character, which could only have been derived from the Fairfield family, and which had rendered him the idol of his mother, while it had had the contrary affect on his other parent. The prospect of settling Augustus so advantageously was very satisfactory to Mr. Merton; and, sending for his youngest son, he told him, that, seeing he had no wish of pursuing the commercial speculations, in which his family were embarked, with any portion of spirit, he could now put him into a way of making his fortune at a single stroke. The whole soul of Augustus recoiled when he heard the proposition of his father - What! marry Miss Manby? marry the haughty, the cruel, the unfeeling Letitia Manby? she, who tyrannized over a helpless orphan, to whom she apparently extended

her protection! - that gentle being, whose patient forbearance, whose modest sweetness, had gained her an interest in his heart, which was scarcely known to himself! - No, never could he unite himself to Miss Manby!

In the firmest and the most decided manner Augustus expressed his dislike of Miss Manby, and his repugnance to the connexion. Mr. Merton was enraged with his son, and told him, as he valued his favour, if he expected from henceforth to be beheld as a son, he expected an implicit compliance with his wishes in this instance. Augustus temporized with his father - for the first time in his life, the treacherous emotions of his heart inclined him to play a double part - he promised to visit in ***** Lane; he did so, but while the young heiress absolutely doated on him, while she exposed her preference to every common observer, Augustus could scarcely conceal the disgust with which he suffered her civilities, nor how deeply he quaffed the delicious draughts of love as they fell from the honied lips, the chastened smiles, of the unconscious Angelina! Wholly inexperienced and new to the world as Angelina was, there was something in the respectful regard, in the tender manner which Augustus Merton displayed in his behaviour towards her, which seemed to give life a new charm in her eyes. Yet these floating and delightful ideas had never been discussed in her mind; for she beheld Mr. Augustus Merton as the elected husband of her cousin, and frequently whispered to herself that Letitia was a most fortunate creature.

Miss Manby kept Angelina, as much as was possible, at a distance, while Miss Danby (a ci-devant friend, who had at length got over her scruples concerning ***** Lane, in the prospect of Miss Manby's approaching union with the son of Mr. Merton, a man of great fortune and consequence) was her intimate companion and confidante! - Poor Angelina, confined in a close apartment up three pair of stairs, brooding over her past sorrows, and her present difficulties, would have become the victim of melancholy despondence, if the thought of Augustus Merton had not sometimes lulled her griefs, with airy and gay dreams of happiness.

The insulting and contumelious treatment which she met with from the friends in the parlour, and which were invariably backed by Mrs. Manby, could not have been sustained, if the benevolent friendliness of Mr. Merton had not frequently been exerted in her behalf; and on one of those instances of illiberal and vaunting superiority, when poor Angelina had given way to the bitterest emotions of her soul, Augustus Merton had accidentally found her; - prudence, duty, reflection, fled at the sight of her distress! and he abruptly made an impassioned avowal of love, as sincere as it was fervent. Surprise of the most delightful kind rendered Angelina dumb; whilst Augustus hastily assured her, that nothing but his affection for her, and his compassion for her situation, could have induced him to bear the society at ***** Lane for one half hour! He lamented that the prejudices of his father forbade him to offer her his hand in a public manner, but with vows of constancy he besought her to hear him. He conjured her to consent to his proposal of a private marriage, that she might be his beyond the reach of fate or fortune! - The fond, the confiding, the grateful Angelina, was ill-calculated to carry on a contest against her own heart; - she met Augustus Merton one morning in ***** church, where they were formally and legally united in marriage bonds; after which, the bride retired to private lodgings, which her husband had taken for her reception. To save appearances, and to avoid a discovery, Augustus consented to continue to a visit, for a time, in ***** Lane. But the suspicions of Letitia Manby were awake, though she contrived to conceal them from the object of them. In conjunction with her mother, she set every inquiry on foot to discover the retreat of Angelina, and when this had been accomplished, a train of revenge was laid as black as it proved unsuccessful. With all the apprehensive fears of a friend zealous for the honour of his family, Mrs. Manby sought the elder Mr. Merton, and under a strict charge of inviolable secrecy, confided to him her fears, that Mr. Augustus Merton had an intention of disgracing himself by marrying a low creature whom she had protected merely from benevolent and charitable motives.

Mr. Merton was greatly shocked at the intelligence of Mrs. Manby; but, eager to snatch his son from (what he termed) ruin, he ordered him to embark immediately for Ireland to transact some commercial business of an urgent nature which would necessarily detain him some time; and, during his absence, Mrs. Manby took upon herself the charge of putting the young lady out of his reach. Poor Augustus, in this instance, dared not disobey his father - no time had been given him for reflection; he just snatched a hasty farewell of his darling Angelina, in an agony of mind little short of distraction. He left her all the money he had, and promising to write to her frequently, he tore himself away, and got on board the vessel, which was already under weigh.

And now it was, that in all the affected distress of insulted honour and maternal affection, Mrs. Manby sought out her niece. Breaking violently, and unushered, into her apartment, she assured her, that she had been trepanned and ruined by a villain, under the stale pretext of a false marriage. At first, the indignant Angelina thought it doubting Heaven, to doubt the faith and honour of Augustus Merton; but proofs, behind proofs, were produced by Mrs. Manby, of a false clergyman being hired by Augustus, for the performance of the marriage ceremony, for which there had been prepared a fictitious licence, and that the whole business had been formal and illegal - that she could no longer hope! -

The agony of the innocent orphan is not to be described; more especially when she found that she was likely to become the mother of a witness of her own shame and the guilt of her seducer. To her aunt she now turned herself, as to her only friend; and on her knees conjured her to bestow pity and forgiveness! Mrs. Manby evinced more feeling than Angelina had ever experienced from her before. She said, she could not take her back to **** Lane; - she must never tell her Litty what she had done for her, but she would not let the only child of her own sister perish; and she would send her into some retired part of Wales; and she would pay for her maintenance there, if Angelina would consent to go by a feigned name, and never attempt to see or hear from her vile seducer! Alas! Angelina could easily promise this, convinced of his falsehood, whose heart she had hitherto believed the seat of truth. - She only wished to hide her shame and sorrow in obscurity! She was quickly transported into Wales, and the smallpox soon after carrying off the woman with whom she had lodged in London, and also a young woman, who had immediately tenanted Angelina's vacated apartments on her quitting them, Mrs. Manby managed this (to her) lucky circumstance very adroitly; and the death of poor Angelina was credited even by Mr. Merton. Miss Manby was the malicious suggester of all the schemes which her parent had so promptly executed; and being convinced, that Augustus Merton would never accede to her tender wishes, even if he were to outlive his affection for Angelina Forrester, she determined, that during his absence, she would marry his brother; the more effectually to revenge herself on Augustus, by thus securing the favour of Mr. Merton towards his eldest son.

Mr. George Merton wasily fell in with the views of this crafty young lady. Mr. Merton was delighted to find that the Manby wealth would still be centred in his family, and within a very few weeks after the marriage of Miss Manby and Mr. George Merton - Mr. Manby was deprived of life, by a sudden stroke of apoplexy; and thus, nearly fifty thousand pounds fell into the eager grasp of the lucky George Merton! Mrs. Manby outlived her husband but a few months. The place of Angelina's concealment was perfectly well known to Mrs. George Merton; and, through her mother's former agent in the business, she contrived that her stipend should be continued regularly.

We will pass over the agonizing feelings of Augustus Merton, on being informed of the untimely fate of his beloved Angelina. The idea of her falling a victim to a direful malady; - alone, and unprotected - her only friend - her husband, at a distance, was dreadful! He pondered over her virtues; he delighted in retracing her mild and gentle attractions; the modest excellencies of her mind; and he gave way to all the oppressive grief which pierced his soul; while the very sight of Mrs. George Merton - of his brother's wife, was torture!

The look of exultation and triumph which sat on her countenance gave him a sensation of abhorrence and disgust; and he fled from her presence as he would have hastened from a venomous reptile!

The elapsed; yet still the wounds of Augustus's heart were unclosed. He still sighed over lost happiness; and the death of Mr. Fairfield, in Jamaica, with the tenour of his last will, were at length made known to his relatives in England! Strange as the tenour of this will appeared; miserable as must be the future fate of Olivia Fairfield, if dependent on his brother; yet Augustus declared to his father, that the affections of his heart were for ever lain in the tomb of Angelina Forrester (he had not thought it necessary to avow his private marriage since the fatal event of her death had taken place) and that he could never marry his cousin! But, consenting to meet Olivia at Clifton, - the natural benevolence and philanthropy of his heart got the better of this resolution, and he made the virtuous sacrifice of his own feelings to Olivia Fairfield's happiness!

It would be incredible that there could have existed such a character as Mrs. George Merton, if the melancholy fact were not made too apparent - and that by her own confession. The happiness which ensued to the union of Augustus and Olivia, the fortune which Augustus enjoyed, once more excited all the malice of her heart; and, burning with revenge at beholding the tranquil serenity of their countenances, she thought to put the death-stroke to all future comfort by restoring Angelina to the sight of her husband - returning them both to poverty, and overwhelming the hapless Olivia with complicated misery!

Angelina, in her sequestered nook, had (soon after her retreat to it) become the mother of a fine little boy; and in rearing her offspring with maternal tenderness, she had received all the comfort of which her existence seemed capable. She had a half-yearly remittance from town, sufficient for her decent maintenance; it was continued to be paid by Mrs. Manby's agent, after that lady's death, and Angelina was given to understand, that this was done in consequence of the secret and dying injunctions of that lady; and that Angelina was desired implicitly, to follow his directions in every step of her future life. The marriage of Augustus Merton to Miss Fairfield had been carefully communicated to Angelina through this channel; and if a doubt had still hung on her mind with regard to this falsehood, and the turpitude of his conduct towards her, the knowledge of this event entirely decided it. She became inured and resigned to her lot: she deeply lamented her inexperienced weakness, and that credulity which had induced her to consent to a private marriage; but her conscience was eased of the eight of intentional guilt, and her faith in the promises of God, firmly planted in her mind, she looked forwards to a happy futurity with chastened hope!

From this torpid tranquility, Angelina was once more roused by a letter from the agent, informing her, that the house in which she resided was advertised for sale, and that he had in consequence taken a cottage for her in Devonshire, to which she was required to move without loss of time; that the situation was more eligible, and that she would remain as secluded, and as much unknown, as in Wales.

These orders Angelina dared not disobey; but the thought of removing to such a distance was very unpleasant. She had associated ideas of comfort and quiet with the cottage which had been her asylum in trouble, which had sheltered her defenceless head from the cruel taunts of a malicious world, and which had been the birthplace of her child; and she set out on her journey with a heavy and foreboding heart. To her great surprise and mortification, she found that her new habitation was attached to a gentleman's park, and near a bathing place of general resort; she feared to stir abroad, lest she should attract the prying eye of curiosity. She had from time to time observed a gentleman walking near her cottage, and, fearing a discover and recognition of her person with double vigilance, till surprised, whilst sitting in her parlour, by the abrupt entrance of Colonel Singleton, who addressing her in a strain of gallantry, as fulsome as it was ill-timed, she

lost her presence of mind in the indignant sense of the insult, and rushing from the house was caught in the arms of her still-doating husband!

END OF THE NARRATIVE

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD - IN CONTINUATION

THUS, my dear Ms. Milbanke, have I given you the simple statement of facts. In the full acquittal of Augustus Merton, believe me, I do not feel my own hard fate. Mine was a disinterested attachment, my dearest friend; and I glory in saying, that I prefer his happiness to my own. I have just received a note of congratulation from Honeywood. I suspect that Dido has been the means of so speedily conveying this intelligence to Elm Wood. Poor girl, she was nearly frantic with joy when she heard of it. How grateful am I for her faithful attachment! Mrs. George Merton is recovered from her illness. Her mind disburdened of its load, became tranquil, and her health mended in consequence. Ah! if the inward feelings of the guilty were made apparent, I believe we should find, that, even in this world, they experienced no light punishment.

IN CONTINUATION

MORE wonders! - More events to communicate to my dear friend. I have just parted with another visitor - with the uncle of Mr. Honeywood! He introduced himself to me uncalled for - unexpected: but I received him with a cordial welcome, for I beheld the good Mr. Bellfield! -Yes, Honeywood is the generous, the noble-minded nephew, who has sought out his worthy and unfortunate relative, and who has caused the tears of delighted gratitude to rush to the eyes of this respectable old man!

"Ah!" said the venerable Bellfield, as he pressed my hand in his, "I glory in this nephew, my dear madam; there is only one man, whom I know, that is his equal -" He stopped. The long-absent crimson visited his time-worn cheek; his confusion convinced me that he alluded to Augustus. He proceeded - "There is only one woman worthy of him - and she - ah! madam - much esteemed and respected young lady - suffer an old man to speak - suffer him to ask you, whether it be charity, whether it be humanity, to let this excellent youth pine away the flower of his days? to be exiled from that society which he prizes beyond every other? to be ever within the hearing of her manifold virtues, of her extraordinary endowments, and still to experience the punishment of Tantalus, in not daring to enter her presence? Let not my plain speaking offend you, dearest lady," seeing that I rose from my seat - "I ask these questions from the sincerity of my heart. You have it in your power to raise my nephew to the highest state of happiness which he is capable of enjoying in this state of being. - You acknowledge his worth - you are not blind to his virtues - then why -"

"Mr. Bellfield," said I, interrupting him, "little did I think that I could ever regret receiving a visit from you - and are you, too, joined in a party against the unfortunate Olivia? Is it the venerable, the good Mr. Bellfield that seeks to persuade this beating heart to become an apostate to its first love?"

"Is it Miss Fairfield," asked Mr. Bellfield, looking at me with some severity of expression in his countenance, - "is it Miss Fairfield who talks of a passion which she ought never to name? - which she ought to exert all her fortitude, all her resolution, to extirpate for ever from her heart?"

"Heaven is my witness!" cried I, "that I consider Augustus Merton as the husband of Angelina, that for the 'wealth of worlds' I would not interrupt their happiness. To define my feelings, exactly, I cannot; yet I feel a consolation - a romantic satisfaction, in imagining myself as the window of my love! Had death taken from me the object of my affections, this bosom never could have known another lord. Think then, my dear sir, how much more acute was my misfortune, when, by a single stroke, an instance almost unparalleled - duty - religion - even honour, bade me instantly resign my living husband!"

"You are an extraordinary creature!" said Mr. Bellfield, wiping his eyes; "and to say the truth, I do not wonder at Honeywood, when you have the power to make all old fellow, like myself, play the child and blubber before you! - But, ah! my poor Honeywood, my good boy!" - and snatching up his hat and, sick he walked out of the house.

I will not say any thing of this new exercise of my feelings, for I must, ever sympathize with those whom I love; and that her Olivia, loves both Honeywood and his good old relative, Mrs. Milbanke will readily believe.

IN CONTINUATION

MR. BELLFIELD visits me daily. Never since our first interview has he dropped a syllable concerning his nephew's attachment, though his virtues are the never-varying topic of his discourse; and they form so striking a contrast to the pride, the arrogance, and the supercilious importance of Sir Marmaduke Ingot, that I cannot wonder at his garrulity. He has given me a brief sketch of Mrs. Honeywood's life. I will weave it into a little narrative for your perusal.

THE HISTORY OF MRS. HONEYWOOD

It has been said, that Mr. Bellfield took the orphan and destitute children of an only sister into his house, resolving to become their protector - and this he was in the fullest sense of the word. From that hour he discarded all thoughts of matrimony, although his temper and his inclination would have led him to seek for connubial happiness; and his heart had long felt a secret preference in favour of a lady, whose character and connexions were very suitable to his own, but from the moment when he voluntarily resolved to be the father of the fatherless, he steadily applied himself to the conquest of every tender sentiment for this lady, and his endeavors were so far crowned with success, that through a long term of years, during which he maintained an undiminished intercourse with her, she had never imagined that his regard for her had ever risen beyond the bounds of friendship!

Mrs. Moreton had left three children; the eldest was Marmaduke, whom his uncle soon perceived to have very ambitious notions joined to an imperious and irascible disposition. His views of gain were too ardent and sanguine to bear the plodding means of patient industry and perseverance, by which an independence must be acquired in England; and his young heart burned to go to a climate where a fortune would be speedily acquired, and every luxury of life be within his reach, ere time should have impaired his powers of enjoyment: - a country, where the following maxim has too frequently been adopted by the youth who have set out on the career of gain - "Get money, - honestly, if you can; - but, whatever you do, get money."

Mr. Bellfield was an easy man, - he was indulgent to all with whom he was concerned; and perceiving that the whole thoughts of Marmaduke were turned towards the East, exerted all his interest (which was, at that period, very great, as his mercantile connexions were very extensive), and fitted out his nephew for Bengal. The second son continued with his uncle, and died of a decline, when he was just starting in manhood. - This was a sore affliction to Sophia Moreton; she had loved her brother Charles with fond affection: he had always been her favourite brother, and constant associate and companion, during the last three years that she had returned from school to keep her uncle's house. Mr. Bellfield dried the tears of his lovely niece - the good man doated on this amiable girl, whose manners and whose person were particularly calculated to conciliate regard; while the virtues of her heart gave a rich promise of future worth. Bereft of her brother, Sophia redoubled her attentions towards her kind uncle; and it might be said that she lived only to evince her duty and her gratitude towards him: and Mr. Bellfield has frequently been heard to say, that this was by far the happiest period of his life.

Sophia Moreton was a blooming girl of eighteen, when a young West Indian was consigned to the care of Mr. Bellfield, in order to acquire a local knowledge of England by a few months residence in it, as a finish to commercial education. The house of Honeywood had for some years maintained a correspondence with that of Bellfield, in the mutual transaction of business; and always ready to do a good natured action, the good Bellfield welcomed the youth most cordially, and he became an inmate of his house. Delighted with the charms of the gay metropolis, full of health, with spirits and unsubdued gaiety in all the flush of effervescent youth, Honeywood enlivened every party, and gilded every hour by his unceasing vivacity. He was soon attracted by the beautiful simplicity of Sophia Moreton, and, hasty and impassioned, with all that fervour of disposition which so peculiarly characterizes his countrymen - he declared that health, that happiness, that life itself depended on his taking back the lovely Sophia to the West Indies as his wife. Sophia thought Mr. Honeywood handsome and agreeable, but she had seen very little of him; she could not be said to know this character. She felt her heart shrink within her, at the idea of leaving her uncle, and venturing herself with him on "untried seas and unknown shores;" but Honeywood, the ardent Honeywood, was not to be dissuaded from his purpose: he swore that he would never return again to his father, unless she would accede to his wishes; and on his knees he frantically besought Mr. Bellfield not to withhold his consent, not to condemn him to everlasting ruin! Mr. Bellfield made some allowance for the sanguine temperament of this young and hot-headed West Indian; he felt that it would be a bitter trial to him to part with his beloved Sophia; but self-denial had long been the good man's practice: and the known wealth and established respectability of Honeywood's father, the pleasing qualities of the young man, and his (apparently) warm regard for his niece, made him think that he should probably be opposing the advancement of Sophia, and her future happiness in life, by not furthering the union. He sounded his niece on the subject - poor Sophia was not deeply in love, but she hesitated not to acknowledge, that she certainly felt a preference, a sort of interest for Mr. Honeywood; and in reality this was the true state of her heart. But this open avowal from one of her modest disposition, Mr. Bellfield construed into something of a warmer kind, and became in consequence more eager to forward the union of the young couple, while Sophia imagining she was pleasing her uncle by a compliance with his wishes - an uncle to whom she owed every thing - no longer hesitate to become the wife of Honeywood; and Mr. Bellfield remitted with her ten thousand pounds as her wedding portion.

On their first arrival in the island, all was delighted fondness on the part of Honeywood; proud of the beauty of his bride, and of the fortune which she had brought him, he introduced her to all his acquaintance, and they existed in one continued swirl of hilarity and amusement. The elder Mr. Honeywood received his daughter-in-law with much satisfaction, and Sophia had nothing to complain of: and yet there was a vacuity in her mind, a want of relish for all the gratifications which waited her, which she ingeniously attributed to the absence of her respected uncle; that good man, in whose society and conversation she had always found her highest enjoyment; whose approbation of her conduct had always been the stimulus of her exertions.

Sophia too soon perceived that there was no stability in the character of her husband; his principles were not fixed, but veered with every impulsive movement of his feelings, and the rapid and changeable turns of these, in his impetuous constitution, were constantly engaging him in some plan, which interested him only, as long as any difficulty appeared in the pursuit. Nothing could dissuade him from any design which he took in hand; and his various and chimerical speculations (after the death of his father, which happened in a few years after his return to Jamaica) becoming more extensive in their aim, were consequently more serious in their failure, which occurred but too frequently. It was in vain that Sophia, by gentle persuasions, would have induced him to pursue one undeviating and steady rack; immediately on the defeat of one wild scheme, his whole soul was rapt on the projection of another, and his large fortune, in consequence, became much impoverished, and his affairs in great confusion. The consignments of Mr. Bellfield were not attended to, and poor Sophia, amidst the pressure of domestic disappointment and maternal solicitude, for the future fate of her little boy, felt a greater weight at her heart, from the fear that her good uncle would suffer from

her husband's imprudences. A prey to unceasing disquiet and anxiety, daily witnessing acts of the most unlicensed extravagance, with no power or influence in checking its career, her health was on the decline, and she eagerly accepted her husband's offer of revisiting England for its restoration; but in fact to see her beloved uncle, towards whom her heart yearned with fond affection: and to ask his advice relative to the education of her son, who was now of an age to be put to school, and for whose morals she dreaded the tainted atmosphere of Jamaica.

Sophia found her uncle depressed in spirits and circumstances. Time had imprinted its passing hand on his head, but his heart was still the same, and he folded his beloved niece to it with unsubdued tenderness. Sophia at this moment lifted up the anguished sigh, and sincerely wished she had never quitted those paternal arms which now sheltered her in their fond embrace!

Charles Honeywood was placed at an eligible school, Sophia resumed her duties in her uncle's family, and the old man smiled once again. Sophia's health might have mended from the genial air of her native clime, from the kind indulgence of her protector, if the fear, the anxiety, which she suffered on the account of Honeywood, if the evident embarrassment of her uncle's affairs - embarrassed by the negligence of her husband - had not imbibed every moment!

Months and years passed on, and Sophia's presence was not re-demanded in Jamaica. The inconstancy, the neglect of her husband, the entire loss of his affections, had been but too apparent previous to her quitting him, though her conduct had been irreproachable; and by patient suffering, and undiminished attempts to please on her part, she had mildly essayed to win him back to the path of duty.

The involvement of Mr. Bellfield's affairs became truly alarming, when the failure of Mr. Honeywood's house in Jamaica, by reducing her kind, her generous uncle to the verge of ruin, almost broke the heart of the affectionate Sophia. It was soon after that the news of Honeywood's death determined her to revisit a place which had lain the foundation of all her sorrows, in order to gather up a maintenance for her son (that son, whose education completed, was now all that a fond mother's most sanguine wishes had depicted), if from the wreck of a once-noble patrimony she could but snatch a little pittance, something to assist her uncle - to support her Charles - she should be content!

The struggles which Mrs. Honeywood underwent during three years of anxious inspection into the intricate and perplexed affairs of her late husband, effectually undermined her health; and she returned to England with a competency snatched from the ruin of his fortune, to resign her life in the arms of her disconsolate son, and to be in utter ignorance respecting the fate of her honoured uncle; - (for, of the title of her brother Marmaduke, - of his return to England, and his large fortune, she was wholly unacquainted).

On losing his mother, Honeywood had nearly resigned himself to despair, when he was roused from his agonizing emotions to attend the death-bed of an old gentleman who was distantly related to his grandfather, Mr. Moreton, and who resided at Elm Wood in Monmouthshire. This gentleman having no near relative, made a will bequeathing Honeywood the bulk of his fortune, in estates and money, to the value of three thousand per annum. The heart of Honeywood experienced no exhilaration at this acquisition of prosperity, while yet a stranger to the fate of his uncle Bellfield, while yet mourning the loss of his beloved mother. He continued at Elm Wood, after the demise of the old gentleman, and in one of his accidental conversations with Dido, she gave him, in her simple manner, the history of the neighbourhood of New Park; and happened to mention the name of "good old Mr. Bellfield, as one of her dear Misset's best friends." Honeywood did not notice the discovery to her, but instantly wrote to the venerable gentleman as has been mentioned.

THE END OF THE NARRATIVE

OLIVIA FAIRFIELD TO MRS. MILBANKE
IN CONTINUATION

DEAREST Mrs. Milbanke! I am foiled in my best designs. Augustus has forestalled me - he has presented the amiable Waller with a living in the adjoining parish to Mr. Lumley. It was one which we had both set our eyes upon, as a desirable situation for our young friends. - Ah! how am I daily constrained to bear added testimony to the worth of Augustus Merton!

IN CONTINUATION

YES! My beloved friend, I am coming to you. I waited but for you to suggest a scheme which my heart has long anticipated. Your letter is arrived, and Dido is already packing up with avidity. We will revisit Jamaica. I shall come back to the scenes of my infantine happiness - of my youthful tranquillity. I shall again zealously engage myself in ameliorating the situation, in instructing the minds - in mending the morals of our poor blacks. I shall again enjoy the society of my dear Mrs. Milbanke - I shall forget the lapse of time which has occurred since I parted from her, and shall again be happy! Eager to be with you once more, I almost count the tardy minutes as they move along.

IN CONTINUATION

MY passage is taken in the ****; and to-morrow I set out for Bristol. England, favoured Isle! - Happy country, where the laws are duly administered - where the arts - the sciences flourish, and where religion is to be found in all its beautiful purity. Farewel! - a long farewel! - Fain would I have taken up my abode in this charming clime, - but Heaven forbade it. Yet, England, I shall carry with me over the world of waters a veneration for thy name, a veneration for that soil which produced a Lumley - a Bellfield - and an Augustus Merton!

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EDITOR AND A FRIEND.

Friend. - What do you propose from the publication of the foregoing tale? If your Woman of Colour be an imaginary character, I do not see the drift of your labours, as undoubtedly there is no moral to the work!

Editor. - How so?

Friend. - You have not rewarded Olivia even with the usual meed of virtue - a husband!

Editor. - Virtue, like Olivia Fairfield's, may truly be said to be its own reward - the moral I would deduce from her story is, that there is no situation in which the mind (which is strongly imbued with the truths of our most holy faith, and the consciousness of a divine Disposer of Events) may not resist itself against misfortune, and become resigned to its fate. And if these pages should teach one child of calamity to see Him in the hour of distress who is always to be found, if they teach one skeptical European to look with a compassionate eye towards the despised native of Africa - then, whether Olivia Fairfield's be a real or an imaginary character, I shall not regret that I have edited the Letters of Woman of Colour!

FINIS