

HENRY FIELDING

AMELIA –
VOLUME 3

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http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25203191

Amelia – Volume 3:

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BOOK IX

Chapter i.

In which the history looks backwards

Before we proceed farther with our history it may be proper to look back a little, in order to account for the late conduct of Doctor Harrison; which, however inconsistent it may have hitherto appeared, when examined to the bottom will be found, I apprehend, to be truly congruous with all the rules of the most perfect prudence as well as with the most consummate goodness.

We have already partly seen in what light Booth had been represented to the doctor abroad. Indeed, the accounts which were sent of the captain, as well by the curate as by a gentleman of the neighbourhood, were much grosser and more to his disadvantage than the doctor was pleased to set them forth in his letter to the person accused. What sense he had of Booth's conduct was, however, manifest by that letter. Nevertheless, he resolved to suspend his final judgment till his return; and, though

he censured him, would not absolutely condemn him without ocular demonstration.

The doctor, on his return to his parish, found all the accusations which had been transmitted to him confirmed by many witnesses, of which the curate's wife, who had been formerly a friend to Amelia, and still preserved the outward appearance of friendship, was the strongest. She introduced all with – "I am sorry to say it; and it is friendship which bids me speak; and it is for their good it should be told you." After which beginnings she never concluded a single speech without some horrid slander and bitter invective.

Besides the malicious turn which was given to these affairs in the country, which were owing a good deal to misfortune, and some little perhaps to imprudence, the whole neighbourhood rung with several gross and scandalous lies, which were merely the inventions of his enemies, and of which the scene was laid in London since his absence.

Poisoned with all this malice, the doctor came to town; and, learning where Booth lodged, went to make him a visit. Indeed, it was the doctor, and no other, who had been at his lodgings that evening when Booth and Amelia were walking in the Park, and concerning which the reader may be pleased to remember so many strange and odd conjectures.

Here the doctor saw the little gold watch and all those fine trinkets with which the noble lord had presented the children, and which, from the answers given him by the poor ignorant,

innocent girl, he could have no doubt had been purchased within a few days by Amelia.

This account tallied so well with the ideas he had imbibed of Booth's extravagance in the country, that he firmly believed both the husband and wife to be the vainest, silliest, and most unjust people alive. It was, indeed, almost incredible that two rational beings should be guilty of such absurdity; but, monstrous and absurd as it was, ocular demonstration appeared to be the evidence against them.

The doctor departed from their lodgings enraged at this supposed discovery, and, unhappily for Booth, was engaged to supper that very evening with the country gentleman of whom Booth had rented a farm. As the poor captain happened to be the subject of conversation, and occasioned their comparing notes, the account which the doctor gave of what he had seen that evening so incensed the gentleman, to whom Booth was likewise a debtor, that he vowed he would take a writ out against him the next morning, and have his body alive or dead; and the doctor was at last persuaded to do the same. Mr. Murphy was thereupon immediately sent for; and the doctor in his presence repeated again what he had seen at his lodgings as the foundation of his suing him, which the attorney, as we have before seen, had blabbed to Atkinson.

But no sooner did the doctor hear that Booth was arrested than the wretched condition of his wife and family began to affect his mind. The children, who were to be utterly undone with their

father, were intirely innocent; and as for Amelia herself, though he thought he had most convincing proofs of very blameable levity, yet his former friendship and affection to her were busy to invent every excuse, till, by very heavily loading the husband, they lightened the suspicion against the wife.

In this temper of mind he resolved to pay Amelia a second visit, and was on his way to Mrs. Ellison when the serjeant met him and made himself known to him. The doctor took his old servant into a coffee-house, where he received from him such an account of Booth and his family, that he desired the serjeant to shew him presently to Amelia; and this was the cordial which we mentioned at the end of the ninth chapter of the preceding book.

The doctor became soon satisfied concerning the trinkets which had given him so much uneasiness, and which had brought so much mischief on the head of poor Booth. Amelia likewise gave the doctor some satisfaction as to what he had heard of her husband's behaviour in the country; and assured him, upon her honour, that Booth could so well answer every complaint against his conduct, that she had no doubt but that a man of the doctor's justice and candour would entirely acquit him, and would consider him as an innocent unfortunate man, who was the object of a good man's compassion, not of his anger or resentment.

This worthy clergyman, who was not desirous of finding proofs to condemn the captain or to justify his own vindictive proceedings, but, on the contrary, rejoiced heartily in every piece

of evidence which tended to clear up the character of his friend, gave a ready ear to all which Amelia said. To this, indeed, he was induced by the love he always had for that lady, by the good opinion he entertained of her, as well as by pity for her present condition, than which nothing appeared more miserable; for he found her in the highest agonies of grief and despair, with her two little children crying over their wretched mother. These are, indeed, to a well-disposed mind, the most tragical sights that human nature can furnish, and afford a juster motive to grief and tears in the beholder than it would be to see all the heroes who have ever infested the earth hanged all together in a string.

The doctor felt this sight as he ought. He immediately endeavoured to comfort the afflicted; in which he so well succeeded, that he restored to Amelia sufficient spirits to give him the satisfaction we have mentioned: after which he declared he would go and release her husband, which he accordingly did in the manner we have above related.

Chapter ii

In which the history goes forward

We now return to that period of our history to which we had brought it at the end of our last book.

Booth and his friends arrived from the bailiff's, at the serjeant's lodgings, where Booth immediately ran up-stairs to his Amelia; between whom I shall not attempt to describe the meeting. Nothing certainly was ever more tender or more joyful. This, however, I will observe, that a very few of these exquisite moments, of which the best minds only are capable, do in reality over-balance the longest enjoyments which can ever fall to the lot of the worst.

Whilst Booth and his wife were feasting their souls with the most delicious mutual endearments, the doctor was fallen to play with the two little children below-stairs. While he was thus engaged the little boy did somewhat amiss; upon which the doctor said, "If you do so any more I will take your papa away from you again." – "Again! sir," said the child; "why, was it you then that took away my papa before?" "Suppose it was," said the doctor; "would not you forgive me?" "Yes," cries the child, "I would forgive you; because a Christian must forgive everybody; but I should hate you as long as I live."

The doctor was so pleased with the boy's answer, that he caught him in his arms and kissed him; at which time Booth

and his wife returned. The doctor asked which of them was their son's instructor in his religion; Booth answered that he must confess Amelia had all the merit of that kind. "I should have rather thought he had learnt of his father," cries the doctor; "for he seems a good soldier-like Christian, and professes to hate his enemies with a very good grace."

"How, Billy!" cries Amelia. "I am sure I did not teach you so."

"I did not say I would hate my enemies, madam," cries the boy; "I only said I would hate papa's enemies. Sure, mamma, there is no harm in that; nay, I am sure there is no harm in it, for I have heard you say the same thing a thousand times."

The doctor smiled on the child, and, chucking him under the chin, told him he must hate nobody 5 and now Mrs. Atkinson, who had provided a dinner for them all, desired them to walk up and partake of it.

And now it was that Booth was first made acquainted with the serjeant's marriage, as was Dr Harrison; both of whom greatly felicitated him upon it.

Mrs. Atkinson, who was, perhaps, a little more confounded than she would have been had she married a colonel, said, "If I have done wrong, Mrs. Booth is to answer for it, for she made the match; indeed, Mr. Atkinson, you are greatly obliged to the character which this lady gives of you." "I hope he will deserve it," said the doctor; "and, if the army hath not corrupted a good boy, I believe I may answer for him."

While our little company were enjoying that happiness which

never fails to attend conversation where all present are pleased with each other, a visitant arrived who was, perhaps, not very welcome to any of them. This was no other than Colonel James, who, entering the room with much gaiety, went directly up to Booth, embraced him, and expressed great satisfaction at finding him there; he then made an apology for not attending him in the morning, which he said had been impossible; and that he had, with the utmost difficulty, put off some business of great consequence in order to serve him this afternoon; "but I am glad on your account," cried he to Booth, "that my presence was not necessary."

Booth himself was extremely satisfied with this declaration, and failed not to return him as many thanks as he would have deserved had he performed his promise; but the two ladies were not quite so well satisfied. As for the serjeant, he had slipt out of the room when the colonel entered, not entirely out of that bashfulness which we have remarked him to be tainted with, but indeed, from what had past in the morning, he hated the sight of the colonel as well on the account of his wife as on that of his friend.

The doctor, on the contrary, on what he had formerly heard from both Amelia and her husband of the colonel's generosity and friendship, had built so good an opinion of him, that he was very much pleased with seeing him, and took the first opportunity of telling him so. "Colonel," said the doctor, "I have not the happiness of being known to you; but I have long

been desirous of an acquaintance with a gentleman in whose commendation I have heard so much from some present." The colonel made a proper answer to this compliment, and they soon entered into a familiar conversation together; for the doctor was not difficult of access; indeed, he held the strange reserve which is usually practised in this nation between people who are in any degree strangers to each other to be very unbecoming the Christian character.

The two ladies soon left the room; and the remainder of the visit, which was not very long, past in discourse on various common subjects, not worth recording. In the conclusion, the colonel invited Booth and his lady, and the doctor, to dine with him the next day.

To give Colonel James his due commendation, he had shewn a great command of himself and great presence of mind on this occasion; for, to speak the plain truth, the visit was intended to Amelia alone; nor did he expect, or perhaps desire, anything less than to find the captain at home. The great joy which he suddenly conveyed into his countenance at the unexpected sight of his friend is to be attributed to that noble art which is taught in those excellent schools called the several courts of Europe. By this, men are enabled to dress out their countenances as much at their own pleasure as they do their bodies, and to put on friendship with as much ease as they can a laced coat.

When the colonel and doctor were gone, Booth acquainted Amelia with the invitation he had received. She was so struck

with the news, and betrayed such visible marks of confusion and uneasiness, that they could not have escaped Booth's observation had suspicion given him the least hint to remark; but this, indeed, is the great optic-glass helping us to discern plainly almost all that passes in the minds of others, without some use of which nothing is more purblind than human nature.

Amelia, having recovered from her first perturbation, answered, "My dear, I will dine with you wherever you please to lay your commands on me." "I am obliged to you, my dear soul," cries Booth; "your obedience shall be very easy, for my command will be that you shall always follow your own inclinations." "My inclinations," answered she, "would, I am afraid, be too unreasonable a confinement to you; for they would always lead me to be with you and your children, with at most a single friend or two now and then." "O my dear!" replied he, "large companies give us a greater relish for our own society when we return to it; and we shall be extremely merry, for Doctor Harrison dines with us." "I hope you will, my dear," cries she;" but I own I should have been better pleased to have enjoyed a few days with yourself and the children, with no other person but Mrs. Atkinson, for whom I have conceived a violent affection, and who would have given us but little interruption. However, if you have promised, I must undergo the penance." "Nay, child," cried he, "I am sure I would have refused, could I have guessed it had been in the least disagreeable to you though I know your objection." "Objection!" cries Amelia eagerly "I have no objection." "Nay, nay," said

he, "come, be honest, I know your objection, though you are unwilling to own it." "Good Heavens!" cried Amelia, frightened, "what do you mean? what objection?" "Why," answered he, "to the company of Mrs. James; and I must confess she hath not behaved to you lately as you might have expected; but you ought to pass all that by for the sake of her husband, to whom we have both so many obligations, who is the worthiest, honestest, and most generous fellow in the universe, and the best friend to me that ever man had."

Amelia, who had far other suspicions, and began to fear that her husband had discovered them, was highly pleased when she saw him taking a wrong scent. She gave, therefore, a little in to the deceit, and acknowledged the truth of what he had mentioned; but said that the pleasure she should have in complying with his desires would highly recompense any dissatisfaction which might arise on any other account; and shortly after ended the conversation on this subject with her cheerfully promising to fulfil his promise.

In reality, poor Amelia had now a most unpleasant task to undertake; for she thought it absolutely necessary to conceal from her husband the opinion she had conceived of the colonel. For, as she knew the characters, as well of her husband as of his friend, or rather enemy (both being often synonymous in the language of the world), she had the utmost reason to apprehend something very fatal might attend her husband's entertaining the same thought of James which filled and tormented her own

breast.

And, as she knew that nothing but these thoughts could justify the least unkind, or, indeed, the least reserved behaviour to James, who had, in all appearance, conferred the greatest obligations upon Booth and herself, she was reduced to a dilemma the most dreadful that can attend a virtuous woman, as it often gives the highest triumph, and sometimes no little advantage, to the men of professed gallantry.

In short, to avoid giving any umbrage to her husband, Amelia was forced to act in a manner which she was conscious must give encouragement to the colonel; a situation which perhaps requires as great prudence and delicacy as any in which the heroic part of the female character can be exerted.

Chapter iii.

A conversation between Dr Harrison and others

The next day Booth and his lady, with the doctor, met at Colonel

James's, where Colonel Bath likewise made one of the company.

Nothing very remarkable passed at dinner, or till the ladies withdrew. During this time, however, the behaviour of Colonel James was such as gave some uneasiness to Amelia, who well understood his meaning, though the particulars were too refined and subtle to be observed by any other present.

When the ladies were gone, which was as soon as Amelia could prevail on Mrs. James to depart, Colonel Bath, who had been pretty brisk with champagne at dinner, soon began to display his magnanimity. "My brother tells me, young gentleman," said he to Booth, "that you have been used very ill lately by some rascals, and I have no doubt but you will do yourself justice."

Booth answered that he did not know what he meant. "Since I must mention it then," cries the colonel, "I hear you have been arrested; and I think you know what satisfaction is to be required by a man of honour."

"I beg, sir," says the doctor, "no more may be mentioned of that matter. I am convinced no satisfaction will be required of the captain till he is able to give it."

"I do not understand what you mean by able," cries the colonel. To which the doctor answered, "That it was of too tender a nature to speak more of."

"Give me your hand, doctor," cries the colonel; "I see you are a man of honour, though you wear a gown. It is, as you say, a matter of a tender nature. Nothing, indeed, is so tender as a man's honour. Curse my liver, if any man – I mean, that is, if any gentleman, was to arrest me, I would as surely cut his throat as –"

"How, sir!" said the doctor, "would you compensate one breach of the law by a much greater, and pay your debts by committing murder?"

"Why do you mention law between gentlemen?" says the colonel. "A man of honour wears his law by his side; and can the resentment of an affront make a gentleman guilty of murder? and what greater affront can one man cast upon another than by arresting him? I am convinced that he who would put up an arrest would put up a slap in the face."

Here the colonel looked extremely fierce, and the divine stared with astonishment at this doctrine; when Booth, who well knew the impossibility of opposing the colonel's humour with success, began to play with it; and, having first conveyed a private wink to the doctor, he said there might be cases undoubtedly where such an affront ought to be resented; but that there were others

where any resentment was impracticable: "As, for instance," said he, "where the man is arrested by a woman."

"I could not be supposed to mean that case," cries the colonel; "and you are convinced I did not mean it."

"To put an end to this discourse at once, sir," said the doctor, "I was the plaintiff at whose suit this gentleman was arrested."

"Was you so, sir?" cries the colonel; "then I have no more to say. Women and the clergy are upon the same footing. The long-robed gentry are exempted from the laws of honour."

"I do not thank you for that exemption, sir," cries the doctor; "and, if honour and fighting are, as they seem to be, synonymous words with you, I believe there are some clergymen, who in defence of their religion, or their country, or their friend, the only justifiable causes of fighting, except bare self-defence, would fight as bravely as yourself, colonel! and that without being paid for it."

"Sir, you are privileged," says the colonel, with great dignity; "and you have my leave to say what you please. I respect your order, and you cannot offend me."

"I will not offend you, colonel," cries the doctor; "and our order is very much obliged to you, since you profess so much respect to us, and pay none to our Master."

"What Master, sir?" said the colonel.

"That Master," answered the doctor, "who hath expressly forbidden all that cutting of throats to which you discover so much inclination."

"O! your servant, sir," said the colonel; "I see what you are driving at; but you shall not persuade me to think that religion forces me to be a coward."

"I detest and despise the name as much as you can," cries the doctor; "but you have a wrong idea of the word, colonel. What were all the Greeks and Romans? were these cowards? and yet, did you ever hear of this butchery, which we call duelling, among them?"

"Yes, indeed, have I," cries the colonel. "What else is all Mr. Pope's Homer full of but duels? Did not what's his name, one of the Agamemnons, fight with that poultry rascal Paris? and Diomede with what d'ye call him there? and Hector with I forget his name, he that was Achilles's bosom-friend; and afterwards with Achilles himself? Nay, and in Dryden's Virgil, is there anything almost besides fighting?"

"You are a man of learning, colonel," cries the doctor; "but –"

"I thank you for that compliment," said the colonel. – "No, sir, I do not pretend to learning; but I have some little reading, and I am not ashamed to own it."

"But are you sure, colonel," cries the doctor, "that you have not made a small mistake? for I am apt to believe both Mr. Pope and Mr. Dryden (though I cannot say I ever read a word of either of them) speak of wars between nations, and not of private duels; for of the latter I do not remember one single instance in all the Greek and Roman story. In short, it is a modern custom, introduced by barbarous nations since the times of Christianity;

though it is a direct and audacious defiance of the Christian law, and is consequently much more sinful in us than it would have been in the heathens."

"Drink about, doctor," cries the colonel; "and let us call a new cause; for I perceive we shall never agree on this. You are a Churchman, and I don't expect you to speak your mind."

"We are both of the same Church, I hope," cries the doctor.

"I am of the Church of England, sir," answered the colonel, "and will fight for it to the last drop of my blood."

"It is very generous in you, colonel," cries the doctor, "to fight so zealously for a religion by which you are to be damned."

"It is well for you, doctor," cries the colonel, "that you wear a gown; for, by all the dignity of a man, if any other person had said the words you have just uttered, I would have made him eat them; ay, d – n me, and my sword into the bargain."

Booth began to be apprehensive that this dispute might grow too warm; in which case he feared that the colonel's honour, together with the champagne, might hurry him so far as to forget the respect due, and which he professed to pay, to the sacerdotal robe. Booth therefore interposed between the disputants, and said that the colonel had very rightly proposed to call a new subject; for that it was impossible to reconcile accepting a challenge with the Christian religion, or refusing it with the modern notion of honour. "And you must allow it, doctor," said he, "to be a very hard injunction for a man to become infamous; and more especially for a soldier, who is to lose his bread into

the bargain."

"Ay, sir," says the colonel, with an air of triumph, "what say you to that?"

"Why, I say," cries the doctor, "that it is much harder to be damned on the other side."

"That may be," said the colonel; "but damn me, if I would take an affront of any man breathing, for all that. And yet I believe myself to be as good a Christian as wears a head. My maxim is, never to give an affront, nor ever to take one; and I say that it is the maxim of a good Christian, and no man shall ever persuade me to the contrary."

"Well, sir," said the doctor, "since that is your resolution, I hope no man will ever give you an affront."

"I am obliged to you for your hope, doctor," cries the colonel, with a sneer; "and he that doth will be obliged to you for lending him your gown; for, by the dignity of a man, nothing out of petticoats, I believe, dares affront me."

Colonel James had not hitherto joined in the discourse. In truth, his thoughts had been otherwise employed; nor is it very difficult for the reader to guess what had been the subject of them. Being waked, however, from his reverie, and having heard the two or three last speeches, he turned to his brother, and asked him, why he would introduce such a topic of conversation before a gentleman of Doctor Harrison's character?

"Brother," cried Bath, "I own it was wrong, and I ask the doctor's pardon: I know not how it happened to arise; for you

know, brother, I am not used to talk of these matters. They are generally poltroons that do. I think I need not be beholden to my tongue to declare I am none. I have shown myself in a line of battle. I believe there is no man will deny that; I believe I may say no man dares deny that I have done my duty."

The colonel was thus proceeding to prove that his prowess was neither the subject of his discourse nor the object of his vanity, when a servant entered and summoned the company to tea with the ladies; a summons which Colonel James instantly obeyed, and was followed by all the rest.

But as the tea-table conversation, though extremely delightful to those who are engaged in it, may probably appear somewhat dull to the reader, we will here put an end to the chapter.

Chapter iv.

A dialogue between Booth and Amelia

The next morning early, Booth went by appointment and waited on Colonel James; whence he returned to Amelia in that kind of disposition which the great master of human passion would describe in Andromache, when he tells us she cried and smiled at the same instant.

Amelia plainly perceived the discomposure of his mind, in which the opposite affections of joy and grief were struggling for the superiority, and begged to know the occasion; upon which Booth spoke as follows: —

"My dear," said he, "I had no intention to conceal from you what hath past this morning between me and the colonel, who hath oppressed me, if I may use that expression, with obligations. Sure never man had such a friend; for never was there so noble, so generous a heart — I cannot help this ebullition of gratitude, I really cannot." Here he paused a moment, and wiped his eyes, and then proceeded: "You know, my dear, how gloomy the prospect was yesterday before our eyes, how inevitable ruin stared me in the face; and the dreadful idea of having entailed beggary on my Amelia and her posterity racked my mind; for though, by the goodness of the doctor, I had regained my liberty, the debt yet remained; and, if that worthy man had a design of forgiving me his share, this must have been my utmost hope, and

the condition in which I must still have found myself need not to be expatiated on. In what light, then, shall I see, in what words shall I relate, the colonel's kindness? O my dear Amelia! he hath removed the whole gloom at once, hath driven all despair out of my mind, and hath filled it with the most sanguine, and, at the same time, the most reasonable hopes of making a comfortable provision for yourself and my dear children. In the first place, then, he will advance me a sum of money to pay off all my debts; and this on a bond to be repaid only when I shall become colonel of a regiment, and not before. In the next place, he is gone this very morning to ask a company for me, which is now vacant in the West Indies; and, as he intends to push this with all his interest, neither he nor I have any doubt of his success. Now, my dear, comes the third, which, though perhaps it ought to give me the greatest joy, such is, I own, the weakness of my nature, it rends my very heartstrings asunder. I cannot mention it, for I know it will give you equal pain; though I know, on all proper occasions, you can exert a manly resolution. You will not, I am convinced, oppose it, whatever you must suffer in complying. O my dear Amelia! I must suffer likewise; yet I have resolved to bear it. You know not what my poor heart hath suffered since he made the proposal. It is love for you alone which could persuade me to submit to it. Consider our situation; consider that of our children; reflect but on those poor babes, whose future happiness is at stake, and it must arm your resolution. It is your interest and theirs that reconciled me to a proposal which, when

the colonel first made it, struck me with the utmost horror; he hath, indeed, from these motives, persuaded me into a resolution which I thought impossible for any one to have persuaded me into. O my dear Amelia! let me entreat you to give me up to the good of your children, as I have promised the colonel to give you up to their interest and your own. If you refuse these terms we are still undone, for he insists absolutely upon them. Think, then, my love, however hard they may be, necessity compels us to submit to them. I know in what light a woman, who loves like you, must consider such a proposal; and yet how many instances have you of women who, from the same motives, have submitted to the same!"

"What can you mean, Mr. Booth?" cries Amelia, trembling.

"Need I explain my meaning to you more?" answered Booth. —

"Did I not say I must give up my Amelia?"

"Give me up!" said she.

"For a time only, I mean," answered he: "for a short time perhaps. The colonel himself will take care it shall not be long — for I know his heart; I shall scarce have more joy in receiving you back than he will have in restoring you to my arms. In the mean time, he will not only be a father to my children, but a husband to you."

"A husband to me!" said Amelia.

"Yes, my dear; a kind, a fond, a tender, an affectionate husband. If I had not the most certain assurances of this, doth my Amelia think I could be prevailed on to leave her? No, my

Amelia, he is the only man on earth who could have prevailed on me; but I know his house, his purse, his protection, will be all at your command. And as for any dislike you have conceived to his wife, let not that be any objection; for I am convinced he will not suffer her to insult you; besides, she is extremely well bred, and, how much soever she may hate you in her heart, she will at least treat you with civility.

"Nay, the invitation is not his, but hers; and I am convinced they will both behave to you with the greatest friendship; his I am sure will be sincere, as to the wife of a friend entrusted to his care; and hers will, from good-breeding, have not only the appearances but the effects of the truest friendship."

"I understand you, my dear, at last," said she (indeed she had rambled into very strange conceits from some parts of his discourse); "and I will give you my resolution in a word – I will do the duty of a wife, and that is, to attend her husband wherever he goes."

Booth attempted to reason with her, but all to no purpose. She gave, indeed, a quiet hearing to all he said, and even to those parts which most displeased her ears; I mean those in which he exaggerated the great goodness and disinterested generosity of his friend; but her resolution remained inflexible, and resisted the force of all his arguments with a steadiness of opposition, which it would have been almost excusable in him to have construed into stubbornness.

The doctor arrived in the midst of the dispute; and, having

heard the merits of the cause on both sides, delivered his opinion in the following words.

"I have always thought it, my dear children, a matter of the utmost nicety to interfere in any differences between husband and wife; but, since you both desire me with such earnestness to give you my sentiments on the present contest between you, I will give you my thoughts as well as I am able. In the first place then, can anything be more reasonable than for a wife to desire to attend her husband? It is, as my favourite child observes, no more than a desire to do her duty; and I make no doubt but that is one great reason of her insisting on it. And how can you yourself oppose it? Can love be its own enemy? or can a husband who is fond of his wife, content himself almost on any account with a long absence from her?"

"You speak like an angel, my dear Doctor Harrison," answered Amelia: "I am sure, if he loved as tenderly as I do, he could on no account submit to it."

"Pardon me, child," cries the doctor; "there are some reasons which would not only justify his leaving you, but which must force him, if he hath any real love for you, joined with common sense, to make that election. If it was necessary, for instance, either to your good or to the good of your children, he would not deserve the name of a man, I am sure not that of a husband, if he hesitated a moment. Nay, in that case, I am convinced you yourself would be an advocate for what you now oppose. I fancy therefore I mistook him when I apprehended he said

that the colonel made his leaving you behind as the condition of getting him the commission; for I know my dear child hath too much goodness, and too much sense, and too much resolution, to prefer any temporary indulgence of her own passions to the solid advantages of her whole family."

"There, my dear!" cries Booth; "I knew what opinion the doctor would be of. Nay, I am certain there is not a wise man in the kingdom who would say otherwise."

"Don't abuse me, young gentleman," said the doctor, "with appellations I don't deserve."

"I abuse you, my dear doctor!" cries Booth.

"Yes, my dear sir," answered the doctor; "you insinuated slyly that I was wise, which, as the world understands the phrase, I should be ashamed of; and my comfort is that no one can accuse me justly of it. I have just given an instance of the contrary by throwing away my advice."

"I hope, sir," cries Booth, "that will not be the case."

"Yes, sir," answered the doctor. "I know it will be the case in the present instance, for either you will not go at all, or my little turtle here will go with you."

"You are in the right, doctor," cries Amelia.

"I am sorry for it," said the doctor, "for then I assure you you are in the wrong."

"Indeed," cries Amelia, "if you knew all my reasons you would say they were very strong ones."

"Very probably," cries the doctor. "The knowledge that they

are in the wrong is a very strong reason to some women to continue so."

"Nay, doctor," cries Amelia, "you shall never persuade me of that. I will not believe that any human being ever did an action merely because they knew it to be wrong."

"I am obliged to you, my dear child," said the doctor, "for declaring your resolution of not being persuaded. Your husband would never call me a wise man again if, after that declaration, I should attempt to persuade you."

"Well, I must be content," cries Amelia, "to let you think as you please."

"That is very gracious, indeed," said the doctor. "Surely, in a country where the church suffers others to think as they please, it would be very hard if they had not themselves the same liberty. And yet, as unreasonable as the power of controuling men's thoughts is represented, I will shew you how you shall controul mine whenever you desire it."

"How, pray?" cries Amelia. "I should greatly esteem that power."

"Why, whenever you act like a wise woman," cries the doctor, "you will force me to think you so: and, whenever you are pleased to act as you do now, I shall be obliged, whether I will or no, to think as I do now."

"Nay, dear doctor," cries Booth, "I am convinced my Amelia will never do anything to forfeit your good opinion. Consider but the cruel hardship of what she is to undergo, and you will make

allowances for the difficulty she makes in complying. To say the truth, when I examine my own heart, I have more obligations to her than appear at first sight; for, by obliging me to find arguments to persuade her, she hath assisted me in conquering myself. Indeed, if she had shewn more resolution, I should have shewn less."

"So you think it necessary, then," said the doctor, "that there should be one fool at least in every married couple. A mighty resolution, truly! and well worth your valuing yourself upon, to part with your wife for a few months in order to make the fortune of her and your children; when you are to leave her, too, in the care and protection of a friend that gives credit to the old stories of friendship, and doth an honour to human nature. What, in the name of goodness! do either of you think that you have made an union to endure for ever? How will either of you bear that separation which must, some time or other, and perhaps very soon, be the lot of one of you? Have you forgot that you are both mortal? As for Christianity, I see you have resigned all pretensions to it; for I make no doubt but that you have so set your hearts on the happiness you enjoy here together, that neither of you ever think a word of hereafter."

Amelia now burst into tears; upon which Booth begged the doctor to proceed no farther. Indeed, he would not have wanted the caution; for, however blunt he appeared in his discourse, he had a tenderness of heart which is rarely found among men; for which I know no other reason than that true goodness is rarely

found among them; for I am firmly persuaded that the latter never possessed any human mind in any degree, without being attended by as large a portion of the former.

Thus ended the conversation on this subject; what followed is not worth relating, till the doctor carried off Booth with him to take a walk in the Park.

Chapter v.

A conversation between Amelia and Dr Harrison, with the result

Amelia, being left alone, began to consider seriously of her condition; she saw it would be very difficult to resist the importunities of her husband, backed by the authority of the doctor, especially as she well knew how unreasonable her declarations must appear to every one who was ignorant of her real motives to persevere in it. On the other hand, she was fully determined, whatever might be the consequence, to adhere firmly to her resolution of not accepting the colonel's invitation.

When she had turned the matter every way in her mind, and vexed and tormented herself with much uneasy reflexion upon it, a thought at last occurred to her which immediately brought her some comfort. This was, to make a confidant of the doctor, and to impart to him the whole truth. This method, indeed, appeared to her now to be so adviseable, that she wondered she had not hit upon it sooner; but it is the nature of despair to blind us to all the means of safety, however easy and apparent they may be.

Having fixed her purpose in her mind, she wrote a short note to the doctor, in which she acquainted him that she had something of great moment to impart to him, which must be an entire secret from her husband, and begged that she might have

an opportunity of communicating it as soon as possible.

Doctor Harrison received the letter that afternoon, and immediately complied with Amelia's request in visiting her. He found her drinking tea with her husband and Mrs. Atkinson, and sat down and joined the company.

Soon after the removal of the tea-table Mrs. Atkinson left the room.

The doctor then, turning to Booth, said, "I hope, captain, you have a true sense of the obedience due to the church, though our clergy do not often exact it. However, it is proper to exercise our power sometimes, in order to remind the laity of their duty. I must tell you, therefore, that I have some private business with your wife; and I expect your immediate absence."

"Upon my word, doctor," answered Booth, "no Popish confessor, I firmly believe, ever pronounced his will and pleasure with more gravity and dignity; none therefore was ever more immediately obeyed than you shall be." Booth then quitted the room, and desired the doctor to recall him when his business with the lady was over.

Doctor Harrison promised he would; and then turning to Amelia he said, "Thus far, madam, I have obeyed your commands, and am now ready to receive the important secret which you mention in your note." Amelia now informed her friend of all she knew, all she had seen and heard, and all that she suspected, of the colonel. The good man seemed greatly shocked at the relation, and remained in a silent astonishment.

Upon which Amelia said, "Is villany so rare a thing, sir, that it should so much surprize you?" "No, child," cries he; "but I am shocked at seeing it so artfully disguised under the appearance of so much virtue; and, to confess the truth, I believe my own vanity is a little hurt in having been so grossly imposed upon. Indeed, I had a very high regard for this man; for, besides the great character given him by your husband, and the many facts I have heard so much redounding to his honour, he hath the fairest and most promising appearance I have ever yet beheld. A good face, they say, is a letter of recommendation. O Nature, Nature, why art thou so dishonest as ever to send men with these false recommendations into the world?"

"Indeed, my dear sir, I begin to grow entirely sick of it," cries Amelia, "for sure all mankind almost are villains in their hearts."

"Fie, child!" cries the doctor. "Do not make a conclusion so much to the dishonour of the great Creator. The nature of man is far from being in itself evil: it abounds with benevolence, charity, and pity, coveting praise and honour, and shunning shame and disgrace. Bad education, bad habits, and bad customs, debauch our nature, and drive it headlong as it were into vice. The governors of the world, and I am afraid the priesthood, are answerable for the badness of it. Instead of discouraging wickedness to the utmost of their power, both are too apt to connive at it. In the great sin of adultery, for instance; hath the government provided any law to punish it? or doth the priest take any care to correct it? on the contrary, is the most

notorious practice of it any detriment to a man's fortune or to his reputation in the world? doth it exclude him from any preferment in the state, I had almost said in the church? is it any blot in his escutcheon? any bar to his honour? is he not to be found every day in the assemblies of women of the highest quality? in the closets of the greatest men, and even at the tables of bishops? What wonder then if the community in general treat this monstrous crime as a matter of jest, and that men give way to the temptations of a violent appetite, when the indulgence of it is protected by law and countenanced by custom? I am convinced there are good stamina in the nature of this very man; for he hath done acts of friendship and generosity to your husband before he could have any evil design on your chastity; and in a Christian society, which I no more esteem this nation to be than I do any part of Turkey, I doubt not but this very colonel would have made a worthy and valuable member."

"Indeed, my dear sir," cries Amelia, "you are the wisest as well as best man in the world –"

"Not a word of my wisdom," cries the doctor. "I have not a grain – I am not the least versed in the Chrematistic¹ art, as an old friend of mine calls it. I know not how to get a shilling, nor how to keep it in my pocket if I had it."

"But you understand human nature to the bottom," answered Amelia; "and your mind is the treasury of all ancient and modern learning."

¹ The art of getting wealth is so called by Aristotle in his Politics.

"You are a little flatterer," cries the doctor; "but I dislike you not for it. And, to shew you I don't, I will return your flattery, and tell you you have acted with great prudence in concealing this affair from your husband; but you have drawn me into a scrape; for I have promised to dine with this fellow again to-morrow, and you have made it impossible for me to keep my word."

"Nay, but, dear sir," cries Amelia, "for Heaven's sake take care! If you shew any kind of disrespect to the colonel, my husband may be led into some suspicion – especially after our conference."

"Fear nothing, child. I will give him no hint; and, that I may be certain of not doing it, I will stay away. You do not think, I hope, that I will join in a cheerful conversation with such a man; that I will so far betray my character as to give any countenance to such flagitious proceedings. Besides, my promise was only conditional; and I do not know whether I could otherwise have kept it; for I expect an old friend every day who comes to town twenty miles on foot to see me, whom I shall not part with on any account; for, as he is very poor, he may imagine I treat him with disrespect."

"Well, sir," cries Amelia, "I must admire you and love you for your goodness."

"Must you love me?" cries the doctor. "I could cure you now in a minute if I pleased."

"Indeed, I defy you, sir," said Amelia.

"If I could but persuade you," answered he, "that I thought

you not handsome, away would vanish all ideas of goodness in an instant. Confess honestly, would they not?"

"Perhaps I might blame the goodness of your eyes," replied Amelia; "and that is perhaps an honest confession than you expected. But do, pray, sir, be serious, and give me your advice what to do. Consider the difficult game I have to play; for I am sure, after what I have told you, you would not even suffer me to remain under the roof of this colonel."

"No, indeed, would I not," said the doctor, "whilst I have a house of my own to entertain you."

"But how to dissuade my husband," continued she, "without giving him any suspicion of the real cause, the consequences of his guessing at which I tremble to think upon."

"I will consult my pillow upon it," said the doctor; "and in the morning you shall see me again. In the mean time be comforted, and compose the perturbations of your mind."

"Well, sir," said she, "I put my whole trust in you."

"I am sorry to hear it," cries the doctor. "Your innocence may give you a very confident trust in a much more powerful assistance. However, I will do all I can to serve you: and now, if you please, we will call back your husband; for, upon my word, he hath shewn a good catholic patience. And where is the honest serjeant and his wife? I am pleased with the behaviour of you both to that worthy fellow, in opposition to the custom of the world; which, instead of being formed on the precepts of our religion to consider each other as brethren, teaches us to regard

those who are a degree below us, either in rank or fortune, as a species of beings of an inferior order in the creation."

The captain now returned into the room, as did the serjeant and Mrs. Atkinson; and the two couple, with the doctor, spent the evening together in great mirth and festivity; for the doctor was one of the best companions in the world, and a vein of chearfulness, good humour, and pleasantry, ran through his conversation, with which it was impossible to resist being pleased.

Chapter vi.

Containing as surprizing an accident as is perhaps recorded in history

Booth had acquainted the serjeant with the great goodness of Colonel James, and with the chearful prospects which he entertained from it. This Atkinson, behind the curtain, communicated to his wife. The conclusion which she drew from it need scarce be hinted to the reader. She made, indeed, no scruple of plainly and bluntly telling her husband that the colonel had a most manifest intention to attack the chastity of Amelia.

This thought gave the poor serjeant great uneasiness, and, after having kept him long awake, tormented him in his sleep with a most horrid dream, in which he imagined that he saw the colonel standing by the bedside of Amelia, with a naked sword in his hand, and threatening to stab her instantly unless she complied with his desires. Upon this the serjeant started up in his bed, and, catching his wife by the throat, cried out, "D – n you, put up your sword this instant, and leave the room, or by Heaven I'll drive mine to your heart's blood!"

This rough treatment immediately roused Mrs. Atkinson from her sleep, who no sooner perceived the position of her husband, and felt his hand grasping her throat, than she gave a violent shriek and presently fell into a fit.

Atkinson now waked likewise, and soon became sensible of the violent agitations of his wife. He immediately leapt out of bed, and running for a bottle of water, began to sprinkle her very plentifully; but all to no purpose: she neither spoke nor gave any symptoms of recovery Atkinson then began to roar aloud, upon which Booth, who lay under him, jumped from his bed, and ran up with the lighted candle in his hand. The serjeant had no sooner taken the candle than he ran with it to the bed-side. Here he beheld a sight which almost deprived him of his senses. The bed appeared to be all over blood, and his wife weltering in the midst of it. Upon this the serjeant, almost in a frenzy, cried out, "O Heavens! I have killed my wife. I have stabbed her! I have stabbed her!" "What can be the meaning of all this?" said Booth. "O, sir!" cries the serjeant, "I dreamt I was rescuing your lady from the hands of Colonel James, and I have killed my poor wife." – Here he threw himself upon the bed by her, caught her in his arms, and behaved like one frantic with despair.

By this time Amelia had thrown on a wrapping-gown, and was come up into the room, where the serjeant and his wife were lying on the bed and Booth standing like a motionless statue by the bed-side. Amelia had some difficulty to conquer the effects of her own surprize on this occasion; for a more ghastly and horrible sight than the bed presented could not be conceived.

Amelia sent Booth to call up the maid of the house, in order to lend her assistance; but before his return Mrs. Atkinson began to come to herself; and soon after, to the inexpressible joy

of the serjeant, it was discovered she had no wound. Indeed, the delicate nose of Amelia soon made that discovery, which the grosser smell of the serjeant, and perhaps his fright, had prevented him from making; for now it appeared that the red liquor with which the bed was stained, though it may, perhaps, sometimes run through the veins of a fine lady, was not what is properly called blood, but was, indeed, no other than cherry-brandy, a bottle of which Mrs. Atkinson always kept in her room to be ready for immediate use, and to which she used to apply for comfort in all her afflictions. This the poor serjeant, in his extreme hurry, had mistaken for a bottle of water. Matters were now soon accommodated, and no other mischief appeared to be done, unless to the bed-cloaths. Amelia and Booth returned back to their room, and Mrs. Atkinson rose from her bed in order to equip it with a pair of clean sheets.

And thus this adventure would have ended without producing any kind of consequence, had not the words which the serjeant uttered in his frenzy made some slight impression on Booth; so much, at least, as to awaken his curiosity; so that in the morning when he arose he sent for the serjeant, and desired to hear the particulars of this dream, since Amelia was concerned in it.

The serjeant at first seemed unwilling to comply, and endeavoured to make excuses. This, perhaps, increased Booth's curiosity, and he said, "Nay, I am resolved to hear it. Why, you simpleton, do you imagine me weak enough to be affected by a dream, however terrible it may be?"

"Nay, sir," cries the serjeant, "as for that matter, dreams have sometimes fallen out to be true. One of my own, I know, did so, concerning your honour; for, when you courted my young lady, I dreamt you was married to her; and yet it was at a time when neither I myself, nor any of the country, thought you would ever obtain her. But Heaven forbid this dream should ever come to pass!" "Why, what was this dream?" cries Booth. "I insist on knowing."

"To be sure, sir," cries the serjeant, "I must not refuse you; but I hope you will never think any more of it. Why then, sir, I dreamt that your honour was gone to the West Indies, and had left my lady in the care of Colonel James; and last night I dreamt the colonel came to my lady's bed-side, offering to ravish her, and with a drawn sword in his hand, threatening to stab her that moment unless she would comply with his desires. How I came to be by I know not; but I dreamt I rushed upon him, caught him by the throat, and swore I would put him to death unless he instantly left the room. Here I waked, and this was my dream. I never paid any regard to a dream in my life – but, indeed, I never dreamt anything so very plain as this. It appeared downright reality. I am sure I have left the marks of my fingers in my wife's throat. I would riot have taken a hundred pound to have used her so."

"Faith," cries Booth, "it was an odd dream, and not so easily to be accounted for as that you had formerly of my marriage; for, as Shakespear says, dreams denote a foregone conclusion. Now it is impossible you should ever have thought of any such matter

as this."

"However, sir," cries the serjeant, "it is in your honour's power to prevent any possibility of this dream's coming to pass, by not leaving my lady to the care of the colonel; if you must go from her, certainly there are other places where she may be with great safety; and, since my wife tells me that my lady is so very unwilling, whatever reasons she may have, I hope your honour will oblige her."

"Now I recollect it," cries Booth, "Mrs. Atkinson hath once or twice dropt some disrespectful words of the colonel. He hath done something to disoblige her."

"He hath indeed, sir," replied the serjeant: "he hath said that of her which she doth not deserve, and for which, if he had not been my superior officer, I would have cut both his ears off. Nay, for that matter, he can speak ill of other people besides her."

"Do you know, Atkinson," cries Booth, very gravely, "that you are talking of the dearest friend I have?"

"To be honest then," answered the serjeant, "I do not think so. If I did, I should love him much better than I do."

"I must and will have this explained," cries Booth. "I have too good an opinion of you, Atkinson, to think you would drop such things as you have without some reason – and I will know it."

"I am sorry I have dropt a word," cries Atkinson. "I am sure I did not intend it; and your honour hath drawn it from me unawares."

"Indeed, Atkinson," cries Booth, "you have made me very

uneasy, and I must be satisfied."

"Then, sir," said the serjeant, "you shall give me your word of honour, or I will be cut into ten thousand pieces before I will mention another syllable."

"What shall I promise?" said Booth.

"That you will not resent anything I shall lay to the colonel," answered Atkinson.

"Resent! – Well, I give you my honour," said Booth.

The serjeant made him bind himself over and over again, and then related to him the scene which formerly past between the colonel and himself, as far as concerned Booth himself; but concealed all that more immediately related to Amelia.

"Atkinson," cries Booth, "I cannot be angry with you, for I know you love me, and I have many obligations to you; but you have done wrong in censuring the colonel for what he said of me. I deserve all that he said, and his censures proceeded from his friendship."

"But it was not so kind, sir," said Atkinson, "to say such things to me who am but a serjeant, and at such a time too."

"I will hear no more," cries Booth. "Be assured you are the only man I would forgive on this occasion; and I forgive you only on condition you never speak a word more of this nature. This silly dream hath intoxicated you."

"I have done, sir," cries the serjeant. "I know my distance, and whom I am to obey; but I have one favour to beg of your honour, never to mention a word of what I have said to my lady; for I

know she never would forgive me; I know she never would, by what my wife hath told me. Besides, you need not mention it, sir, to my lady, for she knows it all already, and a great deal more."

Booth presently parted from the serjeant, having desired him to close his lips on this occasion, and repaired to his wife, to whom he related the serjeant's dream.

Amelia turned as white as snow, and fell into so violent a trembling that Booth plainly perceived her emotion, and immediately partook of it himself. "Sure, my dear," said he, staring wildly, "there is more in this than I know. A silly dream could not so discompose you. I beg you, I intreat you to tell me – hath ever Colonel James – "

At the very mention of the colonel's name Amelia fell on her knees, and begged her husband not to frighten her.

"What do I say, my dear love," cried Booth, "that can frighten you?"

"Nothing, my dear," said she; "but my spirits are so discomposed with the dreadful scene I saw last night, that a dream, which at another time I should have laughed at, hath shocked me. Do but promise me that you will not leave me behind you, and I am easy."

"You may be so," cries Booth, "for I will never deny you anything. But make me easy too. I must know if you have seen anything in Colonel James to displease you."

"Why should you suspect it?" cries Amelia.

"You torment me to death," cries Booth. "By Heavens! I will

know the truth. Hath he ever said or done anything which you dislike?"

"How, my dear," said Amelia, "can you imagine I should dislike a man who is so much your friend? Think of all the obligations you have to him, and then you may easily resolve yourself. Do you think, because I refuse to stay behind you in his house, that I have any objection to him? No, my dear, had he done a thousand times more than he hath – was he an angel instead of a man, I would not quit my Billy. There's the sore, my dear – there's the misery, to be left by you."

Booth embraced her with the most passionate raptures, and, looking on her with inexpressible tenderness, cried, "Upon my soul, I am not worthy of you: I am a fool, and yet you cannot blame me. If the stupid miser hoards, with such care, his worthless treasure – if he watches it with such anxiety – if every apprehension of another's sharing the least part fills his soul with such agonies – O Amelia! what must be my condition, what terrors must I feel, while I am watching over a jewel of such real, such inestimable worth!"

"I can, with great truth, return the compliment," cries Amelia. "I have my treasure too; and am so much a miser, that no force shall ever tear me from it."

"I am ashamed of my folly," cries Booth;" and yet it is all from extreme tenderness. Nay, you yourself are the occasion. Why will you ever attempt to keep a secret from me? Do you think I should have resented to my friend his just censure of my conduct?"

"What censure, my dear love?" cries Amelia.

"Nay, the serjeant hath told me all," cries Booth – "nay, and that he hath told it to you. Poor soul! thou couldst not endure to hear me accused, though never so justly, and by so good a friend. Indeed, my dear, I have discovered the cause of that resentment to the colonel which you could not hide from me. I love you, I adore you for it; indeed, I could not forgive a slighting word on you. But, why do I compare things so unlike? – what the colonel said of me was just and true; every reflexion on my Amelia must be false and villanous."

The discernment of Amelia was extremely quick, and she now perceived what had happened, and how much her husband knew of the truth. She resolved therefore to humour him, and fell severely on Colonel James for what he had said to the serjeant, which Booth endeavoured all he could to soften; and thus ended this affair, which had brought Booth to the very brink of a discovery which must have given him the highest torment, if it had not produced any of those tragical effects which Amelia apprehended.

Chapter vii.

In which the author appears to be master of that profound learning called the knowledge of the town

Mrs. James now came to pay a morning's visit to Amelia. She entered the room with her usual gaiety, and after a slight preface, addressing herself to Booth, said she had been quarrelling with her husband on his account. "I know not," said she, "what he means by thinking of sending you the Lord knows whither. I have insisted on his asking something for you nearer home; and it would be the hardest thing in the world if he should not obtain it. Are we resolved never to encourage merit; but to throw away all our preferments on those who do not deserve them? What a set of contemptible wretches do we see strutting about the town in scarlet!"

Booth made a very low bow, and modestly spoke in disparagement of himself. To which she answered, "Indeed, Mr. Booth, you have merit; I have heard it from my brother, who is a judge of those matters, and I am sure cannot be suspected of flattery. He is your friend as well as myself, and we will never let Mr. James rest till he hath got you a commission in England."

Booth bowed again, and was offering to speak, but she interrupted him, saying, "I will have no thanks, nor no fine

speeches; if I can do you any service I shall think I am only paying the debt of friendship to my dear Mrs. Booth."

Amelia, who had long since forgot the dislike she had taken to Mrs. James at her first seeing her in town, had attributed it to the right cause, and had begun to resume her former friendship for her, expressed very warm sentiments of gratitude on this occasion. She told Mrs. James she should be eternally obliged to her if she could succeed in her kind endeavours; for that the thoughts of parting again with her husband had given her the utmost concern. "Indeed," added she, "I cannot help saying he hath some merit in the service, for he hath received two dreadful wounds in it, one of which very greatly endangered his life; and I am convinced, if his pretensions were backed with any interest, he would not fail of success."

"They shall be backed with interest," cries Mrs. James, "if my husband hath any. He hath no favour to ask for himself, nor for any other friend that I know of; and, indeed, to grant a man his just due, ought hardly to be thought a favour. Resume your old gaiety, therefore, my dear Emily. Lord! I remember the time when you was much the gayer creature of the two. But you make an arrant mope of yourself by confining yourself at home – one never meets you anywhere. Come, you shall go with me to the Lady Betty Castleton's."

"Indeed, you must excuse me, my dear," answered Amelia, "I do not know Lady Betty."

"Not know Lady Betty! how, is that possible? – but no matter,

I will introduce you. She keeps a morning rout; hardly a rout, indeed; a little bit of a drum – only four or five tables. Come, take your capuchine; you positively shall go. Booth, you shall go with us too. Though you are with your wife, another woman will keep you in countenance."

"La! child," cries Amelia, "how you rattle!"

"I am in spirits," answered Mrs. James, "this morning; for I won four rubbers together last night; and betted the things, and won almost every bet. I am in luck, and we will contrive to be partners – Come."

"Nay, child, you shall not refuse Mrs. James," said Booth.

"I have scarce seen my children to-day," answered Amelia. "Besides, I mortally detest cards."

"Detest cards!" cries Mrs. James. "How can you be so stupid? I would not live a day without them – nay, indeed, I do not believe I should be able to exist. Is there so delightful a sight in the world as the four honours in one's own hand, unless it be three natural aces at bragg? – And you really hate cards?"

"Upon reflexion," cries Amelia, "I have sometimes had great pleasure in them – in seeing my children build houses with them. My little boy is so dexterous that he will sometimes build up the whole pack."

"Indeed, Booth," cries Mrs. James, "this good woman of yours is strangely altered since I knew her first; but she will always be a good creature."

"Upon my word, my dear," cries Amelia, "you are altered too

very greatly; but I doubt not to live to see you alter again, when you come to have as many children as I have."

"Children!" cries Mrs. James; "you make me shudder. How can you envy me the only circumstance which makes matrimony comfortable?"

"Indeed, my dear," said Amelia, "you injure me; for I envy no woman's happiness in marriage." At these words such looks past between Booth and his wife as, to a sensible by-stander, would have made all the airs of Mrs. James appear in the highest degree contemptible, and would have rendered herself the object of compassion. Nor could that lady avoid looking a little silly on the occasion.

Amelia now, at the earnest desire of her husband, accoutred herself to attend her friend; but first she insisted on visiting her children, to whom she gave several hearty kisses, and then, recommending them to the care of Mrs. Atkinson, she and her husband accompanied Mrs. James to the rout; where few of my fine readers will be displeased to make part of the company.

The two ladies and Booth then entered an apartment beset with card-tables, like the rooms at Bath and Tunbridge. Mrs. James immediately introduced her friends to Lady Betty, who received them very civilly, and presently engaged Booth and Mrs. James in a party at whist; for, as to Amelia, she so much declined playing, that as the party could be filled without her, she was permitted to sit by.

And now, who should make his appearance but the noble peer

of whom so much honourable mention hath already been made in this history? He walked directly up to Amelia, and addressed her with as perfect a confidence as if he had not been in the least conscious of having in any manner displeased her; though the reader will hardly suppose that Mrs. Ellison had kept anything a secret from him.

Amelia was not, however, so forgetful. She made him a very distant courtesy, would scarce vouchsafe an answer to anything he said, and took the first opportunity of shifting her chair and retiring from him.

Her behaviour, indeed, was such that the peer plainly perceived that he should get no advantage by pursuing her any farther at present. Instead, therefore, of attempting to follow her, he turned on his heel and addressed his discourse to another lady, though he could not avoid often casting his eyes towards Amelia as long as she remained in the room.

Fortune, which seems to have been generally no great friend to Mr. Booth, gave him no extraordinary marks of her favour at play. He lost two full rubbers, which cost him five guineas; after which, Amelia, who was uneasy at his lordship's presence, begged him in a whisper to return home; with which request he directly complied.

Nothing, I think, remarkable happened to Booth, unless the renewal of his acquaintance with an officer whom he had known abroad, and who made one of his party at the whist-table.

The name of this gentleman, with whom the reader will

hereafter be better acquainted, was Trent. He had formerly been in the same regiment with Booth, and there was some intimacy between them. Captain Trent expressed great delight in meeting his brother officer, and both mutually promised to visit each other.

The scenes which had past the preceding night and that morning had so confused Amelia's thoughts, that, in the hurry in which she was carried off by Mrs. James, she had entirely forgot her appointment with Dr Harrison. When she was informed at her return home that the doctor had been to wait upon her, and had expressed some anger at her being gone out, she became greatly uneasy, and begged of her husband to go to the doctor's lodgings and make her apology.

But lest the reader should be as angry with the doctor as he had declared himself with Amelia, we think proper to explain the matter. Nothing then was farther from the doctor's mind than the conception of any anger towards Amelia. On the contrary, when the girl answered him that her mistress was not at home, the doctor said with great good humour, "How! not at home! then tell your mistress she is a giddy vagabond, and I will come to see her no more till she sends for me." This the poor girl, from misunderstanding one word, and half forgetting the rest, had construed into great passion, several very bad words, and a declaration that he would never see Amelia any more.

Chapter viii.

In which two strangers make their appearance

Booth went to the doctor's lodgings, and found him engaged with his country friend and his son, a young gentleman who was lately in orders; both whom the doctor had left, to keep his appointment with Amelia.

After what we mentioned at the end of the last chapter, we need take little notice of the apology made by Booth, or the doctor's reception of it, which was in his peculiar manner. "Your wife," said he, "is a vain hussy to think herself worth my anger; but tell her I have the vanity myself to think I cannot be angry without a better cause. And yet tell her I intend to punish her for her levity; for, if you go abroad, I have determined to take her down with me into the country, and make her do penance there till you return."

"Dear sir," said Booth, "I know not how to thank you if you are in earnest."

"I assure you then I am in earnest," cries the doctor; "but you need not thank me, however, since you know not how."

"But would not that, sir," said Booth, "be shewing a slight to the colonel's invitation? and you know I have so many obligations to him."

"Don't tell me of the colonel," cries the doctor; "the church is to be first served. Besides, sir, I have priority of right, even to you yourself. You stole my little lamb from me; for I was her first love."

"Well, sir," cries Booth, "if I should be so unhappy to leave her to any one, she must herself determine; and, I believe, it will not be difficult to guess where her choice will fall; for of all men, next to her husband, I believe, none can contend with Dr Harrison in her favour."

"Since you say so," cries the doctor, "fetch her hither to dinner with us; for I am at least so good a Christian to love those that love me – I will shew you my daughter, my old friend, for I am really proud of her – and you may bring my grand-children with you if you please."

Booth made some compliments, and then went on his errand. As soon as he was gone the old gentleman said to the doctor, "Pray, my good friend, what daughter is this of yours? I never so much as heard that you was married."

"And what then," cries the doctor; "did you ever hear that a pope was married? and yet some of them have had sons and daughters, I believe; but, however, this young gentleman will absolve me without obliging me to penance."

"I have not yet that power," answered the young clergyman; "for I am only in deacon's orders."

"Are you not?" cries the doctor; "why then I will absolve myself. You are to know then, my good friend, that this young

lady was the daughter of a neighbour of mine, who is since dead, and whose sins I hope are forgiven; for she had too much to answer for on her child's account. Her father was my intimate acquaintance and friend; a worthier man, indeed, I believe never lived. He died suddenly when his children were infants; and, perhaps, to the suddenness of his death it was owing that he did not recommend any care of them to me. However, I, in some measure, took that charge upon me; and particularly of her whom I call my daughter. Indeed, as she grew up she discovered so many good qualities that she wanted not the remembrance of her father's merit to recommend her. I do her no more than justice when I say she is one of the best creatures I ever knew. She hath a sweetness of temper, a generosity of spirit, an openness of heart – in a word, she hath a true Christian disposition. I may call her an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

"I wish you joy of your daughter," cries the old gentleman; "for to a man of your disposition, to find out an adequate object of your benevolence, is, I acknowledge, to find a treasure."

"It is, indeed, a happiness," cries the doctor.

"The greatest difficulty," added the gentleman, "which persons of your turn of mind meet with, is in finding proper objects of their goodness; for nothing sure can be more irksome to a generous mind, than to discover that it hath thrown away all its good offices on a soil that bears no other fruit than ingratitude."

"I remember," cries the doctor, "Phocylides saith, Mn kakov

ev epens opens dpelpelv ioov eot evi povtw²

But he speaks more like a philosopher than a Christian. I am more pleased with a French writer, one of the best, indeed, that I ever read, who blames men for lamenting the ill return which is so often made to the best offices.³ A true Christian can never be disappointed if he doth not receive his reward in this world; the labourer might as well complain that he is not paid his hire in the middle of the day."

"I own, indeed," said the gentleman, "if we see it in that light —"

"And in what light should we see it?" answered the doctor. "Are we like Agrippa, only almost Christians? or, is Christianity a matter of bare theory, and not a rule for our practice?"

"Practical, undoubtedly; undoubtedly practical," cries the gentleman. "Your example might indeed have convinced me long ago that we ought to do good to every one."

"Pardon me, father," cries the young divine, "that is rather a heathenish than a Christian doctrine. Homer, I remember, introduces in his Iliad one Axylus, of whom he says —

— Hidvos o'nv avopwpoloi
pavras yap tyeeokev⁴

² To do a kindness to a bad man is like sowing your seed in the sea.

³ D'Esprit.

⁴ He was a friend to mankind, for he loved them all.

But Plato, who, of all the heathens, came nearest to the Christian philosophy, condemned this as impious doctrine; so Eustathius tells us, folio 474."

"I know he doth," cries the doctor, "and so Barnes tells us, in his note upon the place; but if you remember the rest of the quotation as well as you do that from Eustathius, you might have added the observation which Mr. Dryden makes in favour of this passage, that he found not in all the Latin authors, so admirable an instance of extensive humanity. You might have likewise remembered the noble sentiment with which Mr. Barnes ends his note, the sense of which is taken from the fifth chapter of Matthew: —

[Greek verse]

"It seems, therefore, as if this character rather became a Christian than a heathen, for Homer could not have transcribed it from any of his deities. Whom is it, therefore, we imitate by such extensive benevolence?"

"What a prodigious memory you have!" cries the old gentleman: "indeed, son, you must not contend with the doctor in these matters."

"I shall not give my opinion hastily," cries the son. "I know, again, what Mr. Poole, in his annotations, says on that verse of St Matthew — That it is only to *heap coals of fire upon their heads*. How are we to understand, pray, the text immediately preceding? — *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.*"

"You know, I suppose, young gentleman," said the doctor, "how these words are generally understood. The commentator you mention, I think, tells us that love is not here to be taken in the strict sense, so as to signify the complacency of the heart; you may hate your enemies as God's enemies, and seek due revenge of them for his honour; and, for your own sakes too, you may seek moderate satisfaction of them; but then you are to love them with a love consistent with these things; that is to say, in plainer words, you are to love them and hate them, and bless and curse, and do them good and mischief."

"Excellent! admirable!" said the old gentleman; "you have a most inimitable turn to ridicule."

"I do not approve ridicule," said the son, "on such subjects."

"Nor I neither," cries the doctor; "I will give you my opinion, therefore, very seriously. The two verses taken together, contain a very positive precept, delivered in the plainest words, and yet illustrated by the clearest instance in the conduct of the Supreme Being; and lastly, the practice of this precept is most nobly enforced by the reward annexed —*that ye may be the children*, and so forth. No man who understands what it is to love, and to bless, and to do good, can mistake the meaning. But if they required any comment, the Scripture itself affords enow. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing.* They do not, indeed, want the comments of men, who, when they cannot bend their mind to the obedience of Scripture,

are desirous to wrest Scripture to a compliance with their own inclinations."

"Most nobly and justly observed," cries the old gentleman. "Indeed, my good friend, you have explained the text with the utmost perspicuity."

"But if this be the meaning," cries the son, "there must be an end of all law and justice, for I do not see how any man can prosecute his enemy in a court of justice."

"Pardon me, sir," cries the doctor. "Indeed, as an enemy merely, and from a spirit of revenge, he cannot, and he ought not to prosecute him; but as an offender against the laws of his country he may, and it is his duty so to do. Is there any spirit of revenge in the magistrates or officers of justice when they punish criminals? Why do such, ordinarily I mean, concern themselves in inflicting punishments, but because it is their duty? and why may not a private man deliver an offender into the hands of justice, from the same laudable motive? Revenge, indeed, of all kinds is strictly prohibited; wherefore, as we are not to execute it with our own hands, so neither are we to make use of the law as the instrument of private malice, and to worry each other with inveteracy and rancour. And where is the great difficulty in obeying this wise, this generous, this noble precept? If revenge be, as a certain divine, not greatly to his honour, calls it, the most luscious morsel the devil ever dropt into the mouth of a sinner, it must be allowed at least to cost us often extremely dear. It is a dainty, if indeed it be one, which we come at with great

inquietude, with great difficulty, and with great danger. However pleasant it may be to the palate while we are feeding on it, it is sure to leave a bitter relish behind it; and so far, indeed, it may be called a luscious morsel, that the most greedy appetites are soon glutted, and the most eager longing for it is soon turned into loathing and repentance. I allow there is something tempting in its outward appearance, but it is like the beautiful colour of some poisons, from which, however they may attract our eyes, a regard to our own welfare commands us to abstain. And this is an abstinence to which wisdom alone, without any Divine command, hath been often found adequate, with instances of which the Greek and Latin authors everywhere abound. May not a Christian, therefore, be well ashamed of making a stumbling-block of a precept, which is not only consistent with his worldly interest, but to which so noble an incentive is proposed?"

The old gentleman fell into raptures at this speech, and, after making many compliments to the doctor upon it, he turned to his son, and told him he had an opportunity now of learning more in one day than he had learnt at the university in a twelvemonth.

The son replied, that he allowed the doctrine to be extremely good in general, and that he agreed with the greater part; "but I must make a distinction," said he. However, he was interrupted from his distinction at present, for now Booth returned with Amelia and the children.

Chapter ix.

A scene of modern wit and humour

In the afternoon the old gentleman proposed a walk to Vauxhall, a place of which, he said, he had heard much, but had never seen it.

The doctor readily agreed to his friend's proposal, and soon after ordered two coaches to be sent for to carry the whole company. But when the servant was gone for them Booth acquainted the doctor that it was yet too early. "Is it so?" said the doctor; "why, then, I will carry you first to one of the greatest and highest entertainments in the world."

The children pricked up their ears at this, nor did any of the company guess what he meant; and Amelia asked what entertainment he could carry them to at that time of day?

"Suppose," says the doctor, "I should carry you to court."

"At five o'clock in the afternoon!" cries Booth.

"Ay, suppose I should have interest enough to introduce you into the presence."

"You are jesting, dear sir," cries Amelia.

"Indeed, I am serious," answered the doctor. "I will introduce you into that presence, compared to whom the greatest emperor on the earth is many millions of degrees meaner than the most contemptible reptile is to him. What entertainment can there be to a rational being equal to this? Was not the taste of

mankind most wretchedly depraved, where would the vain man find an honour, or where would the love of pleasure propose so adequate an object as divine worship? with what ecstasy must the contemplation of being admitted to such a presence fill the mind! The pitiful courts of princes are open to few, and to those only at particular seasons; but from this glorious and gracious presence we are none of us, and at no time excluded."

The doctor was proceeding thus when the servant returned, saying the coaches were ready; and the whole company with the greatest alacrity attended the doctor to St James's church.

When the service was ended, and they were again got into their coaches, Amelia returned the doctor many thanks for the light in which he had placed divine worship, assuring him that she had never before had so much transport in her devotion as at this time, and saying she believed she should be the better for this notion he had given her as long as she lived.

The coaches being come to the water-side, they all alighted, and, getting into one boat, proceeded to Vauxhall.

The extreme beauty and elegance of this place is well known to almost every one of my readers; and happy is it for me that it is so, since to give an adequate idea of it would exceed my power of description. To delineate the particular beauties of these gardens would, indeed, require as much pains, and as much paper too, as to rehearse all the good actions of their master, whose life proves the truth of an observation which I have read in some ethic writer, that a truly elegant taste is generally accompanied

with an excellency of heart; or, in other words, that true virtue is, indeed, nothing else but true taste.

Here our company diverted themselves with walking an hour or two before the music began. Of all the seven, Booth alone had ever been here before; so that, to all the rest, the place, with its other charms, had that of novelty. When the music played, Amelia, who stood next to the doctor, said to him in a whisper, "I hope I am not guilty of profaneness; but, in pursuance of that chearful chain of thoughts with which you have inspired me this afternoon, I was just now lost in a reverie, and fancied myself in those blissful mansions which we hope to enjoy hereafter. The delicious sweetness of the place, the enchanting charms of the music, and the satisfaction which appears in every one's countenance, carried my soul almost to heaven in its ideas. I could not have, indeed, imagined there had been anything like this in this world."

The doctor smiled, and said, "You see, dear madam, there may be pleasures of which you could conceive no idea till you actually enjoyed them."

And now the little boy, who had long withstood the attractions of several cheesecakes that passed to and fro, could contain no longer, but asked his mother to give him one, saying, "I am sure my sister would be glad of another, though she is ashamed to ask." The doctor, overhearing the child, proposed that they should all retire to some place where they might sit down and refresh themselves; which they accordingly did. Amelia now

missed her husband; but, as she had three men in her company, and one of them was the doctor, she concluded herself and her children to be safe, and doubted not but that Booth would soon find her out.

They now sat down, and the doctor very gallantly desired Amelia to call for what she liked. Upon which the children were supplied with cakes, and some ham and chicken were provided for the rest of the company; with which while they were regaling themselves with the highest satisfaction, two young fellows walking arm-in-arm, came up, and when they came opposite to Amelia they stood still, staring Amelia full in the face, and one of them cried aloud to the other, "D – n me, my lord, if she is not an angel!" – My lord stood still, staring likewise at her, without speaking a word; when two others of the same gang came up, and one of them cried, "Come along, Jack, I have seen her before; but she is too well manned already. Three – are enough for one woman, or the devil is in it!"

"D – n me," says he that spoke first, and whom they called Jack, "I will have a brush at her if she belonged to the whole convocation." And so saying, he went up to the young clergyman, and cried, "Doctor, sit up a little, if you please, and don't take up more room in a bed than belongs to you." At which words he gave the young man a push, and seated himself down directly over against Amelia, and, leaning both his elbows on the table, he fixed his eyes on her in a manner with which modesty can neither look nor bear to be looked at.

Amelia seemed greatly shocked at this treatment; upon which the doctor removed her within him, and then, facing the gentleman, asked him what he meant by this rude behaviour? – Upon which my lord stepped up and said, "Don't be impertinent, old gentleman. Do you think such fellows as you are to keep, d – n me, such fine wenches, d – n me, to yourselves, d – n me?"

"No, no," cries Jack, "the old gentleman is more reasonable. Here's the fellow that eats up the tithe-pig. Don't you see how his mouth waters at her? Where's your slabbering bib?" For, though the gentleman had rightly guessed he was a clergyman, yet he had not any of those insignia on with which it would have been improper to have appeared there.

"Such boys as you," cries the young clergyman, "ought to be well whipped at school, instead of being suffered to become nuisances in society."

"Boys, sir!" says Jack; "I believe I am as good a man as yourself, Mr. – , and as good a scholar too. *Bos fur sus quotque sacerdos*. Tell me what's next. D – n me, I'll hold you fifty pounds you don't tell me what's next."

"You have him, Jack," cries my lord. "It is over with him, d – n me! he can't strike another blow."

"If I had you in a proper place," cries the clergyman, "you should find I would strike a blow, and a pretty hard one too."

"There," cries my lord, "there is the meekness of the clergyman – there spoke the wolf in sheep's clothing. D – n me, how big he looks! You must be civil to him, faith! or else he will

burst with pride."

"Ay, ay," cries Jack, "let the clergy alone for pride; there's not a lord in the kingdom now hath half the pride of that fellow."

"Pray, sir," cries the doctor, turning to the other, "are you a lord?"

"Yes, Mr. –," cries he, "I have that honour, indeed."

"And I suppose you have pride too," said the doctor.

"I hope I have, sir," answered he, "at your service."

"If such a one as you, sir," cries the doctor, "who are not only a scandal to the title you bear as a lord, but even as a man, can pretend to pride, why will you not allow it to a clergyman? I suppose, sir, by your dress, you are in the army? and, by the ribbon in your hat, you seem to be proud of that too. How much greater and more honourable is the service in which that gentleman is enlisted than yours! Why then should you object to the pride of the clergy, since the lowest of the function is in reality every way so much your superior?"

"Tida Tidu Tidum," cries my lord.

"However, gentlemen," cries the doctor, "if you have the least pretension to that name, I beg you will put an end to your frolic; since you see it gives so much uneasiness to the lady. Nay, I entreat you for your own sakes, for here is one coming who will talk to you in a very different stile from ours."

"One coming!" cries my lord; "what care I who is coming?"

"I suppose it is the devil," cries Jack; "for here are two of his livery servants already."

"Let the devil come as soon as he will," cries my lord; "d – n me if I have not a kiss!"

Amelia now fell a trembling; and her children, perceiving her fright, both hung on her, and began to cry; when Booth and Captain Trent both came up.

Booth, seeing his wife disordered, asked eagerly what was the matter? At the same time the lord and his companion, seeing Captain Trent, whom they well knew, said both together, "What, doth this company belong to you?" When the doctor, with great presence of mind, as he was apprehensive of some fatal consequence if Booth should know what had past, said, "So, Mr. Booth, I am glad you are returned; your poor lady here began to be frightened out of her wits. But now you have him again," said he to Amelia, "I hope you will be easy."

Amelia, frightened as she was, presently took the hint, and greatly chid her husband for leaving her. But the little boy was not so quick-sighted, and cried, "Indeed, papa, those naughty men there have frightened my mamma out of her wits."

"How!" cries Booth, a little moved; "frightened! Hath any one frightened you, my dear?"

"No, my love," answered she, "nothing. I know not what the child means. Everything is well now I see you safe."

Trent had been all the while talking aside with the young sparks; and now, addressing himself to Booth, said, "Here hath been some little mistake; I believe my lord mistook Mrs. Booth for some other lady."

"It is impossible," cries my lord, "to know every one. I am sure, if I had known the lady to be a woman of fashion, and an acquaintance of Captain Trent, I should have said nothing disagreeable to her; but, if I have, I ask her pardon, and the company's."

"I am in the dark," cries Booth. "Pray what is all this matter?"

"Nothing of any consequence," cries the doctor, "nor worth your enquiring into. You hear it was a mistake of the person, and I really believe his lordship that all proceeded from his not knowing to whom the lady belonged."

"Come, come," says Trent, "there is nothing in the matter, I assure you. I will tell you the whole another time."

"Very well; since you say so," cries Booth, "I am contented." So ended the affair, and the two sparks made their congee, and sneaked off.

"Now they are gone," said the young gentleman, "I must say I never saw two worse-bred jackanapes, nor fellows that deserved to be kicked more. If I had had them in another place I would have taught them a little more respect to the church."

"You took rather a better way," answered the doctor, "to teach them that respect."

Booth now desired his friend Trent to sit down with them, and proposed to call for a fresh bottle of wine; but Amelia's spirits were too much disconcerted to give her any prospect of pleasure that evening. She therefore laid hold of the pretence of her children, for whom she said the hour was already too late;

with which the doctor agreed. So they paid their reckoning and departed, leaving to the two rakes the triumph of having totally dissipated the mirth of this little innocent company, who were before enjoying complete satisfaction.

Chapter X

A curious conversation between the doctor, the young clergyman, and the young clergyman's father

The next morning, when the doctor and his two friends were at breakfast, the young clergyman, in whose mind the injurious treatment he had received the evening before was very deeply impressed, renewed the conversation on that subject.

"It is a scandal," said he, "to the government, that they do not preserve more respect to the clergy, by punishing all rudeness to them with the utmost severity. It was very justly observed of you, sir," said he to the doctor, "that the lowest clergyman in England is in real dignity superior to the highest nobleman. What then can be so shocking as to see that gown, which ought to entitle us to the veneration of all we meet, treated with contempt and ridicule? Are we not, in fact, ambassadors from heaven to the world? and do they not, therefore, in denying us our due respect, deny it in reality to Him that sent us?"

"If that be the case," says the doctor, "it behoves them to look to themselves; for He who sent us is able to exact most severe vengeance for the ill treatment of His ministers."

"Very true, sir," cries the young one; "and I heartily hope He will; but those punishments are at too great a distance to infuse

terror into wicked minds. The government ought to interfere with its immediate censures. Fines and imprisonments and corporal punishments operate more forcibly on the human mind than all the fears of damnation."

"Do you think so?" cries the doctor; "then I am afraid men are very little in earnest in those fears."

"Most justly observed," says the old gentleman. "Indeed, I am afraid that is too much the case."

"In that," said the son, "the government is to blame. Are not books of infidelity, treating our holy religion as a mere imposture, nay, sometimes as a mere jest, published daily, and spread abroad amongst the people with perfect impunity?"

"You are certainly in the right," says the doctor; "there is a most blameable remissness with regard to these matters; but the whole blame doth not lie there; some little share of the fault is, I am afraid, to be imputed to the clergy themselves."

"Indeed, sir," cries the young one, "I did not expect that charge from a gentleman of your cloth. Do the clergy give any encouragement to such books? Do they not, on the contrary, cry loudly out against the suffering them? This is the invidious aspersion of the laity; and I did not expect to hear it confirmed by one of our own cloth."

"Be not too impatient, young gentleman," said the doctor. "I do not absolutely confirm the charge of the laity; it is much too general and too severe; but even the laity themselves do not attack them in that part to which you have applied your defence."

They are not supposed such fools as to attack that religion to which they owe their temporal welfare. They are not taxed with giving any other support to infidelity than what it draws from the ill examples of their lives; I mean of the lives of some of them. Here too the laity carry their censures too far; for there are very few or none of the clergy whose lives, if compared with those of the laity, can be called profligate; but such, indeed, is the perfect purity of our religion, such is the innocence and virtue which it exacts to entitle us to its glorious rewards and to screen us from its dreadful punishments, that he must be a very good man indeed who lives up to it. Thus then these persons argue. This man is educated in a perfect knowledge of religion, is learned in its laws, and is by his profession obliged, in a manner, to have them always before his eyes. The rewards which it promises to the obedience of these laws are so great, and the punishments threatened on disobedience so dreadful, that it is impossible but all men must fearfully fly from the one, and as eagerly pursue the other. If, therefore, such a person lives in direct opposition to, and in a constant breach of, these laws, the inference is obvious. There is a pleasant story in Matthew Paris, which I will tell you as well as I can remember it. Two young gentlemen, I think they were priests, agreed together that whosoever died first should return and acquaint his friend with the secrets of the other world. One of them died soon after, and fulfilled his promise. The whole relation he gave is not very material; but, among other things, he produced one of his hands, which Satan had made use of to write

upon, as the moderns do on a card, and had sent his compliments to the priests for the number of souls which the wicked examples of their lives daily sent to hell. This story is the more remarkable as it was written by a priest, and a great favourer of his order."

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