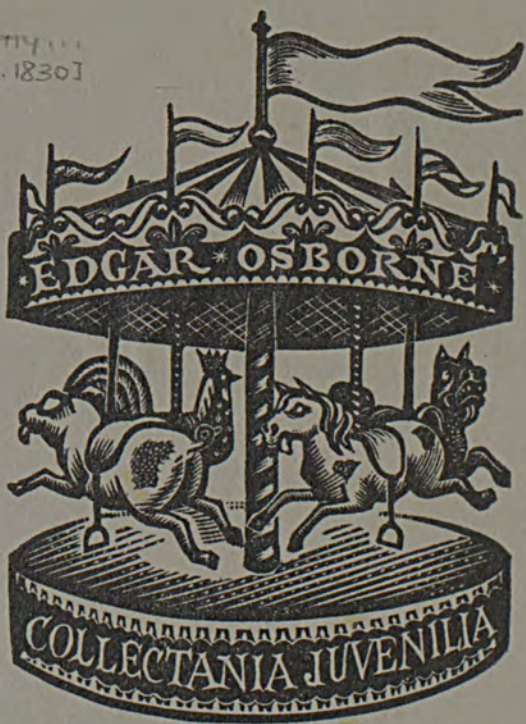

Harriet Bostwick
Given by Georgiana
Tidwell - Oct. 1824 -

Frontispiece to "The Pretty Portress."

"I shall accept of it," replied the princess, "provided Miss Somers' promises to accept a present from me, and not to examine its contents till I am out of sight."

see page 104.

London: William Darton, 58, Holborn Hill.

THE

PRETTY PORTRESS

OF

WINDSOR LODGE;

OR,

FILIAL AFFECTION REWARDED,

IN THE INSTANCE OF A

ROYAL PROTEGEE.

A MORAL TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Bible the Standard of Taste," "The Outlines of a Rational System of Education;" "A Catechism of Criticism;" &c.

ILLUSTRATED WITH COPPER-PLATES.

LONDON:

WILLIAM DARTON, 58, HOLBORN HILL:

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PREFACE.

It may with justice be remarked, that works of fiction are only entitled to commendation, when they propose, through the medium of their story, the inculcation of some moral precept, or the prosecution of some particular virtue.

It was with the view to hold up to respect and admiration the possession of one of the most prominent virtues of our nature, that the present little book was written; and, if the ability to execute such a task, kept pace with the writer's estimation of this first of affections, the public

might, at present, have been presented with a very different performance.

To have done his best, though a confession which, perhaps, may do little credit to his head, is, nevertheless, an avowal, that must shew his respect for the sensible part of his readers; and who, on its perusal, though they may withhold that admiration due to a production of merit, will, he trusts, at the same time, acquit him of the charges of having written much nonsense, and of having spun out his matter by the insertion of what is frivolous, and not convertible to some useful purpose.

THE

PRETTY PORTRESS,

&c

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
"The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
"The ploughman homeward plods his weary way."

How delighted are we with thy remains, O GRAY! who, in the space of a few hundred lines, hast comprised whatever is beautiful, whatever is exquisite in thought!

By reason of this, thy brevity, we carry thee in our bosoms, instead of

leaving thee behind us on our shelves. Thou art too delicious a morsel for us to part with or to forsake. If we direct our steps into the church-yard, there thou givest our thoughts a diviner cast. If we saunter along the mountain's brow at "sober dusk of eve," by thy persuasion we listen with double rapture to the far-pealing curfew, to the beetle's hum, or to the distant tinkling of the sheepfold's simple bell.

Such were the reflections of ——— as he left, on a fine evening of autumn, the chapel and cloisters of Windsor, those abodes, not of rustic mortality, the theme of Gray's Elegy, but depositaries of the remains of human grandeur, and entered the Park of that favoured place, to breathe

the fragrance of the evening, as well as to indulge a spirit of melancholy, with which the scenes he had witnessed during the day had inspired him. The time was just that described by the Poet, whose merits have been made the subject of the short eulogy at the commencement of this work, in that inimitable Elegy he has given to us and to posterity. The sun had, to use the language of poetry, "descended into the waters of the ocean," and evening was beginning to draw over the fair face of nature her "graudual dusky veil." The hour of toil had passed, and the sweets of home were anticipated by the rustic already on his way. The beetle was traversing the walks; the ear was occasionally saluted by the

knell of the day that was gone; and sober meditation had sallied out on her career.

Most majestic of woods! consecrated by the attachment of royalty, and hallowed in the muse of Pope, whoever that has felt the protection of thy umbrageous walks during the scorching of the noonday sun, or experienced the advantage of thy seclusion to tell a tale of love, or listen to a vow of attachment, without adding a mite in thy praise, must be ungrateful indeed. Long mayest thou retain that preference which cultivated taste has assigned thee! Long may the breezes that play among thy foliage waft health and harmony to the visitant who has the soul to appreciate these thy beauties.

Having offered our tribute of admiration to this most favoured haunt, we shall now return to the young gentleman who is the hero of this tale; and whom, a few minutes since, we have led out to walk, and who, by this time, had got to that extremity of the forest allotted for public accommodation, and had reached the precincts of the Royal residence, when, conceiving, by the time he got back to the inn, that it would be time to retire from the fatigues of the day, he began to retrace his steps, and pursue his walk homewards. And little did he imagine, when he formed this resolution, of what was to happen before he partook of that repose to which his thoughts were now directed; little

did he suppose, that an event was to take place, by which his future prospects were to be so materially affected.

Let no one consider the day concluded, says an Eastern legend, till the finger of sleep has closed the eye-lids; and be sparing of your panegyrics, ye flatterers, till death has sealed the character.

At a distance of three hundred yards from the spot he commenced his return, he perceived, on the opposite side of the walk, a female form gliding through the trees, in pursuit of something which she frequently called by name; and which, as it crossed the way towards our hero, he perceived to be a rabbit. As the little animal ran almost

–and placed it, with his own hand, in that bosom which was prepared to receive it;

see page 11.

London: William Darton; *58, Holborn Hill.*

directly up to him, he, as it appeared to be her wish to have it caught, laid hold of it in the gentlest possible manner, and placed it, with his own hand, in that bosom which was prepared to receive it; and, in doing so, though, at the moment, by no means inclined to that pleasantry, which frequently, to gratify its vanity, puts the object on which it is exercised to the blush, yet could not help congratulating the innocent creature on the felicity of its good fortune.

Without any wish to avail herself of this opportunity for introduction to the stranger, she, with a frankness which innocence alone could inspire, did not merely thank him for his attention, but expressed a wish that she had been so fortunate as to have

met him an hour before that time, as she had been out so long in trying to bring it back. "It is a young pet," said she, "to which my mother and I are much attached; it strayed into our lodge one morning, four weeks since, when so young as to be scarcely able to walk; we have, till now, reared it, fed it with our own hands, and, I fear, as it is now able to run about of itself, that we are likely to lose it."

"It must be an indifferent judge of its advantages," he observed, at a loss but to say something, "to escape from so much tenderness. Some, there are, who, were they fortunate enough to command half the caresses which you bestow on that little creature, would, I am sure, never forget their influence."

What there was in this reply which this amiable girl did not like, it may not be hard to discover; its effect was, her taking leave of him, and wishing him a pleasant walk, after once more thanking him for his kindness.

Take leave, in course, she did, but yet did not deny him her presence; or rather, to speak more plainly, her appearance, her manner, and the innocence of her address, were really as present to the mind of our hero, as during the few seconds he had been conversing with her.

"Who can this young female be," said he to himself, "that has made an impression on my regard so strong, that, previous to this hour, I never felt any thing similar?

"Romance, with all her extravagance, cannot match this occurrence; that I should, on this very evening, in this place, and at this hour, meet with that form, and those features, which, to my imagination, from my earliest recollection have been depicted! Would it be prudent in me to follow her, and ascertain, from this interesting stranger, her name, her address, her views, her family? I am certain she is respectably connected. In her manner, though respectful to a degree, and even affable, yet there was attendant on these amiable qualities a certain unassumed dignity, which convinces me that her mind is of a very superior order. Under these circumstances, this step might

prevent my having a subsequent opportunity of meeting her, which is certainly my wish. What is best to be done?—see her again I must.—I cannot resist the desire.—She is yet within sight.—I can easily overtake her, if I please;—to-morrow may, perhaps, do as well,—but there is uncertainty in the delay.—I may never have another opportunity,—her rabbit may not again give me such an occasion of conversing with her." In the midst of this soliloquy, he was suddenly stopped by her passing a stile, by which she was entirely concealed from his view.

A resolution was instantly formed by our young hero, since he found himself precluded for that night from seeing her, of repairing to the spot

to-morrow at the same hour, when chance might possibly be on his side, and be favourable to his wishes. In the meantime, he intended to obtain from the people of the inn all the information he could, respecting this female who had so unexpectedly rivetted his attention; and whose fate, he began to feel a strong presentiment, was ultimately to be connected with his own. And while he pursues his walk, we will have time, as it is full a mile in length, to attempt some description of this fair creature.

"Her form was fresher than the morning rose
"When the dew wets its leaves."

Not a dozen of words back, we have promised you, my readers, a description of this female, whom the simple accident of which we have made mention, was the means of introducing, and who is to form the most prominent character, and is, in short, to be the burthen of this little book.

In this description, then, we would not have you anticipate that she is in possession of some of those charms of which you have seen so many ladies

possessed, in the Opera House. or at an assembly, or going to court; and which, as you must agree with us, are partly artificial, though we have seen some very beautiful women stoop to make use of them. No profusion of ringlets enveloped her head; no waving plumes scared, while they attracted, attention; no brilliancy of ornaments, which, while they dazzle all around them, occupy the beholder's attention with their own value, very often to the exclusion of that of the fair object that wears them. No, we believe you have had a hint of what you are to expect, from our prefacing this detail with the beautiful lines from Thomson, descriptive of the charms of Lavinia.

In the first place, then, she pos-

sessed all the indications of excellent health in the highest degree; and which, if they do not constitute beauty, yet are so essential to it, that it cannot be said to exist in their absence. Of these, as the principal of this first of requisites, may be enumerated, transparency of complexion, vermilion lips and gums, and brilliancy of the eyes. In shape, she might be tall, rather than otherwise; agile in figure, and in the proportion of its parts admirable. Her hair, of the darkest shade of brown, was elegantly divided on her forehead; and every part of her neck, bosom, and arms, were covered with a garment that equalled, in its purity, the snow itself.

Her manner, to which many will

pay more regard, particularly her language, was extremely unaffected. And, to explain this to our young readers, we will inform them, that this absence of affectation consisted in her making use of no words, in conversation, but such as she perfectly understood. On every occasion, when addressed, she made no effort to shine, by aiming at that which she did not conceive herself perfectly able for; but expressed herself with all possible clearness and simplicity.

How different was this, her manner, from that which characterized the eldest daughter of our hero's landlord, who had just returned from a boarding-school, and whom the good-natured man solicited permis-

sion to introduce to him, as a proficient in music, in painting, in dancing, and, in short, in every lady-like accomplishment! And who, to a question proposed to her by the young gentleman, relative to her opinion of the beauty of Windsor chapel, to his astonishment, though to her doating father's admiration, with the greatest ease imaginable, observed, that "it was neat, but very elegant."

Nor was this the only instance in which this young lady stumbled in verbal accuracy during their conversation, as, at the dinner-table, to which the host had been so kind as to invite our hero, when solicited by the young gentleman to allow him the honour to send her a

glass of wine, saluted his astounded ears with the following answer:—"Excuse me, sir, I never *takes* wine."

But to return to our heroine, whose name for the remainder of our acquaintance is to be Miss Margaret Somers, as our hero, George Sackville, has not yet finished his walk.

Enough has been said, we believe, to prove her worthy of admiration, as far as the attractions of person are concerned. Her mind has also been shewn to be of that cast, which, whatever excellencies it may have possessed, avoided their indiscriminate display,—a mind to which conceit, which lies only on the surface of knowledge, is a stranger. We shall now give a short sketch of her

history, and how she came so much to attract the notice of Royalty, as to be respected, rewarded, and patronized by the wisest and best, as well as most exalted, of men.

Margaret Somers is the only daughter and child of the late Lieut. Somers of the —— regiment. For several years the lieutenant and his family rented a little cottage in the neighbourhood of Egham, sequestered in its situation, and in a state of comparative seclusion. So much so, indeed, that excepting to the postman and tax-collector, with one or two others, among whom was the rector of the parish, he was unknown to almost all the neighbourhood. The cause of this mode of living may be accounted for on two reasons,—his limited income, and the

precarious state of his health, which had suffered severely during the Spanish campaign. Of relatives he had a few, and some of them of rank; but, from intimacy and friendly offices, a breach existed, which neither time nor friendly expostulation could heal. Somers had been so imprudent, according to their views, as, at his outset on life, to ruin his prospects for ever. Instead of the vain, the gay, the wealthy young lady, whom his father, a man possessed of uncommon worldly wisdom, had selected for him, young Somers chose, in consideration of her merit alone, the daughter of an humble curate, and who could give her no better dowry than a Bible and his blessing.

In vain did he remonstrate with his

father on the propriety and happiness of his choice; in vain did he question the right of any parent to select a partner for his son without first consulting him; in vain did he refer to her virtues, to her affection, to her mind, which was of itself an intellectual treasure. The father was inexorable. His son, according to his account, was for ever ruined; and he gave him, at the same time, to understand, that on his means he must expect to have no recourse on any occasion whatever, and that the substance he had to spare, he must consider as the right and property of his other children, who had formed connexions prudent in their nature, which satisfied him, that what he had to bestow would be

advantageously and properly taken care of.

For years, young Somers, with no other income than his pay as an ensign, contrived to support himself and family in independence and comfort; and in doing which, he found little difficulty, as long as his wife's father lived, with whom, during his absence on foreign service, she constantly resided. On the death of this parent, however, matters were changed; and his pay, though increased to that of a lieutenancy, was barely sufficient to support the appearance of a gentleman, and the expences of a wife, and suitable education of a daughter.

He had not enjoyed this accession of rank long, till, in crossing the

Pyrennees, he got sick; and was, in consequence, ordered home, when conceiving his end to be near, and having obtained the permission of his wife to sell out his commission, a step by which he thought he could most effectually promote her own and his child's interest, he retired to this privacy, awaiting with patience and resignation from week to week, and from month to month; and, latterly, from year to year, his approaching end. Though otherwise a religious man, he was frequently heard to charge Providence with being less kind to him than to many of his companions, whom he had seen fall beside him, as the period of his deliverance from illness did not arrive till two years after he had expended

the last shilling of which he was possessed.

To defray the expences of her husband's funeral, widow Somers, as her plate and other valuables had been all disposed of, was compelled to have recourse to an expedient, which, her husband, while alive, would never hear of, and this was to sell her late father's library, her only dowry ; and which, though it was worth six times as much, only brought her forty pounds.

On the death of her beloved father, the situation of Miss Somers was truly helpless.

Without a friend in the world but her widowed mother, who had become infirm, in consequence of a paralytic attack of the side, which

she contracted from her unremitting attention to her husband, during his last illness, her mind constantly directed by the principles of our religion, which promises to the destitute, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," found, in its consolatory and reviving effects, that support which she must in vain have sought from any other quarter.—But our young traveller has just now arrived at his inn, and is shewn into a room with lighted candles, and every preparation for supper, where we will leave him for the present, as we have nothing better to do with him, perusing the daily paper, while we proceed with our account of Miss Somers.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
"The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
"How many a flower is born to blush unseen,
"And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

THE reader may easily guess the extent of Miss Somers' calamity from what is already related, without another word being said on the subject; his attention is now to be directed to that resolution which she formed shortly after her father's decease; and which had, for its object, a provision of the means of supporting herself and her aged and afflicted mother.

"Mother, dearer to me than life itself," said she, one day, in the most consolatory tone, "I cannot any longer endure the thoughts of your suffering those privations to which you are about to be exposed, without endeavouring, by every means which God has granted me, to avert them. My poor father's removal from us has left me now at liberty to extend my labours to something beyond those merely domestic; and, I have been thinking, that, could my time be in any way shared between my attention to you, and to something which might conduce to our support, you may yet be happy, and me happier still from being that source of happiness to so beloved a parent."

Her mother's face, hitherto down-

cast in sorrow, brightened up at this affectionate address from her daughter; and, having embraced her, declared that, under all her afflictions, God had been truly kind, in thus having left her a guardian angel, whose filial tenderness was now her only comfort. "And pray, my dear Margaret," said she, "what plan do you now propose by which you will be able to accomplish the end you have in view? I am only afraid that, in whatever expectations you may have indulged, relative to the facility of obtaining such a situation as would suit you, you have been too sanguine. I trust, my dear," continued she, "you do not set your mind on any thing like an instructress; as, in that case, you are sure to be disap-

pointed; your education, though a sensible one, has unfortunately not been of that kind, that can further your wishes in that way; and, as to any other line to which you can direct your attention, so as to be productive of that profit you calculate upon, I am at a loss to conceive. Have you, my dear, any particular thoughts on the subject? if you have, pray inform me of them."

"Have you never observed, my dear mother," said the other, "in the papers which my father used to get, advertisements respecting female attendants or companions wanted for ladies infirm or insane? As to my education, limited as it is, I am truly grateful for it; but, such as it is, don't you think it sufficient,

with the requisites of attention and desire to please, for the acceptation of a situation of this sort?"

"I certainly do, my dear," rejoined her mother; "but supposing you were sufficiently fortunate to obtain such employment, you must consent to leave me behind,—you cannot attend on us both: whoever engages you, must have, by night and by day, your undivided attention; this, I am sure, will be an obstacle in your way. Believe me, it is with no selfish consideration that I speak thus; I should be most happy to see my child in that situation, and as soon as possible, where her own happiness is most likely to be permanently promoted. As for me, my days are not likely to be long on

this side of the grave; the idea of having such a daughter alone reconciles me to that life which I do not enjoy; and I can be, though the thoughts of parting with you must be painful, sufficiently happy, were you comfortably situated; to hear of your welfare, even if the possibility of seeing you is denied me."

"Think not for a moment of separation," said Margaret, "that must not be, on any consideration. As you shall see, there will be no occasion for it. A thought has struck me, and I consider it plausible and likely to answer, that, in the event of my obtaining a situation of the sort, I am pretty confident that, by representing the matter when about to be engaged, the request is of

such a nature, that no feeling person can well refuse it,—to be allowed to share with you my attention at those intervals when disengaged from the services of the other. Let me see," added she, pulling out her pocket-book at the same time, "I think I have here copied down the address of a house where such situations are to be found,—here it is. Now, dear mother, give me your consent to allow me to try this project; there can be no harm attendant on its trial, if it should not be successful; and, I am of opinion, that I have considerable chance in my favour."

Though this scheme did not appear equally practicable to her mother as to Margaret, yet the hope of seeing her daughter usefully em-

ployed, as her means were near their termination, nine pounds being all that remained out of the forty she received from the sale of the books, wrung from her a consent, which, under any other circumstances, she would not have granted.

The next day was then appointed for the trial of this project; and, in the morning, Miss Somers was, by the first coach that passed, to visit the great city, to look for employment.

As a few of our readers may be desirous of knowing, in what part of the coach Miss Somers went to town, we shall inform them, that she took an inside place, and a very hot place it promised to be, in a very hot morning; as it happened to be filled,

with the exception of this place, with disputants warmly engaged in discussing the respective merits of the poets of the day.

"'Pon honor," says a smart young gentleman, "if Tom Moore does not please me more than any poet that ever lived. I really think him superior to all I have ever read. His songs, for instance,—what could be finer?"

"I am very much of your opinion," added a lady with a long white veil; and who seemed, by her appearance, to belong to the blue-stocking sisterhood, "provided you except my dear Lord Byron,—who has, and I am confident this gentleman will join me in the opinion, exceeded all poets that ever lived, whether you regard

fertility of invention, variety of description, refinement of taste, or elegance of versification."

"If you appeal to me, madam," replied an old gentleman who sat pent up in a corner, and who seemed, by his dress, to be a clergyman, "I shall, previous to giving my opinion, beg to ask you one question; and that is, whether you suppose those poems, in the praise of which you have said so much, would have extracted such an encomium, had they been the production of Mr. Byron the carpenter, or of Frank Byron the shoemaker?"

"Really, sir," rejoined the other, "I am at a loss how to answer your question; but, since you promise your

opinion on the subject, provided I comply with your conditions, I do believe that they would possess the same merit, had they been issued from the pen of Mr. Byron the green-grocer, or any other Mr. Byron."

"That I grant you," said the old gentleman, "their merit would have been the same; but my question should be understood,—would these poems have been equally popular, had they come from any one but a lord?"

"I do believe it," answered she.

"Then I do not," returned he.

"Bravo, old chap," exclaimed the young gentleman; "you are right, 'pon honor, if you a'nt: how can such fellows as snobs and green-

grocers be supposed to know any thing of these matters?"

To Miss Somers, this morçeau of criticism, which was terminated by the departure of the old gentleman at Brentford, was a great treat, as she had never heard any thing of the kind before; and as, although her education was not of that description to qualify her for a governess, yet it comprised an intimate acquaintance with the principal English poets, from Chaucer to the present time. Nothing particular occurred during the remainder of the ride, which extended to the White-Horse Cellar in Piccadilly.

We have now arrived with Miss Somers at the agent's, whose business was, as his prospectus, after a

long preamble, set forth, to provide teachers with pupils, pupils with teachers, companions with ladies, and ladies with companions.—"And pray, madam, what is your object?" asked a smart young man, with a forward air, a look of affected penetration, and stiffened collar, and who gave himself out as the principal of the concern.

"My object," replied Miss Somers, "is to enquire, whether you can procure immediately for me the situation of companion to some sickly or infirm lady, who may want the society of some young respectable person?"

"I believe, ma'am, I can; I think I am sufficiently fortunate; I have had one on my book since last week, without a single applicant for it; but I

suppose you know our mode of doing business in these cases, is, previous to furnishing you with the address of the party in want of your services, our customary fee is ———"

"I care not as to the amount of the fee or premium," said Miss Somers, interrupting him, "provided the situation is likely to suit me; but I think it right to inform you, before you proceed further, that I can enter no situation of that or any other kind, unless an infirm mother, who is dearer to me than life, be allowed to accompany me."

"I understand you perfectly," answered the other promptly, "I perceive how it is; this to which I am about to recommend you, will, I am sure, suit you to a tittle. The lady

who spoke to me on the occasion anticipated your case precisely; and said, she would have no objection whatever to the young lady's bringing along with her her mother or aunt;—rather aged, I presume?"

"Yes, sir, she is."

"The very thing. Then, madam, I believe I may already congratulate you on having obtained this situation; a pound is our premium, and sixpence to the clerk."

In giving this shark his demand, a difficulty arose as to the terms, as she had taken only a guinea in her pocket to meet the expences of the day; and with part of it she had paid her coach-fare to town, which diminished her amount to seventeen shillings; this, she, with the greatest

innocence displayed, observing, at the same time, that it was all that she had about her. On the day following, however, and when she got the situation, he might rely on her punctuality in paying him the balance.

"It will do very well," said the other, grasping the money, "seventeen shillings is three and sixpence under our regular premium, but it will do—it will do." Having said so, he gave the unsuspecting creature a slip of paper, having an address written on it; and, wishing her a good morning, pocketed the last farthing this poor girl had in her possession, although he knew she had even deprived herself, by giving him her all, of the means of leaving town.

It may be unnecessary to trouble our readers with the particulars of Miss Somers' disappointment and chagrin at finding herself duped by this worthless wretch, who, under the pretence of forwarding the views of this young creature, whose object was most laudable, plundered her of her property, which, under these circumstances, she freely advanced. And we should not have been so particular in this part of our short account of her, had we not imagined, that, by detailing this anecdote, we have erected a beacon to warn the unsuspecting stranger who may come to town with similar views.

That all mankind are not equally rapacious, the reader will acknowledge by the following demonstration

of friendship which Miss Somers received at the hands of the coachman with whom she was to return; and, as it can be best detailed in the form of a dialogue, we shall give it in the words of the parties themselves.

Miss Somers. — Perhaps, coachman, you may have known my father?

Coachman. — Very likely I did, Miss; what was his name?

Miss S.—Lieut. Somers, of Ivy Cottage, near Egham.

Coach.—I knew the gentleman by sight remarkably well, I have driven him to town and back a hundred times and more; he was exceedingly kind to me; but I hear the gentleman is since dead,—is it true?

Miss S.—It is.

Coach.—Then I presume I have the pleasure of seeing his daughter?

Miss S.—You have.

Coach.—And in what way can I serve you in town? Would you wish me to call any where, or send any where for you? Here is my porter, and a very steady man he is, I can depend on him, he'll run at a minute's notice, and will be back ere the coach start, I'll warrant him.

Miss S.—Thank you, coachman, I have no where to send, I have already completed all my business.

Coach.—Then pray tell me what I can do to serve you. As young ladies sometimes miscalculate on their money matters in town, perhaps you will allow me to advance you some money; now, do permit me,

here is one, two, three, four, or five sovereigns, all I have got, and very much at your service; and, if these are not sufficient, I can, in a moment's time, get more.

Miss S.—To say the truth, coachman, I have a little miscalculated in my expences, and my view in speaking to you was, provided the name of the late Mr. Somers was known to you, to request of you to allow me to ride home in your coach, and, on my arrival I shall thankfully pay you.

Coach.—That I shall, Miss, and you shall have your choice of a seat, as no names are as yet booked; but can I do nothing more? pray accept of the loan of this sovereign, you

must want some refreshment; here is the White Horse. They are very civil people, and will shew you every attention; I will just mention your name at the bar—I am sure they will shew you the greatest respect.

Miss S.—I thank you, sir, indeed I thank you for your civility; yet I beg of you to excuse my accepting any money, as I assure you I have no need for it; and, as for refreshment, I do not feel the least desire, I never eat before dinner, and I think that I shall be home by our usual dinner hour.

Coach.—You will then allow me to order you a room, to wait till the coach is ready, as it will be full an hour before we start, and I am so certain that you will experience

every respect and attention, or I should not otherwise request you.

Miss S.—I really thank you, sir; I would rather, however, prefer, as the day is fine, to take a walk to the park to see the improvements, which, I understand, are going on. I shall take care to be with you at three o'clock.

The coachman, finding further entreaties of no avail, raised his hat, made his bow, and promised to see kept for her the place she had selected.

Not a few of our readers, we are aware, will, on the present occasion, be disposed to charge Miss Somers, in refusing to accept of any thing else than a ride from the coachman, with unnecessary and unseasonable

delicacy. The good nature of this man was, as they will think, but ill repaid by the reserve with which she treated his proffered kindness. What a fool she must have been, others will observe, to deny herself the comfort of a refreshment, when it was so civilly and respectfully placed within her reach ; especially when she knew she could discharge the obligation on her arrival at her mother's. While others will think with Miss Somers, and commend that reserve which prevented her from incurring any other obligation than what she could not possibly avoid. The idea of refreshment, as she was no slave to her comforts, held out to her no inducement to borrow money. The case of the conveyance, however,

differed materially from the other, as it could not be dispensed with, but was, in fact, a matter of necessity.

Our readers have, no doubt, already suspected us guilty of an omission, and on a subject respecting which they must already have been forming abundance of conjecture, and that is the state of Miss Somers' mind on the occasion of this deception and disappointment.

When we say that her soul was entirely uninfluenced by any thing like pride, and that while her imagination, young and buoyant, depicted the chances of success in too glowing colours, and urged her forward in this affair, contrary to either the wishes or advice of her mother, yet, as she was equally en-

dued with that ingenuousness to acknowledge her precipitancy and determine on amendment, we shall relieve a great portion of our good-natured readers from any apprehension as to the state of her feelings.

Her determination, in this case, was as soon conceived as adopted; and it was similar to that of the penitent prodigal in the parable, to confess to her dearest friend and mother her mistaken precipitancy, and to promise reflection and attention to advice for the future.

Her soul, which was truth itself, determined on revealing every circumstance as it happened, without palliation or colouring; and she knew full well, that it was into a bosom fraught with affection, and that would

return endearment for sincerity, to which she was about to make her confession.

We shall now conduct her to the stage-coach, where a select party had already occupied all the seats, with the exception of that allotted for her, and among whom existed as strong a turn for disputation, as that observed in the morning's party.

"I perceive," said an elderly gentleman to a young lady who sat by him, and had a copy of "Woodstock" on her lap, which he had received at the librarian's that forenoon, "that you are an admirer of Sir Walter Scott. As for myself, I regret, that I have been unable to keep pace with the ingenious Baronet. Some five or six of his first Novels I read, and with

very considerable pleasure:—subsequent to "Rob Roy," however, or rather the "Tales of my Landlord," I have not seen one, though I shall most willingly commence their perusal when I can spare time.

And pray, sir, will you have the goodness to explain what you mean by the term *considerable*, when applied to the pleasure you said you received when you perused those celebrated Novels? asked a young man, with a broad Scotch accent, and who seemed "eager for the fray," as Pope has it, somewhere, in his translation of "Homer." "I am sure you will admit that you have read nothing equal to them in the English language."

"Indeed, sir, I will again confess

that they gave me very great pleasure in the course of perusal; and if, according to your vocabulary, the expression *considerable* implies any thing inferior, I beg to correct it, and substitute another instead. As to the other part of your observation, relative to their standing at the head of English fictitious composition, I most humbly beg leave to differ from the opinion you have advanced. As, from the impression which those of this author that I have read produced on me, I must say, that my estimation of other works of the kind, and which have been allowed to be first rate in their way, is as yet unshaken."

"Perhaps, gentlemen," said an elderly lady who had hitherto sat

mute, "you measure your ideas of excellence in this way, according to different standards. It may be, this young gentleman," politely bowing to him, "admires what is descriptive of the localities with which he is acquainted, and, no doubt, enamoured; while you, sir, may consider man, best described, as clogged with no nationality, but with the world for his arena, moving, speaking, and acting in a manner that all mankind can understand, entertaining all equally, and equally benefiting all."

"I am obliged to you, Madam, for the manner in which you have expressed part of my sentiments on this matter; I must also add, however, that I am sufficiently old-

fashioned to admire whatever has a tendency to utility, even in a work of fiction. Consequently, according to my standard, Madam, the works of Fielding,* with some exceptions, it is true, appear to me the first."

"I really wonder at that," exclaimed the young Scotchman, "as I never yet, with the exception of yourself, heard Fielding's novels praised as beyond those of second or third rate. Perhaps you will have the goodness to say in what way their perusal can advance the interests, in the way of utility, of any one who reads them?"

* We would wish it to be understood that the writings of this author are not recommended to young persons. They are to be read with profit only by those advanced in life and experience.

"In the first place, young gentleman," replied the other, "I am pleased with Fielding, as he is the only novelist we have who writes the English language, in that purity, which a man of taste can read. In this respect, he must be considered as a standard; but waiving that, and assuming the utility of his lessons as his principal recommendation, I would go on further to prove my point than the importance of exhibiting such a specimen of intrigue and low villany as Mrs. Honor;—one remarkable instance of whose conduct, and which I am sure will be sufficient, I shall adduce to prove my point.

"When the good-hearted, unsuspecting Sophia revealed to her dear

Honor, her project of escaping from the tyranny of her father, of her going to town, and there throwing herself on the protection of Lady Bellaston till matters could be arranged, Mrs. Honor, like a sound political knave, to lull any suspicions of her sincerity on the part of the other, gave her immediate consent, and vowed that neither life nor death, nor any thing more dreadful, would ever separate her from her dear mistress. The amiable Sophia sucked in all these asseverations as in earnest; and, from the manner of her Abigail, considered her enterprise as finished; conscious as she assured herself of the staunch co-operation of Honor. Mark now the duplicity of human nature, and particularly of this sordid and in-

terested set of creatures. On the moment she left Sophia's presence, she held a parley with her own mind in what way, in this affair, she could most materially advance her own interests. Instead of attaching herself any longer to Sophia, a thought struck her that she could secure a very considerable present, besides a deal of favour, were she to reveal the whole of her young mistress' intentions to the squire, her father. Sophia's generous disposition was not unconsidered next, by this dextrous woman; the time, however, when she could do any thing effectual, was at too great a distance to merit much consideration in a matter of such interest. To the father then she would have went and

sold her dear mistress, and realized something immediate, had not the idea of a journey to London, and its consequent enjoyments, and the excellent opportunity she had of getting respectably introduced, as the companion of Miss Sophia, overcome even her avarice, and struck the balance in her mistress favour. This is, however, but one of the many lessons of practical utility with which the writings of this author abounds."

The coach here stopped at Brentford, when the old lady and the young Scotch gentleman left; leaving along with Miss Somers, the old moralist, and two other ladies, who rode with her the rest of the way.

"I sincerely trust, madam," said the old gentleman to the young lady

who had the volumes in her lap, and after they were again on the way, "that nothing has dropped from me in the course of those few remarks, which I have been making in reply to the gentleman who has since left us, that will, in any way, diminish the delight you will receive in the perusal of these volumes. I assure you I should be sorry if it did. These Scotch are so very national, in regard to every thing that is theirs, that there is no getting rid of their extravagance, but by telling them the plain truth. Sir Walter Scott has, nevertheless, undoubted merit; and, in the collection of materials for these fictitious histories, he has shewn a research, which is truly astonishing. There is, I hear,

hardly a library in these kingdoms famed for any thing curious that has not been ransacked by either himself or his emissaries, with this view. That of the cathedral of Peterborough, was, some five or six years since, visited by an Edinburgh bookseller, at his request. You have, I make no doubt, Madam, read his earlier pieces, those of 'Waverly,' 'Guy Mannering,' the 'Antiquary,' and some few others posterior to these." To which the lady assenting, "You certainly have then, Madam, had a treat; but, entertaining as we in the South reckon these compositions, I am told that they are doubly so to a native who can enter into their peculiarities. Several of the characters in the early productions,

besides, are well known to be portraits of singular men, either recently alive, or at least so in the author's recollection. Of this kind, that of 'Dominie Sampson' is a remarkable instance. And if, ladies, you will give me leave, I shall give you an anecdote of the real personage, which will shew the resemblance to be very striking between him and the ideal subject."

The ladies having assented, the old gentleman went on, that he "had it from a particular friend of his, who had lately travelled in Scotland, that the real Dominie Sampson was still alive, that he had seen him, and that the resemblance between the gentlemen was truly prodigious.

"The model of this extraordinary

being, happened to be the school-master of a place called ———, and was in person, according to my friend's account, a tall, raw-boned, lantern-jawed personage, with a stutter in his speech, speaking of the most trivial subjects always in superlatives and exclamations, and endued with an attachment to what was local so enthusiastic, and a knowledge of what was merely confined to his own little village, that his remarks on any other subject were extravagant and ridiculous in the extreme. On one occasion, the Dominie happened to get nigh poisoned, and, in a way, curious enough. Strolling on a holiday, beyond the limits of his village, to the distance of perhaps ten or a dozen of miles, a

distance to which his former *perambulations* had never extended, he found himself in a sequestered part of the country, wonderfully athirst. A public house presenting itself, in pops the Dominie, sweltering like a bull, and bellowing for something to drink, with a voice truly deafening. The old lady seeing her guest in such tribulation, brought him a bottle of porter, which she said she could recommend. The Dominie, in the true Guy Mannering style, having given three yawns, at each of which he had shewn his long horse tusks to their full length, exclaimed, 'Give it me, woman.' No sooner said than done; the porter was decanted and gulped down in a moment. 'And where did you get thi porter?' was

his next question.—'I got what it was made of from Glasgow, sir,' said the old lady very civilly, 'and the very best of materials I can assure you it was.'—'And what was it made of, woman?' asked the other, screwing up his face as if tasting something very nasty; 'I vow,' he exclaimed, 'I believe that I am poisoned.'—'Poisoned you are not,' replied the other, 'nor in any way hurt;—to tell you all the truth about it, I got last Monday week from the brewer a barrel of as good ale as ever was drank by you or any one else. Well, this ale, which stood in the stable, happening to burst the cask, and run out about the place, I called in a neighbour to see what could be done; when I was told, that

if I would bottle it up, it would have a fine dark colour, and would make excellent porter. So there is the whole truth, and very excellent porter it is, as every one who has tasted it has confessed.'"

By this time, the coach had reached where Miss Somers was to alight; and the coachman, having left his box, handed her out, after she had taken leave of her fellow passengers and of this facetious old gentleman. Mrs. Somers was in attendance, though otherwise extremely unwell, on the return of her beloved daughter; and who presented the coachman, for his great civility, with a handsome pecuniary consideration.

When dinner was over and Betty had taken away, "My dear Margaret,"

said Mrs. Somers, "I must now give you an account of what has happened to me during your absence, since you have been so good as to give me your history of to-day's proceedings, and which I am sorry, seem to have had so much impression on your mind; although I was pretty certain, as I have heard your dear father often observe, that nothing very valuable was to be got by advertisement. Yet let it not in the least affect you,—we have, as yet, the means of living for a few weeks more, during which time, with a little exertion on our part, I am sure something may be done for our mutual advantage."

Miss Somers was all attention, when her mother began as follows: —"You must know, my dear, that,

feeling myself extremely uncomfortable from being deprived of your society, so used have I always been to it, and having a return of my pain in my left side, I laid myself down, and gave orders to Betty not to disturb me till three o'clock, when I should be in time for the coach. I had hardly been, as I calculate, two hours in bed, when Betty roused me to inform me, that Mr. Briggs, our neighbour, wished very much to speak with me.

"I felt alarmed, you must suppose, as I always do, on the sight of that man who so cruelly imposed on your poor father; and expected nothing from his visit, but a repetition of that barbarous claim, to which I am confident, that by the laws neither of

God nor man he is entitled, and gave Betty orders to shew him into the parlour, where I should wait on him immediately.

"In I came, and was, I can assure you, glad to see Mr. Briggs' look so changed from that lowering, forbidding scowl, which he used formerly to exhibit, when he called on your father; and also with the agreeable change in his manner, which was, instead of 'I can want my money no longer,' "will you be so good as to inform me, Mrs. Somers, in what way I can serve you."

"I am delighted to hear you say so," said Miss Somers, "as there was no man whose presence I ever dreaded half so much as that savage's. But I am sure he could not be in

earnest when he said, 'he meant to serve you.' I am all impatience to hear how he proceeded."

"You shall be satisfied and presently, my dear," replied her mother, "you must, however, give me your promise, that you will hear with firmness what I say, before I tell you in what manner Mr. Briggs meant to fulfil his friendly offer of service."

On Miss Somers assenting to her mother's request, she began, "You must know, my dear child, that this Mr. Briggs, three years since, on the death of his second wife, made proposals to your father and myself relative to marrying you;" here Miss Somers became pale, but entreated her mother to go on. "Be firm, my dear," continued the other, "and you

shall hear it all. Your father, who never liked the man much, did not, however, treat him disrespectfully on the occasion, but at once objected on the ground of your age, for you then were not more than sixteen. From that time, till yesterday, he has never renewed the subject." Here, again, Miss Somers became so agitated as to be under the necessity of taking a glass of water; she, however, requested her mother to go on. "I regret, my dear, though I expected as much, the effect that this communication has had on you, but I think it as well to have it over; as I gave my promise to mention the matter to you on your return—a promise which Mr. Briggs, on his bended knees, extorted from me.

He said that, full of regard for our family and of affection for you, whose appearance after having seen you he could never efface from his mind, and having the means of making you comfortable, as far as unembarrassed circumstances and a clear income of three hundred a year went,—he begged to be permitted to renew his proposal to you, adding that, on my part, the same objection which was made on a former occasion, could not now hold. He then asked me for my friendly services and co-operation in the business, and hoped he should be seconded by my good wishes. I told him, that on every occasion but such a one as the present, in which he expected me to use my endeavours in influencing my

daughter on a subject of so much moment as marriage, he might command them to any extent; on the present matter, however, he must rest satisfied with my promise, not to influence my daughter in thwarting his views; and should, as early as possible, inform you of his intended kindness, and leave the matter entirely to your own judgment and inclination. He confessed himself grateful for this promise, and said he would, with my permission, repeat his visit to-morrow forenoon to ascertain the opinion you formed of his suit. Thus, my dear, have I delivered to you what passed in your absence, which I know has given you pain; but which, in pursuance of my promise, and in conformity with

my duty as a parent, I felt bound to acquaint you with."

Perceiving that the effect of this disclosure was severer than she expected, she assisted her to the sofa, and tried to dissipate her agitation by introducing the exhilaration of tea. Tea was then ordered, over which the ladies returned to the further consideration of this subject.

On the subject of marriage, Miss Somers, in consequence of her secluded habits, had never bestowed any consideration. Though capable of the most devoted attachment, yet, towards any one object, as she had not been in the habit of mixing in society where such opportunities occur, she had not confined that devotion. Her time, too, ever since her

ability to read and write, had been so entirely occupied in reading and writing for her father, who was, in consequence of extreme nervousness, unable to do either for himself, to allow her to exercise her imagination in those excursive flights on matrimony and happiness, in which, other young minds, from their abundance of time and opportunity, frequently indulge. To any notion of alliance with Mr. Briggs she had a decided aversion, as well on account of his cruelty to her father, as on account of the appearance, manners, and character of the man. He was not only unpolished to a degree, but was, what might be called, brutal. He was fifty-five years of age, and had been twice married,—but what, above all

these considerations operated the most to his dislike in the mind of Miss Somers, who was a pattern of filial affection, was his allowing the mother of his last wife to beg in the village, and at last to die in the workhouse. If ever love entered the young and innocent mind of Margaret Somers, it was, when ——— used to meet her at church, a youth about her own age, the son of a respectable man in the neighbourhood; and who, on seeing her as he crossed to the opposite pew, never failed to blush, nor she to return it. But this early impression was soon dissipated, as the object which gave rise to it was hurried away, at an early age, to seek his fortune in a foreign clime.

With the particulars of the con-

versation of the ladies at their tea-table we shall not at present trouble our readers, otherwise than by informing them, that Miss Somers determined on seeing Mr. Briggs in the morning—when he promised to call, and to have her mind made up by that time on the subject of his visit.

On this night, the most eventful of her life, Miss Somers retired to rest at her usual hour, and sleep, the balm of fatigue and the anodyne of pain, contrary to her expectation, abstracted her for a while, 'tis true, from real, but to consign her to distractions of a more dire description than ever afflicted her young mind.

To relate the succession of scenes that occurred to her fancy on this

night would be endless, and would afflict our readers more than they deserve. Nor were her visions unchequered by glimpses of ideal sunshine. On one occasion all was gay, innocent, and happy: on another, the gloom of apprehension, of anguish, of horror, thickened around her. A recurrence of the scenes of infancy, so dear to us all, dazzled her for a moment; and, during one of these bright intervals, a succession of every thing that could transport was conjured up in representation to her fancy. A meadow, of exquisite verdure; a golden sky; the sunshine of infancy doubly inspiring; her parents' caresses; the society of her playmates, and among the rest that of ———, whose blush on the occasion was not

forgotten, were all brought forward. But the air soon became black, the storm burst in a clap of thunder, and to her agonized view the figure of Briggs appeared, like the Demon of the Storm, dragging by the grey hairs, through its pitiless vengeance, her aged mother. Sickened at this sight, Margaret screamed aloud.—The scream occasioned by a scene of horror so appalling, awakened her mother, who lay in an adjoining apartment, and who hastened to the assistance of her terrified daughter. On hearing it was but a dream, though Margaret did not relate its particulars, Mrs. Somers was rejoiced; but, dreading its recurrence, she insisted that, for the remainder of that night, her daughter should take a share of her bed.

Morning came, and, earlier than he promised, Mr. Briggs was in attendance. No extra desire was apparent in Miss Somers to appear more amiable than usual in the eyes of this man; nor did she endeavour, by a contrary behaviour, to lessen that interest her appearance was sure of producing. The troubles of the night had had their effect in effacing the tint from a complexion that vied with the vermilion; and an air of sadness was evidently depicted in that visage, the seat, otherwise, of inward harmony and cheerfulness.

"I have brought," said Mr. Briggs, making at the same time one of his best bows, "for the amiable Miss Somers, a letter from a gentleman, to whom, I presume, you

"I have brought," said Mr. Briggs, making at the same time one of his best bows, "for the amiable Miss Somers, a letter from a gentleman, to whom, I presume, you are no stranger.

see page 84 & 85.

London: William Darton; *58, Holborn Hill*.

are no stranger. It is from the clergyman of our parish, and who, along with it, desired me to deliver his most respectful compliments to yourself and mamma."

"Mr. Ebers is very good," replied Miss Somers, "to think of us in the manner he does; pray, Mr. Briggs, when did you see Mr. Ebers?"

"Last night, madam," was his reply. "I hope he was well when you left him." "Very well, indeed," replied the other.

"I hope you will excuse me while I read this note." So saying, she broke the seal; and her mother withdrew.

Rectory House, April —, 182—.

"*My dear young lady,*

"At Mr. Briggs's request I have taken the liberty of addressing to you a few lines, and on a subject the most important, with the exception of our holy religion, of which, indeed, it forms a part, that can engage the attention of any one—and that is the marriage state.

"Mr. Briggs, it seems, has been so fortunate as to have obtained your mother's sanction to wait on you, to explain his wishes to you on this matter; and, apprehensive, as he imagines himself, of his inability to open the matter to you as he ought, has requested my mediation: and, as I have ever considered it my duty

as a Christian minister, to promote among all classes of my parishioners the utmost happiness and good-will, to see them all united in the bond of concord, and not to deny it, provided there is a prospect of increase of happiness, in the bonds of matrimony, I could not single out the amiable Miss Somers as an exception to this my general wish, and who has so many advantages, both natural and acquired, to adorn the marriage life.

"Believe me, my dear young lady, ever since the late melancholy event, which deprived you of the protection of a father, my interest has been excited, in common with that of Mrs. Ebers, for you and your amiable mamma. Often has my wife, in talking on this subject, expressed a

wish, that it had pleased Providence to have blessed us with a son, that we might then have had the chance of possessing as our own, the union of so much beauty and sweetness of temper. But so much happiness is denied us; and it falls only to my lot, I regret to say, to wish, that such a treasure, as I know you to be, is suitably settled in life, according to your merits.

"With regard to the present case, however, let me be understood, as saying not a word of advice or recommendation; there is nothing further from my thoughts, than, in the remotest degree, to influence in her choice, in a matter of so much moment, and with every apparent advantage, even the meanest of my

parishioners; how much less in the present case, where so much worth is at stake.

"Mr. Briggs, I know, to be a sensible and steady man; he has also the means of making you comfortable, as far as a genteel independence goes; and he professes to me his intention, to use every exertion, and to seize every opportunity, to contribute to that happiness which he knows is your desert.

"Having said this much, I must take my leave of you; of one thing, however, I am certain, that you will receive him with that courtesy peculiar to your family, and which is ever the attendant of virtuous minds.

"Mrs. Ebers begs to be remembered to Mrs. Somers, and will take

an early opportunity of paying her respects, and of making her enquiries, in person. In the meantime, believe me to be, my dear Miss Somers, your most attached friend,

J. Ebers."

Favoured by E. Briggs, Esq.

Miss Somers, in perusing this letter, certainly written with the best view and intention, took an opportunity, twice or thrice, of repeating her sincere obligations to Mr. Ebers for his anxiety after her welfare, and of professing herself determined to maintain, by every action of her life, that good opinion she was proud to see entertained of her.

"No man," said Mr. Briggs, "is

more able to form an opinion of the female character, and none more ready to express it when he sees it is deserved, than my friend Mr. Ebers; and the amiable Miss Somers may consider herself fortunate in having had the opportunity of coming in contact with so excellent a judge."

Miss Somers said not a word in reply, but bowed to Mr. Briggs, and at the same time entreated him to take some refreshment. To this Mr. Briggs assented, conceiving that he might have an additional opportunity of urging his plea, and of coming on terms of greater familiarity, than he could otherwise do, over a dry *tete-a-tete* interview.

"Am I then, Miss Somers," said

Mr. Briggs, after taking a few glasses of wine to raise his spirits, "to be that happy man, whom my friend, Mr. Ebers, conceives me entitled to be. Am I then," taking Miss Somers by the hand, "to be permitted to call my own, for ever, all that I now estimate as dear on earth. Assure me that you look on me, and on my humble pretensions, with a favourable eye, and I shall consider myself the happiest of men."

To such rodomontade, from a man of whose heart she had a bad opinion, and whose sincerity, consequently, was questionable, and, in short, who was an object of dislike to Miss Somers in every way, she returned no other answer than by

replying, "that, previous to her taking any step in this affair, by which either his hopes might be encouraged or otherwise, she considered herself under the necessity, as a matter of courtesy, to return an answer to the letter which Mr. Ebers had been so kind as to send her. To that gentleman, then, she begged to refer him, before she would enter upon any further preliminary."

The discourse, in consequence of this declaration, becoming general, she requested her mother to join them till Mr. Briggs, which he did very soon, took his leave.

That Mr. Briggs might not long suffer the inquietude of suspense, and, as she had made up her mind already on the matter, she thought

it as well to return, as soon as possible, the promised answer to Mr. Ebers' note; and, having her mother's concurrence as to the propriety of expedition, she set about its completion as soon as possible. The following is a copy of the letter she produced on the occasion; and which, as our readers will by and bye perceive, was the introduction to her success and independence.

Ivy Cottage, April —, 182—.

"*Dear and Reverend Sir,*

"I cannot express to you the gratitude with which your kind and indulgent letter of this morning inspired me. I value its contents doubly, as it is from a gentleman

whose attentions to my late dear father were unremitted, whose solicitude for the interest of our family has been unwearied, from whose advice in private I have derived much to assist me in the regulation of my conduct, and from whose lips I have heard those lessons of patience and texts of consolation, which have been my stay and support under my afflictions.

"For that part of your letter in which you are pleased to think so highly of me, as to deem me worthy of an alliance with your family, I, really, more than thank you. I have knelt down and kissed the passage, and will, when I have the opportunity, kiss the hand that wrote it. It is particularly kind of you to think

of us, in our low and dejected state. We are now, in the eye of the world, as it hath pleased God, hardly worth a thought; to us, then, in such circumstances, such attention is peculiarly consoling.

"It gives me, reverend sir, heartfelt pleasure to observe, in your note, no direct recommendation of Mr. Briggs or his suit. The gentleman may have those qualities which you are pleased to allow him, and I make no doubt but he has; but, in my mind, I cannot respect him, and, from my heart, I cannot love him.

"I am aware that, on the present occasion, prudence might suggest a great deal, might urge the necessity of escaping from want, and embracing competence, and might dic-

tate the propriety of undervaluing the consideration of my own feelings, in order to secure to a beloved and afflicted mother, the certainty of a home and its comforts. On these, and such grounds, by many minds I know I would be chargeable; but, by that Christian, to whom I have now the comfort of addressing myself, I know that, after I have explained the cause of my rejection of his addresses, I trust I shall be exculpated.

"If a refuge from destitution be the principal ground on which some would advise me to close with this gentleman's proposals, I have to observe, that destitute I hope never to be as long as health, strength, and my present desire to make my-

self useful, is granted me; and, as to my dear mother's being served by this step, I have her sanction to say, that, without my society, she can have no comfort; and that, as our wants are few, she professes herself to be perfectly willing to accommodate her desires to such means as I can procure for her by my exertions.

"Believe me, sir, for this amiable parent alone, I am content to live. Her comfort is all my desire, and it shall be the object of my life; but to secure which, were I ever to deceive this man, by professing to do what I never can, and which is abhorrent to my nature, and to those principles which you teach, what were I to expect in behalf of my dear mother? or what kindness towards her could

I reckon at the hands of a man, whose late wife's mother, as is well known to you, was allowed to linger in misery, a wretched inmate of our workhouse!

"As to what I shall do to secure the object dearest to my heart, I know not,—on God's goodness, however, which is all-sufficient, I am, along with my own endeavours, determined to rely,—with humble confidence on that providing mercy which extends throughout his creation; and which, surely, will not suffer two of his humble, penitent, and harmless creatures, to experience a fate more severe, in its kind, than what is the portion of the fowls of the air, or beasts of the field.

"I hope you will offer an additional

prayer for us, dear and reverend sir, in our present trying circumstances; and which, as it will be that of a righteous man, must have great effect in directing the attention of Almighty benevolence towards the humble endeavours of,

Dear and reverend Sir,

Your grateful and obliged

M. Somers.

"P.S. My mother desires me to add her respects and love to you and Mrs. Ebers; and shall be most happy to see you, or her, whenever you may find it convenient to call."

Scarcely had Mr. Ebers finished the reading of this letter, when the arrival of a carriage at the gate arrested his attention. It was the

carriage of the princess, to whose chaplaincy he had the honour to be lately appointed. This exalted lady, not less remarkable for her rank than condescension, had been in the habit of visiting the family of his predecessor in office, in the most familiar and friendly manner, and had commenced these friendly calls on Mr. Ebers, of which this was the first. As may be expected, the family was taken by surprise,—no preparations had been made to receive the royal guest, as her arrival was unexpected. It was her custom, however, on these occasions, to divest herself of all form, and to take an amiable family by surprise, convinced, as she expressed herself to be, that they then appeared to most advantage.

"And how does Mr. Ebers do this morning?" was her first enquiry; "and how is Mrs. Ebers and family?" was the next; being satisfied as to these particulars,—"and is there any thing that I can do for the good Mr. Ebers this morning?" was the third.

The worthy gentleman bowed, in acknowledgment to her kindness and condescension, and took this opportunity of presenting to the princess the letter which he had just received from Miss Somers. The princess, on reading it, was observed to shed tears; and, having requested Mr. Ebers' company to attend her to the residence of the young lady, she drove towards Ivy Lodge, after having promised to repeat her visit to the Rectory in a very few days.

With the appearance of Miss Somers this exalted and amiable lady was quite delighted,—her artlessness, her good sense, uncontaminated by any affectation; and, above all, her devotion to her infirm mother, so wrought on the princess's affections, that, in the short space of half an hour, she became as interested in the concerns of the Somers' family, as if she had known them for six months. Understanding their circumstances, and having a wish to do this amiable family an act of immediate kindness, she fixed her eyes on a piece of embroidery which Miss Somers had just finished, and to which she had taken a fancy.

"I wish Miss Somers would make me a present of this beautiful piece of embroidery. I declare I have not

seen any thing this long time which has delighted me half so much."

Miss Somers declared, "that the trifle her Royal Highness was pleased to notice was hardly worth acceptance. But that it was at her Royal Highness's service, since it had been so fortunate as to merit such high commendation."

"I shall accept of it," replied the princess, "provided Miss Somers promises to accept a present from me, and not to examine its contents till I am out of sight."

To this, the artless Miss Somers, not anticipating what its contents might be, readily promised; and the princess, having shaken her and Mrs. Somers by the hand, hurried to her carriage, carrying with her the little piece of embroidered work.

After having recovered from the astonishment attendant on a visit so unlooked for, she opened the little note-case which had been slipped into her hand, and three notes of ten pounds each were the sum of its contents.

Nor did the kindness of this amiable and exalted lady rest here; for, on conversing with her royal brother, and shewing him the letter above mentioned, which she had carried with her, it was agreed on, that the widow Somers, and her affectionate daughter, should occupy a lodge attached to the royal residence, with an annuity of one hundred pounds.

The intelligence of this benevolent act on the part of his Majesty, and of good fortune on their part, the princess undertook to be the bearer to the

Somers' family herself, and ordered her own carriage to be in readiness to convey them thither, as soon as the Lodge was ready for their reception.

Having provided for our heroine according to her desert, the attention of the reader is now respectfully directed to the young gentleman, Mr. Sackville, whom we have left at the inn, indulging in contemplative reverie on the scenes of the day, and the adventure of the evening, which, by the way, had well nigh obliterated them all. And the result of his thoughts were these, that, in the morning, his first visit after breakfast should be to the Park, where he would afresh prosecute his enquiries relative to the interesting

female who had made such an impression on his mind.

On the return of the morning, and in the course of his enquiry, the reader may guess his astonishment and delight to have found, in the person of this female, the object, which, at a tender age, had attracted his admiration and inspired him with attachment.

The day to him was the happiest of his life; as, from the period he left this country, which was eight years since, till the present moment, his affections had never ceased to hover round the graces and innocence of the fair tenant of Ivy cottage.

A disclosure of his name and circumstances were next made, by the gentleman himself, to Mrs. Somers, and also to Miss Somers, who art-

lessly accused herself of great want of recollection, when she could forget a face that was, at one time, so well known to her; and a solicitation was at the same time made for that hand which, he said, it had been long his wish to have the good fortune of possessing.

The rest is obvious, and needs no detail. We must not omit, however, that Mrs. Somers and her daughter knelt down spontaneously, and offered up their sincere acknowledgments to that kind Providence who had so brought light out of darkness, and who had converted so much sorrow into so much happiness.

THE END.

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