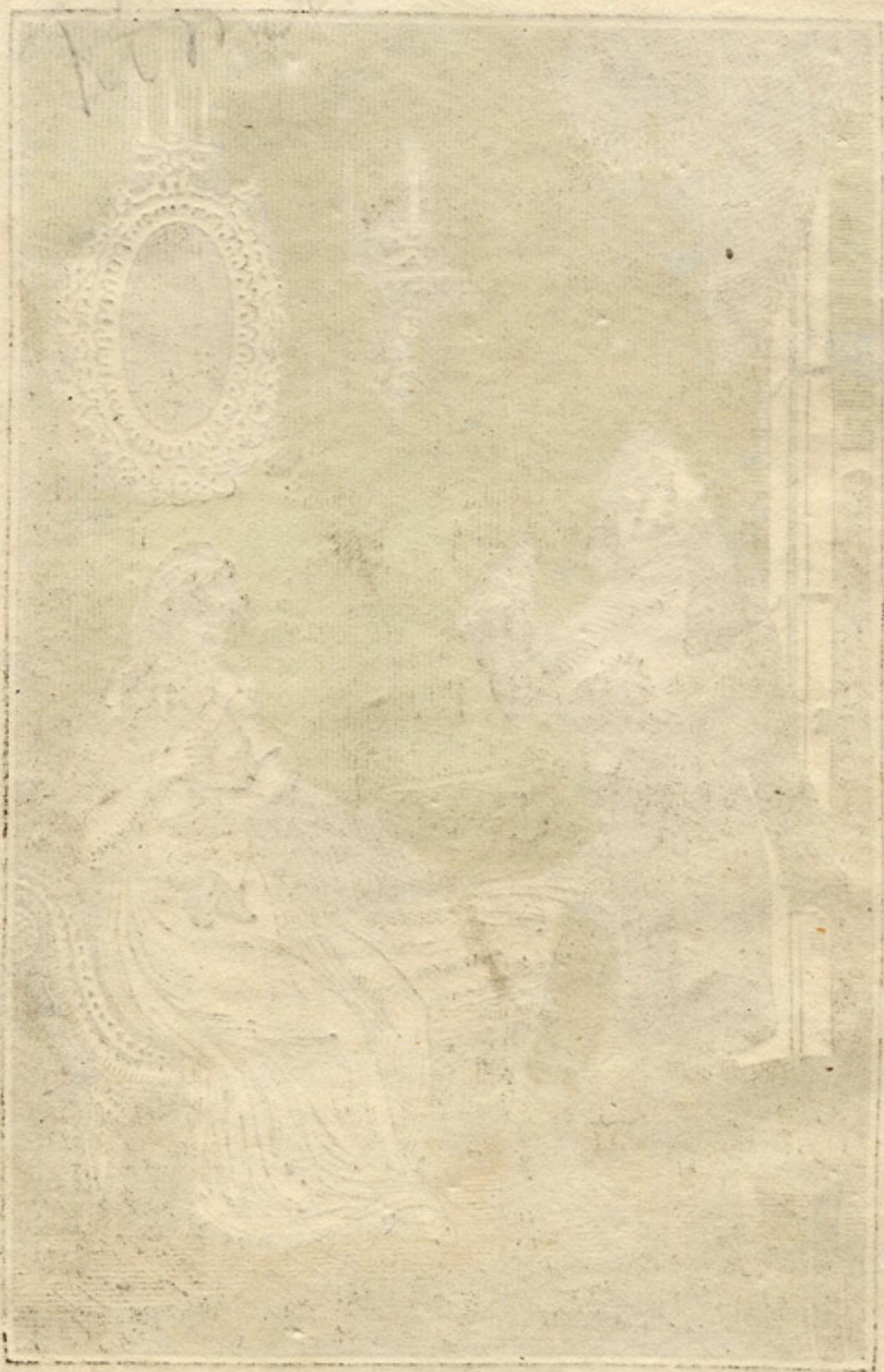


Bernier



The sooner had the King had more of
courage and a serious change.



No sooner had the Earl gazed on the miniature, than his countenance underwent a serious change.

THE
WHITE COTTAGE

OF THE
VALLEY;

OR THE
MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND:

AN
ORIGINAL, INTERESTING ROMANCE.

BY SARAH WILKINSON.

“ So mourns th’ imprison’d lark his hapless fate
In love’s soft season ravish’d from his mate ;
Fondly fatigues his unavailing rage,
And hops and flutters round and round his cage ;
And mourns and droops, with pining grief oppress’d,
Whilst sweet complainings warble from his breast.”

LONDON :

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20, GREAT EASTCHEAP.

Price Sixpence.

THE

WHITE COTTAGE

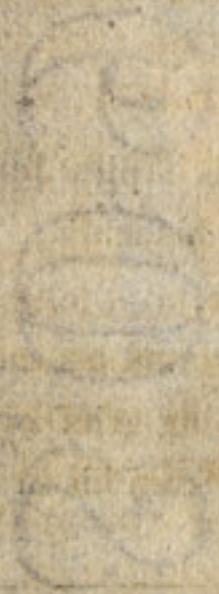
VALLEY

OR THE

WIFE OF THE

ORIGINAL INVENTING ROMAN

BY SARAH WILKINSON



LONDON

PRINTED AND SOLD BY R. HARRISON

NO. 10, GREAT BATHURST

Price 2s. 6d.

THE
WHITE COTTAGE, &c.

THE evening was an awful gloom, and the unfortunate Emma felt it in unison with her own woes; the tears chased each other down her lovely face, and her gentle bosom distended with agonizing sighs. "He comes not," she at length exclaimed, "and I am truly wretched! What a torture is suspense to the human mind; yet I must endure it, for there is not the least clue by which I can gain information, and discover whether the absence of Alfred is the effect of design or accident. Alas! some sudden evil may have befallen him—he may be wounded, or languishing in sickness. He may be dead! O, what a horrid thought have I conjured up to afflict myself with!" and she gave way to a fresh flood of tears. She was aroused from this desponding state by hearing the plaintive cry of one of her lovely babes in the next room, which Emma had appropriated for a nursery. It was the little Rosalthe, who had just awaked from a sweet slumber; Emma took the child to her fond bosom, and in the maternal office for a while forgot her sorrows.

The Dutch clock in the kitchen, the only time-piece the dwelling could boast, had just announced the second hour of the morning when the bell at the gate was rung with vio-

lence. Emma, her children, and the servant had been in bed about four hours: anxiety had chased quiet repose away from the eyelids of the former—she was the first to hear the summons, and started up not doubting that it was her adored Alfred. She felt a weight of care removed from her heart, and slipping on a dressing gown she hastened to the door with a small lamp in her hand. Alas! it was not her adored husband, and she recoiled with horror. She would fain have closed the door on the intruder but that was now too late, and she seriously repented the haste that had led her to open the door without first requiring a signal that it was the person she expected.

The stranger was a tall portly man, of a stern countenance, and he seemed rather past the middle age. His garments were drenched with the rain, and he entreated a fire to dry them, and shelter for the night. Emma shewed him into the parlour, and placing the lamp on the table bade him be seated, and she would presently send a domestic to kindle a fire and attend him. Alise was by this time arisen; she had heard her mistress admit some one, and then enter into conversation: she supposed it was her master, and was dressing herself when Emma entered the chamber and apprized her of what had happened. She gave Alise the keys, and desiring her to call up Annetta, a young girl who had lately been hired to assist the former, ordered that the stranger should have every accommodation the cottage afforded, and that when he found an inclination to retire, he might be shewn to the only spare bed-room which they possessed.

Emma took both the children to her own bed; they slept sweetly, but their hapless mother passed the remainder of the night in a state of the most painful agitation and suspense: her fears concerning Alfred were increased, and the thoughts of having a stranger under her roof added to her cares. The morning dawn found her in deep reflection; she felt a presentiment of approaching evil, which she in vain endeavoured to banish from her mind. The person she had unwarily admitted could not be a robber: he would ere this have called his associates, and plundered their little dwelling. As a benighted traveller it was strange he should have sought a shelter there, in a place only accessible by a foot-path, and to gain which he must have passed an inn by no means inconsiderable.

THE WHITE COTTAGE.

She wished, yet dreaded to hear Alise's summons to breakfast, when she should meet the stranger, and hear what he had to advance for his intrusion on the preceding night, as she certainly expected some reason or apology for such an action.

The stranger was in the parlour when Emma descended; she had the young Adolphus in her arms—Annetta followed, bearing the sweet Rosalthe.

Her guest wished her good morning in courteous terms, and saluted the little ones. "They are sweet babes," exclaimed he; "which of them is your own child?"

There was an earnestness in the manner of putting the question that alarmed the fond mother, and gave birth to ideas as new as they were painful. "I will partly conceal the truth," said she mentally. "There can be no great guilt in such a proceeding, when the motive is considered. This little female infant," said she to him, taking Rosalthe from Annetta, to whom she made a signal to be silent, "is mine; that sweet boy, to whom custom has attached me in a manner similar to my own babe, belongs to Alise, a faithful creature who has long attended me; her husband died while she was in her pregnancy of this her first child, and I resolved still to retain her in my service, and let our children be nursed together: there is but a few days difference in their ages, and they have both attained their ninth month."

"Your husband, madam, I presume, is absent?" said he. Emma replied in the affirmative, nor could she at that moment suppress a deep sigh.

"Will that circumstance, madam," said he, "preclude me from sheltering myself at your house till to-morrow morning? It will render me a great service, and I hope at the same time not put you to much inconvenience, or give you uneasiness." "I regret," said Emma, with a dignified sweetness, "that my husband is not at home to convince you of the urbanity of manners and the goodness of heart he possesses; I must acknowledge that a stranger of your sex is not a desirable guest in his absence: but for the short time you mention it will not be materially inconvenient, nor I trust tend to any regret. My husband has too noble a mind to censure me for an act that has hospitality for its basis."

The stranger thanked her, and then entered into a con-

versation so artfully worded that Emma's suspicions of the stranger's having some sinister design were heightened, as all his questions tended to make a discovery of her domestic circumstances; she was accordingly very reserved in her answers, and as soon as the breakfast things were removed, her guest acquainted Emma that he had letters to write—that he intended to get some method of conveying them to the next town—and it would take him to the early part of the afternoon to prepare them: and to the great relief of the agitated lady retired to the room appropriated to his use. She instantly summoned Alise and Annetta to her presence, that she might fully apprize them of the part they had to act before the stranger could converse them, and thus frustrate her intentions.

While she is conversing with her faithful domestics, we will look back a little to the events that preceded—the distress of mind into which the amiable Emma was now plunged.

Emma de Villeroy was a native of the southern part of France; she was the only child of a very respectable medical man, a descendant of a noble family. In early life he married a most lovely young lady against the consent of her parents: they were inflexible—no entreaties could soften them, and at length, wearied with repeated attempts, the amiable pair entirely desisted from the vain pursuit. In one respect the lady was highly favoured by fortune; her loss of the portion her parents had once destined for her did not deprive her of the affections of her husband; he remained one among the tenderest and best of his sex: one only child blest their marriage. Emma, the lady who is the heroine of this story, most probably out of respect to the feelings of her husband, never mentioned her own family—a universal silence prevailed in that respect, and all that Emma knew was, that her grandfather on the maternal side was a Marquis possessing an ancient title and a splendid fortune.

After an illness of five years continuance, borne with resignation, and indeed cheerfulness, Mrs. Villeroy expired in the arms of her affectionate husband. The expences attending her indisposition had been great; this the good man did not regret, but to add to his distresses, the banker in whose hands he had placed all the money he could spare from his expenditure (as a portion for his daughter, and a reserve against old age) failed, nor did his dividends amount

to two shillings in the pound. Almost heart broken, Mr. Villeroy took to his bed; his business, which he could not attend to, of course fell off, and his circumstances became much involved; he bent under this accumulation of sorrow and distress, and breathed his last sigh on the bosom of his amiable daughter. He was interred in the same grave that contained the body of his late beloved wife, exactly eighteen months after her decease.

Emma was now in her seventeenth year, lovely, indeed dangerously so, for no one could behold her with indifference; she possessed many pleasing accomplishments, besides a variety of useful qualifications. Her father had no relations, and she was left by his decease a most solitary being. At this period she was invited by an elderly lady, a Madame Louvaine, to pass a few weeks at her house till her affairs could be arranged, and some plan formed for her future existence. In the course of a most interesting and important conversation which took place between Madame Louvaine and Emma, the latter regretted the ignorance she was in respecting her mother's relations. "Surely," said she, "they would not suffer one so nearly allied to them as I am to live in a state of poverty that must disgrace their noble blood, were they apprized of my misfortunes! But alas! there is no channel by which I can obtain the wished-for information. It was evidently my father's wish that I should make myself known to them, for on the night previous to his decease, when I was left alone with him, he called me to his bed-side, and thus addressed me: 'Emma, I trust the sale of my effects, including my medical stock and library, will yield you a sum not wholly unworthy your acceptance: but as the grand-daughter of an Earl, my Emma ought to be nobly provided for. They were obdurate to an unchristian-like degree with your dear mother, but I thank heaven she lived not to suffer the distresses that have overwhelmed me: she was always maintained in a manner accordant to my feelings and her own. Your beauty, innocence, and youth may have weight with them. As soon as I am laid in the grave write to them explanatory of your situation; if the answer is not favourable to your wishes, repair to Paris and present yourself to your grandfather—he is still living: of the destination of the rest of the family I know but little. When you arrive in that great city any one will direct you to his residence, which is noted for its princely magnificence. I will now acquaint you with his

title, and the name of the square where his dwelling is situated.' Just at this important instant," continued Emma weeping, "my dear father was seized with a fainting fit; his discourse with me had overpowered him. The usual restoratives were resorted to, but he only recovered from insensibility to feel a deep languor: in vain he essayed to speak—articulation was denied him. He fell into a slumber; it continued several hours, and I hoped from it the most beneficial effects. But alas! it was not so ordained—the hand of death was on him. He made signs for pen, ink, and paper; they were brought him, and he was supported up in bed by his attendants. He fixed his eyes tenderly on me and began to write, but the effort was vain: he had wrote the word *Marquis* in an irregular manner when he fell back. Dying spasms seized him, and in a few hours all that remained of my dear parent was a lifeless corpse."

Madame Louvaine lamented the unfortunate circumstances that had attended her young friend; she bade her be comforted, and place reliance on that power who is always a friend to the virtuous. "A decent time," said the good lady, "has now elapsed since your father's death; we will go to the house to-morrow and pack up your clothes, and what few valuable articles you may wish to retain; we can then fix the day of sale,—it is a melancholy task, but it must be done; at the same time we will carefully examine the papers of your deceased parents—we may find among them some clue to your mother's family." "It is not improbable," rejoined Emma; "thank you, my good friend, for thus studying means to promote my happiness." "You are indeed very dear to me," said the amiable widowed matron. "My long friendship for your parents makes me consider you as one of my own offspring. Were it in my power to follow the dictates of my heart, Emma should no longer feel herself a dependant." Emma thanked her for her kindness, and they soon after retired to rest.

Mrs. Louvaine and Emma repaired to the house of the late Mr. Villeroy as soon as they had breakfasted. Emma felt deeply affected—every object reminded her of the heavy loss she had sustained. Their search was vain in respect to the family of Emma's mother—not the least document appeared. A beautiful miniature of Mrs. Villeroy was in one of the cabinets: Emma now beheld it for the first time; the features were strikingly impressive, but it was evident from the whole appearance that she had sat for it at a period

when she was in the bloom of youth and beauty. It was attached to an elegant pearl chain, and fastened together with a clasp on which was engraved E. M. L. The latter was of course the initials of her maiden name, and proved a valuable prize to Emma, who vowed never to part with so inestimable a treasure. A certificate of the register of her birth was also found; Emma added to her clothes the few jewels her parents had left, which were removed to the house of Mrs. Louvaine, and the sale was appointed for that day week.

Two evenings previous to this time the auctioneer waited on Miss Villeroi to inform her that an elegant young gentleman who had come to Montpellier for his health, had taken such a fancy to the library of her late father, that he was desirous to become a purchaser by private contract, and had submitted the terms on which he would be a customer for the books and a pair of oil paintings. The sum, the auctioneer observed, was liberal—that it was in fact more than he expected to arise from the sale of the whole of the effects. Emma of course could raise no objections to an offer so beneficial, and it was agreed that the young gentleman should wait on her the next morning, with the auctioneer, at the house of Mrs. Louvaine. They came at the hour appointed, and were received by Mrs. Louvaine, who was in the parlour, and sent for Emma down stairs. When she entered the room the stranger advanced to meet her, but suddenly started back, and Emma on her part was no less agitated, though neither of them could account for the emotions they felt.

The affair that brought Mr. Adolphus Montreville to Madame Louvaine's was soon adjusted to the satisfaction of the parties concerned; and such was the politeness shewn by the young Englishman, whose graceful manners did honour to his country, that the lady of the house could not resist the impulse of inviting him to visit her and Emma before he left Montpellier, which he talked of doing in a few days. This invitation was most readily accepted, and the young gentleman departed. Madame Louvaine now seized the opportunity of rallying her young friend on the emotion she had shewn, nor ceased till she had brought her to acknowledge that Mr. Montreville appeared to her the most amiable Englishman she had ever seen.

On the night immediately preceding the sale Emma went

for the last time to take leave of the scene of her former happiness, and to fetch a small parcel of fine china which she would force on the acceptance of Madame Louvaine. She was accompanied by one of her friend's servants, the good old lady herself being rather unwell. As Emma and the maid were returning home a sudden faintness seized the former, the consequence of the grief she had tried to suppress. The young woman with difficulty supported her, and was near sinking with her lovely burthen, when Mr. Montreville most opportunely came to the spot, and recognized, in the fair sufferer, the lovely Miss Villeroy. He carried her to the nearest house that presented itself: Emma, by the attentive care of its inhabitants, was soon recovered. Her face was suffused with scarlet when she saw her situation, and found Mr. Montreville gazing on her with looks in which love was too apparent to be mistaken. He conducted her safely home, and received the thanks of Madame Louvaine for his care and attention to her young friend. From that period Mr. Montreville became a daily visitor at Mrs. Louvaine's, and his delicate attentions to Emma were such as could not be misunderstood: but as he had not spoken of his family (for Mrs. Louvaine was aware that there were many noble houses of the name of Montreville in England not allied to each other) nor made a formal declaration of his passion, the good lady began to be seriously uneasy; and she considered it a duty she owed the child of her departed friends to give Mr. Montreville, in as genteel a manner as possible to understand the tenor of her thoughts. She observed him to colour violently, but still the suffusion was of a nature different from that which betrays conscious guilt, and he soon after left the ladies with an assurance that they should hear from him in the morning. These words were accompanied with a sigh which did not escape the notice of his attentive observers: "Alas!" said she, "all is not right—yet I feel convinced that Montreville is a man of honour; he is under some controul, and I shall never see him more—his parting words signified as much. 'We shall *hear* from him!' that can be nothing but an eternal adieu." Madame Louvaine observed that she was inclined to think well of the young man, but if any thing appeared in future to confirm them in a contrary opinion, she trusted Emma's good sense would banish him for ever from her thoughts.

It was nearly the meridian of the next day when one of

Montreville's servants came with a letter for Miss Villeroy, an answer to which he said he was to call for on the morrow evening. Emma's hand trembled—she could not break the seal. She gave the letter to Madame Louvaine, saying, "Dear madam, read it for me—I have no secrets from you." "Amiable girl," said the old lady, "may your bosom ever remain in such a state of purity!" She read the contents of Mr. Montreville's letter:

"Emma, to yourself and the friendly Madame Louvaine I will unfold the difficulties with which my passion for you is surrounded. The compass of a letter will not allow me to be minute in the circumstances which I submit to your perusal; I shall therefore be as brief as possible. My name is really Montreville, but there is a title attached to it, which for particular reasons I have not used since I left my native country. The Earl, my father, (I am sorry to speak thus of a parent) is a man whose vast fortune is not sufficient to satisfy the cravings of avarice and ambition which lurks in his narrow mind, and still narrower heart. He destines me for a lady, the heiress of a princely fortune—one whom my heart could never approve. Alas! my fortune is not sufficiently independent of him to allow me to brave his anger. The anxiety of my mind brought on an indisposition which threatened serious consequences: the physician prescribed a tour through the south of France, and that I should pass a few months at Montpellier. Nothing in the universe could have been so agreeable as this prescription, to which my father consented through fear of losing the heir on whom he had placed his hopes of further aggrandizement. Besides the pleasure and salutary effects I expected from this tour, there was a stronger motive to render it consonant with my feelings—I was freed from the importunities of my father in respect to a union in which all his wishes were centered, and also from the disagreeable visits I was at times obliged to pay to the uncouth awkward lady whom he had selected for me, and her formal relations.

"None of the beauties of the continent have been able to make more than a momentary impression on my heart till I saw you, Miss Villeroy; for you I have imbibed a passion that can end only with existence; and was I in possession of the titles and estates which are mine in reversion, I would publicly espouse that lovely girl whose image is deeply engraven on my heart, and whom I flatter myself

does not regard me with indifference; but that circumstanced as I now am would be attended with certain ruin to me and the object of my tenderest affections. Will Miss Villeroy deign to listen to what I have to propose? Will she by her consent make me the happiest of men? Will the good Madame Louvaine plead for me, and sanction a scheme which, though romantic, and her reason may not entirely approve, pity may lead her to befriend—a private marriage, without any further disclosure of my family than what I have here given, till a change of circumstances shall permit me to be more explicit, as I am resolved not to make any confidant in a secret of such importance, no, not even to my wife, lest in a moment of misplaced confidence, she should unintentionally betray it.”

Mr. Montreville concluded his letter by mentioning an annual sum by no means contemptible, which he intended to settle on Emma if she acceded to his proposal. “Be not offended or alarmed, my lovely girl,” continued he; “I have both your honour and interest at heart, and I trust no ill consequences will result from your placing an implicit confidence in me. Alas! I have no alternative to propose; all lovely as you are is a circumstance which would have no weight with my father.”

When Mrs. Louvaine concluded the perusal of this important letter, she maintained a deep silence, and bent her eyes ardently on Emma, who bursting into tears flung herself into the arms of her aged friend, exclaiming, “What shall I do? Give me your advice—must I become Montreville’s wife, or (painful alternative) renounce him for ever!” and she relapsed into an agony of grief. “Your own heart, dearest Emma,” said Madame Louvaine, “must decide for you. The small sum of which you are now mistress will not furnish an annuity sufficient to render you independent. Montreville’s scheme is as he says romantic, but his proposals are honourable, and the settlement he proposes much more advantageous than you, as the daughter of a medical practitioner, could ever expect. Your noble birth, and near affinity to a French Marquis is out of the question in this instance; Montreville knows it not, nor would I inform him of a circumstance that in its present state would not in the least tend to your interest. It would be advancing what you could not prove, and subject you to suspicions as illiberal as they are unfounded. In case you should ever be acknowledged by your grandfather your previous marriage

into a noble family would be a favourable circumstance on all sides—till then let it rest in oblivion."

The next week was marked by the marriage of Alfred Montreville and Emma Villeroy, in the presence of Madame Louvaine, an old gentleman, and Montreville's two servants, who were both Frenchmen, and had been hired since his arrival at Montpellier; and on the same day Henrique, one of the latter, was united to Alise, a pleasing woman about thirty, the last ten years of which she had resided as upper servant with Emma's parents.

The new married pair immediately left Montpellier and journeyed into Savoy without any attendants. They therefore hired a few rustics there, and domesticated a few months in a dwelling little better than those inhabited by English peasants, situated in a most retired spot. Montreville was a kind and affectionate husband, but strictly maintained the reserve he had promised respecting his own family. Letters from England occasioned an alteration in their mode of living: Alfred informed her that he was ordered home by his father, and must make immediate preparations for the journey. Emma started on being informed that she was not to accompany him; he said it was impossible, but at the same time promised to make the separation as short as possible. He escorted her to Madame Louvaine's abode, who received her with the most unfeigned joy, and recommended her to that protection which she had always afforded his lovely Emma, till the happy period of their re-union. Alise she found had already become a widow; her husband had died a few weeks since in consequence of a fall from his horse, leaving his wife in a state of pregnancy. Madame Montreville found her truly despondent, but soon, by the consent of her husband, cheered her drooping heart by engaging her as an attendant, and promising that she should be wet nurse to the child that Emma expected to present her husband with in a few months.

Montreville in less than a week departed for England, having first presented his wife with a handsome sum of money to defray her expences till his return. His departure left Emma in a melancholy mood, and six weeks having elapsed without the receipt of even one letter, she became seriously uneasy; she knew not where to write, and for the first time gave way to conjectures of a most displeasing nature, regretting she had become the wife of such a myste-

rious husband, and entailed on herself such a weight of uncertainty and suspense. At this period Mrs. Louvaine was attacked by a serious indisposition, the violent effects of which operating on a frame long since weakened by age and infirmities, was fatal, and Emma lost her truly valued friend, who bequeathed her the house in which she resided, and what property she possessed.

A letter from Montreville arrived to cheer the gloom; it stated that he had been seriously indisposed, but was now quite recovered. He expected to be at Paris about the same time that he hoped Emma would be perfectly recovered from her lying-in, when he entreated that she would lose no time in repairing to the capital with her infant and such attendants as she should deem necessary; but entreated her to adopt any other name than that of Montreville, as his father would be with him, and also the family with whom he wishes an alliance would be at Paris, she would therefore see the necessity of his request. Though Emma was much hurt, she at length determined to yield to his solicitations.

In less than a month after this Alise was delivered of a boy, who from its weakly state did not promise a long existence; and on the following week Emma became the mother of twins, a lovely boy and girl, who were soon after baptized by the names of Adolphus and Rosalthe, and on the ensuing day Alise had the grief to lose her infant. Adolphus took its place at her bosom, and Mrs. Montreville determined to suckle Rosalthe herself. She had lain-in nearly five weeks before she was capable of undertaking a journey of such length. We will pass over the particulars of her tour to say, she arrived safely at Paris with her children and the faithful Alise. They hired only apartments there for a short time; Emma knew not how to apprize her husband that she had fulfilled his wishes, and was uneasy lest he should not recognize her in that great city: her fears were however groundless, for Montreville had daily, about the time of her expected arrival, visited the police book, where the names of all strangers is enrolled immediately on their arrival. Mrs. Villeroy (for that was the name she had taken) her twin children, and a servant, left no doubt in his mind that these were the persons he wished to see. He took the direction, and hastened on the wings of love to see Emma and his children. Joy overcame his amiable wife, and she fainted in his arms. He heard of the death of Mrs. Louvaine with regret, and advised Emma, now she

had lost that friend who was in fact a second mother to her, to leave France and settle in Britain, where he would find a pleasant retreat for her and the children till the happy period should arrive when he could proclaim his marriage to the world, and place Emma in a situation to render her virtues conspicuous.

Emma replied she had no will but his, and it was agreed in a month's time for her to depart for England, under the care of an elderly gentleman who would only know her as a Mrs. Villeroy, and be given to understand that she was the wife of a particular friend of Montreville's, who being in the West Indies, was going to seek an asylum on Montreville's Welch estate till the return of her husband, as her marriage without their consent had rendered her relations implacable. A few evenings previous to her departure Emma accompanied Montreville to the opera; the elegant simplicity of her dress attracted much attention. In the next box was a gentleman apparently about sixty years of age, a lady very little younger, and another in deep mourning about forty. Emma felt a prepossession for these people for which she could account in no other way than that there was a resemblance in their features to those of her departed mother, particularly in the younger lady. She eagerly listened to the conversation in hopes to hear their respective names, and see if any of them corresponded with the initials on the clasp; but her wishes in this respect were not gratified. She thought she should hear the servants called for when the entertainment was over, but here she was also disappointed. Mr. Montreville was seized with a sudden head-ache and wished to retire; Emma of course could find no pretext for staying. As they were leaving the box Emma stumbled, and her husband exclaimed, "Take care, my dear Mrs. Villeroy." The elderly gentleman startled, and uttering the name of Villeroy, said, "My conjectures were true!" Emma followed her husband and heard no more; she mentioned it not to Montreville, nor had he heard a word that passed. Emma passed a restless night—she scarcely admitted a doubt that these were her relations; but she could not make herself known to them, and was therefore obliged to leave France in a painful state of uncertainty in regard of her own family and that of her mysterious husband.

Mr. Landon, the gentleman to whom Montreville en-

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trusted her, behaved during the voyage and journey with the greatest attention, and conducted Emma and her family to a charming valley near Lunindoverly, South Wales. She had been settled here about two months when she was agreeably surprised by a visit from Montreville, who now promised to spend most of his time with her, and that he should not leave Wales till he had first apprised her of such an intention. One night, when he came to the neat white cottage of his beloved wife he appeared unusually agitated, and Emma found it impossible, by all the kind entreaties she used, to make him confess the cause. At parting he said a few sentences which filled her with the utmost uneasiness: "I fear," said he, "our marriage is prematurely discovered—take care of our children, particularly my dear boy." The next time Montreville came she could obtain no further insight into the affair than a promise from her beloved husband that he hoped circumstances would allow him to be more explicit when he came again, which he promised to do the third night at the latest. Alas! he came not—night after night elapsed, and still no Montreville came to enliven her solitude, or speak the language of consolation to her disturbed mind.

She was thus circumstanced when the stranger came to her rural abode and heightened her apprehensions, particularly for her darling son: she understood from the stranger that he did not suppose both the children to be her's; she therefore resolved to practise an innocent deceit in order to ensure the safety of her infant Adolphus. She trembled also for Rosalthe, but considered that if any one was apprehensive of her offspring standing in the way of their possessing an estate, they would be more inveterate against a male than a female infant. She confided her fears to Alise and Annetta, who was an honest little Welch girl, and having told them what answers to make to any questions the stranger should ask, she became more tranquil, certain that she could rely on their fidelity. In the evening the stranger went out to walk, as he said, about the mountains. His conversation during the day had been merely desultory, and Emma began to flatter herself that she had mistaken his questions as the consequence of design, when in fact they were the result of curiosity. He returned late in the evening, took a hasty supper, and retired to bed.

Emma dropped asleep—her dreams were horrific, and she was awakened by sounds that struck terror to her soul:

she heard several footsteps ascending the cottage stairs, and the voice of the stranger pointing out the door of her chamber, which was presently forced open, and the latter entered with two men in masks, and an uncouth looking middle aged woman. The stranger had a pistol in his hand, and he threatened Emma with instant death if she made any resistance to his commands, the first of which was to arise and dress herself and Rosalthe with all expedition, and in the mean while they would retire from the chamber. There was no alternative, and Emma was forced to obey this distressing mandate. With the infant Rosalthe in her arms she was forced to walk through the valley, and a long lane contiguous to it, which formed a communication with the high road; here a carriage and four awaited their approach: she was lifted in by the two men, who with the woman became the companions of her involuntary journey. The blinds being drawn up, they travelled very rapidly for about four hours, when the coach stopped and they were removed. Emma perceived that they were in the court-yard of an ancient edifice, much injured by various devastations, and it formed a solemn and impressive instance of the powerful hand of time, that all-subduing conqueror. Resistance was of no avail, she therefore followed her conductors in silence across a gothic hall, and up a long flight of stone steps, till she came to a gallery hung round with rusty armour. At the end of this gallery was a small suit of rooms, consisting of three apartments, one of which was a neat bed chamber, the furniture of which was much more modern than the rest, but the whole were perfectly clean. Her conductors had retired, having carefully secured their fair captive. Tears relieved her almost bursting heart; she prayed heaven to fortify her mind, and enable her to endure her sorrows for the sake of her infants, and her hopes of a re-union with Montreville, for whose safety and happiness she was most anxious. She hoped that her little son would fall into the hands of his father, and felicitated herself on her scheme of passing him to the treacherous stranger as the son of Alise, or he would have doubtless shared the fate of herself and Rosalthe; "And heaven only knows," said she, sighing, "what that fate may be, or for what base purpose I am brought here."

A fortnight elapsed in captivity; Mrs. Warden (the woman who had attended her on the road) was her sole attendant: her time was passed in nursing Rosalthe, and

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working with her needle, the materials for which the woman procured her—but there was not a book in the whole edifice. Sometimes when she could accompany her Mrs. Warden permitted Emma to wander through the apartments of this extensive building. Emma asked the name of the edifice in vain—no answer was returned.

She was entering on her third week, when one morning as she sat at breakfast she was alarmed by the abrupt entrance of the stranger; his eyes seemed to dart fire from the angry passions of his mind: “You have deceived me,” said he, “and tremble for the consequences! Did not you deny the boy to be your’s—and think you I will be cheated thus?” “Your meaning, sir,” said Emma, “is not known to me, nor can I comprehend by what right you thus question, and indeed persecute me and mine.” “I am Montreville, Earl of Clarencourt, and you, with your syren arts, have seduced my eldest son, Lord Milbury, from his duty. In spite of the precautions he took to conceal his degrading marriage from me, I discovered it: his visits to the White Cottage in the Valley were noticed. I followed him, and one night when you were both seated in the bower I became acquainted with the torturing circumstance that you were his wife. I saw you both embrace an infant—I knew not then you had two, but that discovery is since made, and the flight of your nurse with the child has for the present eluded my chief plan.” “Thank Heaven!” ejaculated Emma. The Earl frowned: “You shall not triumph,” said he; “Clarencourt is not to be trifled with: your husband is a prisoner in this very castle, nor shall you ever meet again if you refuse to sign your name to these conditions. You will see the signature of Montreville—he has also taken the oath required; in fact, he consents to all I ask so he is not to be separated from you, whom he ought to hate as the cause of his undoing. There is the paper—I am now going to leave the castle, and shall return in three days, when I shall wait on you to know your resolve, whether you will make a comparative friend of me or your bitterest foe.” With these words he quitted the room. Emma reclined on her couch, and near an hour elapsed ere she had courage to peruse the contents of a paper that she was well aware must be of a nature fatal to her love and peace of mind. She at length discovered the extent of her misery in this cruel proposal:

The Earl of Clarencourt, highly exasperated at the mar-

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riage of his eldest son, resolved that the brother of Alfred, Edward Montreville, his second and indeed youngest son, should marry the rich heiress to whom he wished so much to be allied, notwithstanding that she was remarkable for the ugliness of her person, and vulgarity of manners. But as the Earl knew that Orinda, so was the lady called, was bent on marrying a title, he determined that Edward should have that advantage; that he would cause the death of Alfred to be reported, and arrange matters so as to favour the deception. Edward was not to be let into the secret, the Earl knowing him to be too generous to take advantage of his elder brother's misfortunes. Alfred, his wife, and Rosalthe, were to depart for America, with a handsome sum of money. Alise and the child were to be advertised for, as if by Emma, to meet her at the White Cottage in the Valley; when she repaired thither she was to be seized on, and brought to her master and mistress, whom she was to accompany in their banishment; and the infant Adolphus was to be given up entirely to the disposal of the Earl, who would promise to provide for him in a manner befitting a private gentleman—as such under a feigned name he should rear him, and report him to be his ward, the son of a late particular friend. Montreville and Emma were to assume a feigned name also, and to take a second oath never to reveal what family they belonged to, or that they were entitled to more than what they could accumulate by commerce, in which he supposed Alfred would embark with the sum assigned him. If the captives refused to ratify this agreement, they were to be confined for life in Milbury Castle, where they now endured an unjust captivity.

Emma revolted from her heart against these proceedings; she even, though assured that it was the hopes of being reunited to her, that had made Montreville sign the paper, blamed him for an act of acquiescence in which he deprived his children of their birth right; and she nobly resolved, though death should be the consequence, to withstand the tyranny of the Earl, rejoicing that he had not Adolphus in his grasp. She hoped that Alise had gained a place of safety for him, and that some clue might lead her to discover his family; she trusted too that time would soften the angry Earl, and incline him to temporize. But alas! Emma had fresh woes to encounter with—the very next day Alise and her young charge were brought prisoners to the castle, having too readily fallen into the plan the Earl formed to entrap

them. Emma was informed of this event, and allowed to embrace the infant, after which the young Adolphus and his nurse were taken to another part of the castle.

When the Earl made his re-appearance he asked Emma if she had duly considered the proposal he had submitted to her judgment; at the same time he rejoined, "It is almost needless to ask such a question, as it would be madness in you to oppose my will, now you are so completely in my power." "True, my lord," said Emma, "you have our bodies in bondage, but over our *souls* you have no dominion. Allow me to tell you that my spirit revolts at such tyranny practised against your own son and two innocent grandchildren, to leave myself out of the question; but surely, as Montreville's wife, I ought not to have been thus insulted! Imprison me for life, if you please, but never will I sign away the birth-right of my babes. Heaven will protect them, and in due time restore them to that rank of which you would have the injustice to deprive them." "Dare the daughter of a plebeian thus brave me?" said the haughty Earl. "But we shall soon see which will succeed best, my power or your threats—take leave of Rosalthe, for you shall see her no more." So saying, his lordship advanced to seize the child. "Base, unnatural monster!" exclaimed Emma; "do not urge me to forget that you are the father of Montreville, and make me curse you." She shrieked aloud, and the terrified Rosalthe clung to her mother's neck, and in so doing pulled out the pearl chain which was concealed under Emma's habit shirt. "What splendid bauble is this?" said the enraged Earl. "This is a fresh proof of my son's mismanagement in lavishing jewels on one whose birth certainly never intended her for such ornaments; his portrait is without doubt suspended from it." So saying, he violently snatched it from her bosom. No sooner had the Earl gazed on the miniature than his countenance underwent a serious change, and he cast himself into the next chair, saying, in faltering accents, "Tell me, I beseech you, how came you by this picture in your possession?" "It is the picture of my deceased mother," said Emma, "and I suppose had been a gift of her's to the worthy man whom I had the happiness to call father, as I found it, after his death, in a small cabinet that used to be wholly appropriated to his own use for important papers, &c." "Then your mother was Emilia Maria Lorraine, daughter of the present Marquis De Aubigne." Emma

entreated the Earl's patience for a few moments; she then recounted her own history, and the difficulty she had been involved in respecting the discovery of the name of her mother's family.

When she had ended this account the Marquis rose from his chair and took two or three hasty turns about the room, still retaining the miniature in his hand, and Emma remained in a painful state of suspense. At length the Earl approached the weeping fair one, and cast himself on his knees: "Child of my beloved Emilia," said he, "forgive the injuries you received at my hands, and those I further intended for you—your persecutions are now at an end: this is a most fortunate discovery for us all. When a very young man I went a three year's journey on the continent; among the letters which I took abroad with me, in order to procure friends and respect due to my rank was one to the Marquis De Aubigny, who then resided near Versailles: he was a particular friend of my family, and indeed distantly related to my mother. When I arrived at his chateau I was seized with an indisposition, the consequence of a cold I had caught on the road, the winter having set in with a severity seldom known in France. The good Marquis and his lady insisted on my staying at their chateau till the return of spring; I recovered my health but lost my heart—their fair daughter Emilia first taught me to feel the power of love. The pleasing manners of that lovely girl caused me to flatter myself that our attachment was reciprocal; but I was deceived—she at length acknowledged that she regarded me even in the light of a brother, but could not accept me as a lover, as she did not feel the warmth of affection required. Her parents were highly displeased, as they much wished for such an alliance, yet they scorned to force her inclinations (alas! I have not acted so with my son,) and I left the chateau, and proceeded on my tour. On my return I revisited the Marquis, in hopes to find Emilia's sentiments softened in my favour. Judge of my surprise when informed that Emilia was married, and in a manner so repugnant to the wishes of her family that they had for ever renounced her, and forbade her name to be mentioned in their presence; nor did I till now know her wedded name. Her sister, Mirandini, married a few years after to the Count St. Aubin—she is now a widow, and without children: she is without doubt the lady you saw at the opera, whose

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likeness to your mother so sensibly struck you : she now resides with her aged parents. You are the legal heiress to their vast personal property, and they have also estates which are not attached to the Marquisate. I must write to them, and report what an amiable grandchild I have discovered for them in the person of my daughter-in-law. But come, let us relieve poor Montreville's anxiety." The Earl rang the bell for Adolphus and his nurse. He took the infant in his own arms, Emma carried Rosalthe, Alise followed, and they proceeded to the gloomy chamber where the Earl had confined his son, who tenderly embraced his wife and children, and seeing them there supposed Emma had agreed to the American voyage ; but he was soon agreeably undeceived, and the now happy pair returned to the more habitable rooms of the castle.

Milbury Castle had long been in such a state of decay that it was thought madness to expend money on its repair, especially as the Earl had a handsome mansion about thirty miles distant, called Clarendon Hall. But as the castle was contiguous to some mines the Earl possessed, he had always one suite of rooms prepared for his reception ; and this place he now chose as a proper one to carry on his designs against Emma and her husband, which was now happily rendered abortive by the late discovery, and he was profuse in his favours to the now happy pair. Lord Milbury and his wife were well aware that all Emma's virtues would not have softened the heart of the Earl had it not been rendered evident that she was the grand-daughter of the Marquis De Aubigny. But they were too amiable ever to breathe the least reproach, and joined in treating the Earl with every testimony of filial respect and love. Edward Montreville soon joined the party at Clarendon Hall, when he was introduced to his sister, and his little nephew and niece. The Earl informed him that Lord Milbury had been privately married above two years to the amiable Emma ; that he had lately discovered it, and signified his consent and warmest approbation—the past severity of the Earl being kept a strict secret by those immediately concerned.

After spending a few weeks very agreeably in Wales the Earl and his children repaired to London, where the former had a house in one of the principal squares, and an adjacent one was taken for Lord and Lady Milbury. Alise was appointed chief superintendant of the nursery, and Annetta came with them to town as an attendant on Rosalthe.

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As soon as the family were settled dispatches were sent off to the Marquis De Aubigny and his lady, explanatory of the late events. In due time an answer arrived acknowledging Emma, Lady Milbury, as their grand-daughter; and that she should be immediately portioned accordingly. They said their impatience to see her was so great, that they should come with all expedition to England. When they arrived, Emma found that they were indeed the same party that had so much interested her feelings at the French opera. Their meeting was truly affecting, and the noble pair most sincerely reproached themselves for their obduracy towards the late Madame Villeroy. They told Emma that her resemblance to her mother had forcibly struck them when they met in France, and on hearing her called Villeroy not a doubt remained, though they restrained their feelings so far as not to speak to her till they had made some enquiries concerning her; and they caused a servant to follow her home, who reported that the lodging was rather obscure; that the people of the house told the man, in answer to his enquiries, that the lady had lately arrived from Montpellier with two children and a servant; that an English gentleman was frequently there, and that they called themselves Mr. and Mrs. Villeroy, but the man of the house soon after they came there discovered accidentally that the gentleman was Montreville, Lord Milbury, and of course the lady must be kept by him, and not a soul visited them; but as they were quiet and paid well they let them remain uninterrupted in their apartments, nor even hinted at the discovery they had made. "Thus you see, my dear Emma," continued the Marquis, "in consequence of this misrepresentation, we renounced you, as we then thought for ever, being ashamed of such connection. We were pleased, though astonished that you made no application to us, being so nearly allied, and your expectations of course great; but instead of attributing it to the right cause, your ignorance of your mother's relations, we supposed it owing to your consciousness that we should discover the guilty life you led. Lord Milbury was soon after introduced to us as the son of our friend Clarendon, but so great was our indignation against you, that we forbore to ask any questions concerning you; had we been more candid an explanation would have taken place, and we should have long since done justice to your virtues."

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Madame the Countess St. Aubin was charmed with her niece, and presented her with a valuable casket of jewels. The Marquis and the ladies remained some months in England, and on their return to France it was agreed that Lord Milbury and his Emma should visit them once at least in every two years.

The Earl of Clarendon soon after consented to the marriage of his son Edward with an amiable young lady, the daughter of a clergyman: he had entirely banished every idea of adding to the wealth and grandeur of his family, by sacrificing the inclinations, and consequently the happiness of his children to his arbitrary wishes. He became to them an altered character, being a kind parent and a valuable friend: he continued a blessing to them for many years. His death was rather sudden, and he was succeeded in his title and estates by Montreville, Lord Milbury and Emma: to modern magnificence they added ancient hospitality, and were at once what is seldom united—great and good.

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