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CHRONICLES
OF
GRETN A GREEN.

By PETER ORLANDO HUTCHINSON.

“Marry in haste, and repent at leisure.”—*Old Proverb.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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OF THE

REIGN OF

ALFRED THE GREAT

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CHRONICLES

OF

GRETN A GREEN.

CHAPTER I.

Topography of the Country between Carlisle and Gretna.

Some facts about Geography
Amuse us for awhile;
And chiefly the Topography
'Twixt Gretna and Carlisle.

WHAT a pity it is that the exquisite romance of running away with a lady, and marrying her clandestinely, should ever be tarnished by subsequent matrimonial squabbles. Alack and well-a-day ! surely it must be a most humiliating consideration, for people to find themselves launching cutting speeches at each other, when the remembrance of the caresses, the rapture, the triumph, that swelled in their bosoms at the successful moment of escape to Gretna is still fresh in their minds, if they only dare to recall it. We say *dare* to recall it : and it is certain that it must require some courage to venture to look back upon

these thrilling moments at such a time as we mention,—that is, when the novelty of wedded life has in some sort passed away,—when the person whom we had always yearned for, and sighed for, and had looked upon as an angel moving upon earth, is, indeed, no more than a human being, possessed of weaknesses, frailties, and imperfections, not to say vices;—at such time, when these failings have increased so far as to create not only indifference but absolute loathing; and when this loathing has broken out into bickerings, contradictions, and wrangling; then, we say, it will require some courage to look back with the mind's eye upon the sweet congratulations of having achieved a midnight elopement unprevented, un-stopped, unarrested.

And why should it require such courage to reflect upon bliss that is gone?

It has been said that there is no grief so great as the recollection of past happiness when in the days of misery. This may be a great grief, certainly; but we were talking of humiliation. Grief may be proud, stern, savage, unbending; but humiliation can scarcely be either of these. Humiliation makes the feeler of it small, degraded, stricken down, abashed; but why should such a remembrance produce such an effect? Why, for this reason: that it lets us know that our judgment was erroneous; that we were incapable of making a wise selection, or that the person we selected managed to outwit us in dissimulation; that we certainly made a shallow and foolish choice; and then the inference is, that he who

makes a foolish choice must, per consequence, be a fool, and that is not flattering to our vanity ; in fine, it makes us out of humour with ourselves, and that is more galling than being out of humour with all the world besides ; and when we are out of humour with ourselves we grow sour and peevish, and soon vent that ill humour upon the nearest object to us, and the unhappy one that is so closely allied to the origin of these disquiets.

It is hard, too, that our ill-humour should be poured out upon our helpmate ; as if that helpmate had committed a crime merely for having complied with our most pressing desires—that is, of becoming our partner. Did we not wish it ? did we not promote it ? did we not solicit it, urge it, importune it ? Of a truth it was very kind in the other party to comply with our request ; to yield to what we vowed was the only thing left us to ensure our happiness. Why, really, we never thought of looking at the matter in this light before. Is it possible that we can vent our peevishness on our partner, who actually became our partner to satisfy our most fervent entreaty ? Positively also, our mate has great reason to be angered with us : did we not consent to marry our mate when it was our mate's pleasure that it should be so ? Yes, this cannot be denied ; and therefore we have committed an offence which our mate never can forgive, and for which our mate will never desist persecuting us.

“ Married love never lasts ; dat is not in de nature,” said the unfortunate Queen Caroline some thirty years

ago ; a sweeping denunciation, certainly, and but an indifferent encouragement to maidens and bachelors. “ I could be the slave of the man I love,” she observed to one of her ladies at another time, with a great deal of truth ; truth, because it is a sentiment in which all other women will agree ; ay, and men too. “ I could be the slave of the man I love ; but to one whom I loved not, and who did not love me, impossible—c’est autre chose.”

We wish the queen had bequeathed us some receipt for ensuring the permanency of wedded love : but alas ! for her, she was one of the last who could have transmitted such a bequest. She judged of every one by her own individual self, when she said, “ Married love never lasts ; dat is not in de nature ;” but after all, if we look round the world, and scrutinize the opinions of men, we shall see that almost all their theses, dogmata, and theorems, are not founded so much on the wisdom of others as they are on their own abstract experience. Because *her* wedded love did not last, she broadly declared that the wedded love of every person besides did not, and would not, last.

Philosophers and moralists preach mutual forbearance as one of the especial ensurers of happiness ; and philosophers and moralists are right in thus preaching : but it is so hard to resist being cross, and to stifle an ill-natured remark when things have gone wrong, and have put us out of sorts. And therefore, of course, on the other hand, it is particularly easy,—it is even *pleasant*, to give a short answer when the

person to whom it is spoken has provoked us to anger, whether justly or not. This is a vile ingredient in human nature; and yet there are few, however amiable as human nature goes, who will not confess that they know it to be fact.

After saying this, it may appear strange that we should pave the way to Gretna by writing this work. But we are *not* paving the way thither in these pages; and we mean to take every opportunity of appending a wholesome moral to each anecdote connected with the disreputable practice of journeying to that bourn, and to lay open every circumstance touching that practice, not that the reader should become enamoured of it, but rather that he or she should detest it and eschew it.

For the information of all those whom it may concern, we will by these presents make them acquainted with the modern geography of this region, as we have hitherto spoken of its ancient appearance; so that the mad and the inconsiderate who journey this way to destruction, or at all events to matrimony, may the better comprehend where they are going, and not otherwise, like the blind, fall together into the ditch.

Now, the veritable distance from the ancient city of Carlisle, on whose wall the sun shines bright, as the minstrel's ballad says, unto Gretna, is nine miles and one half, for there is a mile-stone on the right-hand, or eastern side of the road, under the hedge, indicating to that effect: it is just opposite the first cottage you come to on entering this in-

teresting village, and at about two hundred yards from Gretna Hall, the principal marrying-shop. By this it will be seen that the whole and complete distance from the famous city wherein Arthur held his court and Peredur flourished, across the Debateable Land and the border, even up to the very altar, is two hundred yards more than the nine miles and a half—or, say nine miles and three quarters, which will be making the most of the evil, and taking the matter at the worst, to those who think it far too long, and are impatient to get over it. But the distance from this city to the river Sark, or boundary-line betwixt the two kingdoms, is about nine miles lawful measure, as near as may be, scarce more or less; and at this distance all fugitives may safely calculate on being beyond the reach of English pursuit.

Now, it will not be difficult to perceive how very providentially all these measurements are made out, the said nine miles and the fraction being just a convenient length for a posting stage; not too long, but that the horses may be kept hard at it all the way, and quite long enough for the patience of the knight and his ladye love, who, be it observed, are now anxious to attain unto that bourn whence none (or few) return, and who are both on the last stage of their journey and of their celibacy.

Such progresses, howbeit, progress toward evil, and swains and maidens would do well to eschew them, seeing that, for the most part, they be undertaken lacking the sanction of parents, or the approval of friends, but are rather promoted at the instigation

and enforcement of the devil; and this sheweth us the reason why they do always on such occasions drive speedily, for it is said, we must needs go quick when the devil driveth.

The road is a right fair road as roads go, (though they move not,) notwithstanding it passes over an unstable foundation, altogether lacking "firmness;" but there is a modern road-maker, being the son of Adam, (for "mak signifieth a sonne," said John Elder to Henry VIII.,) who declared that he would sooner make a road over a soft bed, than over a bed of rock. After crossing the bridge of Carlisle, near the meadow where Peredur, the Prince of Sunshine, tilted with and overthrew the discourteous knight who had insulted Queen Gwenhwyvar by dashing the goblet out of her hand as she was drinking, there is an easy ascent until you attain the summit of a hill, over which, in the olden time, ran the Picts' wall, otherwise the wall of Adrian or Severus, about which we have made sufficient historical mention heretofore. Nothing remains of this fortification in the present day exactly at this spot, by reason that the soil of the district is not rocky, so that the coulter of the plough and the self-same Time that aided to build it, have more recently levelled it to the ground; but further eastward, at the stone quarries, traces are yet visible, and will gratify the inquiries of the antiquarian pilgrim. From the summit of this rising, even all the way to the border, the road is passing level, so that the horses would not say that it were much on the collar; it is, for the most part, bounded

on either hand by a dreary waste, even the Debateable Land, or Solway Moss ; a few cheerless huts lie dotted about with their enclosures, like oases in the great desert of Zahara ; and here and there the barrenness of the scene is enlivened by some plantations of fir trees. This description of the country is not given without a reason. Furthermore, in the remote north-east, the western extremities of the Cheviots may be seen rising as a background ; and on the opposite side, toward the setting sun, a fair ken of the western waters openeth to the view. The inhabitants of the said huts look exceedingly miserable ; they are squalid in vesture, and meagre in feature, one while turning up peat for winter fuel, and at another turning up what they are pleased to term their gardens. The children are ragged and dirty, curious to look at passers-by, and not apt to return any base coin that may be thrown to them.

This kind of road continues much the same until it attains the Eske, over which it is carried by a creditable stone and iron bridge ; and then, on reaching the Sark, a smaller stream, it passes, by another bridge of stone, actually over the border into the sister kingdom.

After crossing the Sark, the road, for the last half mile into the village of Gretna, ascends by a moderate inclination ; wherefore, in order to tear up this hill with matrimonio-runaway effect, so as to strike admiration into the hearts of all curious beholders, it is well to ease the cattle over the last mile on the more level moss, (unless papa happens to be

close behind,) because, oh ! thou most sociable companion, that dost accompany us through these pages, although, as we have said, this be an evil undertaking, still, if it *is* done, why, let it be done in a comely manner. Even Pluto himself we would see ascend his burning throne with grace.

We said before, that this minute description of the aspect of the country over which the last stage of the eventful journey passes, has not been written without reason ; verily, to say the honest truth, it has been done for the particular information of all married persons who have driven over this road, and have been wedded at Gretna Green. Indeed ! how so ? Because, forsooth, it is notorious, that when two lovers are sitting in one carriage on their way to be thus united, they are ever and always looking sweetly right into each other's eyes, so that they never see one bit of the country outside. Thus, it has been remarked, that all runaways who have been over the Debateable Land, know less about it than any other travellers whatsoever. We, ourself, did not go this way on an eloping adventure ; consequently we kept our eyes directed out of the carriage to observe the country, having no inducement to direct them in, no bright orbs to look into and discourse with, but scrutinized the face of the district, and made such valuable notes as should serve for this most important history. The above description, we repeat, therefore, has been carefully drawn up for the perusal of all those bright eyes that were gazing passionately into each other when they were

borne along over this last stage,—that is, by the by, if those bright eyes have not since been scratched out.

On entering the village, the stone of nine miles and a half may be seen by the way-side on the right-hand ; a hundred yards beyond that, on the left, is the village church,—but you are not going there, so pass on,—and beyond that, again, is the green, from which the name of *Gretna Green* arose, it being a triangular piece of grass at the convergence of several roads, and on the further side of that is the entrance to Gretna Hall, the modern aristocratic establishment for being married at.

In the days of my Lord Erskine and other personages of renown, it was customary to marry in the old village of Springfield, a place that is distant about half a mile from the green : but the bright star of Springfield has sunk beneath the horizon, and the hall has sprung up, much to its injury and disparagement. The great road from Carlisle into Scotland used to run directly through Springfield, so that it then lay on the principal thoroughfare ; but about the year 1826—more or less—a new road thence to Glasgow was cut through these parts, in such sort as wholly to eschew the said place ; so that the peregrinator wending this way cannot see it at all, nor would he know of its existence unless he were particularly advertised of it.

Hence it is, that Springfield has suffered much in prosperity since the alteration, being entirely cut off from travellers, and well-nigh forgotten by those who come hastily to be wedded.

The neglect of the village has led to the increase of buildings round the green near the church, close to which the new road runs ; and hence has arisen within the last few years, for matrimonial accommodation, (with a true eye to business and a favourable locality,) that comparatively large, neat, and comfortable mansion ycleped “Gretna Hall.” It is a kind of hotel or boarding-house, having coach-house, stables, and everything meet for the horrible end in view—but of this more anon.

It is necessary to explain, that although the place has ever gone by the name of “Gretna Green,” people were always executed in the village of Springfield. Now, attached to this village there was, and, as we have said, there still is, a green or open space, where the inhabitants used to meet of a summer’s evening to enjoy themselves with a game of shinty, tennis, or other ancient pastime ;—such a green as of old pertained and appertained to many towns and villages in England, and which, in some cases remains to this day—and this green under discussion, was the village green of Springfield.

Perhaps, then, it will be demanded, since we say it was the green of Springfield, why it was not called Springfield Green rather than Gretna Green. To this we answer, that the parish in which the village stands and is included, is named Gretna, and that the Green was apparently christened after the parish, as the principal or whole, and not after the village, which was only a part.

Lying, as it does, on the great road northward, and

at the confluence of several minor thoroughfares, the Green is now considered as the nucleus, to the prejudice of Springfield. On the north side lies the lawn and entrance to the Hall; the post-office is on the east; the parish church and the manse, or clergyman's residence, on the south; and from the west, or most acute angle of the trigon, proceed at a slight divergence, the two roads, one to Annan, and the other to Glasgow; whilst the intervals between these buildings and roads are pretty well filled up with cottages.

Such is the present arrangement of this place; in describing which we consider we have done the reader a great service, particularly if he (or she) purposes going that way, and would wish to comprehend the geography thereof previously.

CHAPTER II.

Gretna Green: its Toll-gate keeper and Marrying-houses.

Some good advice is here conscribed

For those who stand in need :

The Toll-gate keeper is described

For those who choose to read.

ALTHOUGH in the last chapter we said we were not paving the way to Gretna Green by writing these pages, and although we said that we would lose no opportunity of appending a wholesome moral to each anecdote which it will be our province to record, yet let it not be concluded that we are therefore one of that *'Αναδελφία* of modern philosophers, who go about decrying matrimony altogether, as a state into which the rising generation had better not think of entering, and which ought to be looked on by those who do venture into it, at best but as a necessary evil.

That which is natural cannot be wrong: and that compact between the sexes which is of divine origin, must be right from its very origin. If, therefore, there is anything whereof to complain, the fault lies in ourselves, and not in the institution. The institution, in itself, is purposed to ensure our happiness, and where it does not achieve this, it

is not referable to the divine framer of the condition, but to our own weaknesses, petulancies, and devilish evil passions.

We hold matrimony to be necessary; the only thing is, to enter upon it advisedly, wisely, and discreetly. Thus, then, when we say that we are not now paving the way to Gretna Green, we mean what we say—*videlicet*, that we are not paving the way to Gretna Green, or persuading people to go thitherward, but are by no means counselling against marriage in other more creditable places. Let all marry, so be they do it considerately; and let them do it before the altar in the midst of Mother Church, with well-approving friends and neighbours around them; and if, after having done our best to obtain a peaceful life, we discover that we have been deceived in our judgments of the partners we have selected, why, the misfortune must be considered in the same light as other appointments in this world are considered, that is, as one of the trials which it has pleased Providence to lay upon us. It is an after-satisfaction to reflect that we took the step to the best of our reason, and with the best concurrence of our relations; but such after-satisfaction cannot alleviate those who have to remember that they ran away to Gretna Green against the wishes, counsel, or consent of their parents, guardians, or whomsoever it might have been.

There is no sting so bitter as that of remorse; and to be angry with ourselves for having done a foolish thing, cuts ten times sharper than the anger of all the whole world else. The anger of another against us

may fire our resentment for a moment, and enkindle our rage against that other ; but remorse for our own misdeeds is a never-dying worm, which gnaws the heart in secret, corrodes it like acid eating into metal, and dives deep, like the canker grub that creeps into the centre of the rose-bud. Compared with this, the outburst of rage is almost a noble passion. Rage against another, where we have justice on our side, is a swelling, an inspiring, an expanding passion ; but remorse is a humiliating, self-degrading, lessening, compressing passion : and where we feel little in our own eyes, painful indeed is the sensation. Wherefore, good reader, eschew Gretna Green for fear of this remorse, and have rectitude on your side by repairing properly to church.

Immediately after the way-farer has passed the Sark, he will perceive a toll-gate just beyond the bridge on the right-hand side ; this is the first building over the border, and is situated close thereunto, as the reader will conceive. Now, this is a right excellent situation for business : as it lies at the very entrance of the Sister Kingdom ; it is on the chief road of the country, over which everybody journeying into western Scotland must pass ; in fine, it is there like the open mouth of a net set against the stream.

The advantageous site of this toll-gate was too valuable to be neglected, and herein dwells one Simon Beatie, collector of tolls, tribute, and so forth, and a man who may be described as being "wide awake." He is a knowing and shrewd personage, well to do in

the world, and knows "what 's what," which, as we take it, is a praise far above common.

As the office of marrying in Scotland is not restricted to a certain privileged few, but is open to all, to be performed by every one whom it may concern, and as he who thus accommodates the needy does not do so there for nothing, any more than elsewhere, why it follows that this trade may be made not an unprofitable one, if the self-ordained priest can only procure customers. Well, now, we have said that Simon lives on the great thoroughfare—this was a wise choice for locality; but then, scores of candidates for matrimony might come over the bridge on foot, (as they often do to lull suspicion,) and pass through the gate on their way to the Green, for foot passengers have no excuse for tarrying at toll-gates, having no tribute to pay. Be it so: but we have said that Simon was "wide awake," and so he determined to give them an excuse for stopping. He set up a large and attractive sign-board over his door, whereon is notified, in bright paint, that he is the vender of "ale, porter, and spirituous liquors," so that the weary and the thirsty may now enter his dwelling, in order to rest their bones and moisten their clay. This was considerate. But dost thou think, right courteous reader, that Simon reared up this huge emblazonment solely and simply to decoy the parched over his threshold? Oh, no! Simon is a shrewd man, as aforesaid, and can look as far into an oak plank as most men. He intended it as an excuse for the shy and diffident, who

might not at first have courage to declare the true object of their coming. All persons whatsoever, let their motive for journeying this way be what it may, have, under the authority of this board, an allegeable reason for stepping in and asking after his health; this is just the very thing he intended. It is the plea of the thirsty, and the cloak of the modest; they allege the first, being stricken with fear through the power of the second.

Touching this enterprising individual, there are many witty and waggish anecdotes current in the parish, ay, and beyond the bounds of the parish, too; these, for the most part are, peradventure, set abroach by the villagers, rather through envy and jealousy of a thriving rival in the trade, than as being broadly based on truth; yet, it is certain, that in much falsehood spoken, some truth will ever be found to run astray. Not a being passes the bridge but Simon searchingly scans him with his eye, first through the little diagonal window which flanks and commands the road, such as all toll-gates possess, and then from his front door, at greater advantage, for he is anxious to secure him ere he can get to the other marrying-shops. If there be anything in the stranger's appearance that looks like wedlock, or as if bent on wedlock, Simon will courteously, but bluntly, (for such is his manner,) bid him welcome over the border by coming to the threshold, as if to receive toll or, if the stranger be on foot, so as to be wholly exempt from paying *scot*, he will then come, merely prompted by a feeling of philanthropy, which he

should appear to bear towards every fellow-creature, and inquire how matters speed in the south country.

Some say that he is somewhat of an inquisitive turn, because he is wont to be very loquacious to those who cross the bridge.

"How now, traveller?" he will say to him, as he approaches, "I ken ye find the roads dusty," (or heavy, or wet, or dry, or rough, or pleasant, or unpleasant, as the case may be,) "how far gang ye? 'tis a far cry to Annan."

"I am not going to Annan," the wayfarer may answer.

"And right too, for ye'll na get there till ye are tired. Ye ken not the distance to Annan; ye are a stranger in these parts by your talk."

"I know this country but imperfectly," is the likely reply; "and if I had never come thus far, I should have known still less."

"Aweel, aweel, now, and that's true; and those that coom here, pick up knowledge that they'll na learn anywhere else."

"Every locality has its own peculiar history, and each place we journey to furnishes something new. It is not strange, therefore, that this neighbourhood should be the home of facts, or traditions, or legends, that are not to be met with elsewhere."

"Right; and facts, too, as no other parish in her majesty's dominions ever contained the like. Why, ken ye what parish ye have stepped into, now that ye have passed yon river?"

"What parish? I know nothing of the divisions

of your parishes in Scotland, or where their boundary lines begin and end; but, if I am not mistaken, the village of Gretna Green is somewhere about here, though I don't mean to say I can tell how far off."

"And that's the name of the parish! the most celebrated parish in all the whole earth; and this toll-gate is the most famous toll-gate that ever was built, not because I take so many bawbees from passers by, but for reasons much more important, as I ken."

"Certainly," the peregrinator will observe, as he gives a glance at the white-washed house; "I should not have been particularly struck with the external appearance of the building, for it looks much like most others of the same class."

"No, no, no," Simon will answer hastily; "no, ye'll na say there's anything about it; and no more there is, barring the inside. I ken ye're tired;—we sell home-brewed beer, ale, porter, cider, foreign wines, whiskey, and other spirituous liquors; and though, as ye say, there's nothing striking outside—except the board that bears those words of course—the inside is one of the neatest insides ye ever went into, especially the parlour with the corner window that looks down the road."

"No doubt, no doubt. How far is it to the nearest public?"

"Oh! now, I ken it's a far cry, and ye'll be overmuch tired an ye go further till ye've rested awhile, and filled your painch with a farl of bread, or a bannock, and a mutchkin of berry-brown."

“No,” I am neither tired nor hungry: and if I stand in need of no rest, nor require any of your berry-brown or heather-dew, why should I tarry here and dally by the way-side?”

“Ye are na in sich a hurry as that. There’s a braw big hoose up at the Green, where they will charge ye for just looking into the gateway: an if ye gang into the door, ye ’ll na coom oot again till your bawbees are a’ gone. He who goes in there will change weight between his heart and his purse; and when he comes away he will find his purse as light as his heart might ha’ been when he went in, but yet not nearly so full: and his heart will be as heavy as his purse might have been, but not with gold though—so tahk that for a truth.”

“And pray what is the name of this ‘braw big hoose,’ against which you warn me?”

“Oh, they cahl it the hahl.”

“The hall?—Gretna Hall?”

“May be ye’ve heard on it afore.”

“I have heard the name.”

“Aweel sir, ye’ve na coom to Scotland for nothing—have ye?”

“I never go or come anywhere for nothing; if I did, I should be wasting time and strength to very little purpose.”

“That’s true; and may be ye’ve not coom to Gretna for nothing neither.”

“Of course not. I should be spending time and strength uselessly if I had—just as I said before.”

“Perhaps you would. Any information that you

want about the customs of this parish I can give you better than any man on the border, and you will do well to inquire here before you go further, for you know not whom you meet or how they will try to persuade you."

"You speak as if I had entered a region of difficulties, temptations, and perplexities, wherein I am to be tried, and sounded as to my motives, and watched and dogged and questioned as to the object of my coming amongst you. Surely I may pass through Gretna Green unnoticed, or tarry as long as I like, and go when I like, without being subject to such scrutiny?"

"Oh Lor, sir, this is the land o' liberty as far as that goes, and ye be welcome over the Sark; but when we see a stranger on the Moss cooming this way, we like to know what is the news that he brings along with him; for it is a true saying, that no two men possess the same knowledge—not if they both came from the same place, and had lived there all their days among the same people—and so ye ken that every one, whoever he is, always brings something different."

"Very good, that is like enough."

Thus Simon will feel his way, and probe the unsuspecting who travel thitherward. He will appear particularly anxious to welcome him — no matter whom or from whence emanating—to the land of cakes and ale; he will ask the news south at Carlisle, how business speeds, whether the traveller has succeeded in the undertaking he had heard he was engaged in, when it is likely to be completed,

whether he is not wearied after his walk, and indeed, whether he will not come in for five minutes and crush a cup or so? These and such like wary questions, judiciously urged, will sometimes elicit from the visitor the purport of his coming, yet if the said visitor, when he has discovered wherefore he is thus catechised, wholly disclaims being bent on a matrimonial adventure, Simon is so suspicious lest he may be deceived, and so fearful lest the rival priesthood in the village should take the job from him, that the strongest asseverations to the contrary, will rarely satisfy him that no wedlock is contemplated.

Thus it is, that his neighbours merrily relate how he one day forcibly waylaid an old woman and her nephew as they were returning from Carlisle market, and well nigh constrained them to enter into the holy estate, in spite of all their protestations against the proceeding. It was in vain they declared that they were actual aunt and nephew, and repudiated the very idea; it was in vain they swore they were only two innocent relations returning quietly to their homes after a day of traffic and toil; it was in vain the old woman called her nephew, "boy," and "child," and "lad" (for he was forty years younger than herself), Simon was deaf to all arguments and all expostulations; he had taken the notion into his imagination, and he was headstrong and determined. These boisterous words reverberated widely through the valley, until they accosted the ears of certain of the villagers at a distance; and this served to attract them hastily to the spot, where their

assistance was verily in request. Gentle entreaty and mild persuasion wholly failed to achieve their deliverance ; and it was not until more decided measures were taken that they succeeded in rescuing these victims from Simon and from matrimony.

'Tis also pleasantly told, that a man traveling along the road, whereon he had never been before, being a stranger in these parts, did by a mere chance meet a woman of whom he inquired the way ; and how Simon pounced upon them both as they were holding converse ; and how he desired to make them forthwith swear hymeneal faith and love to each other till death should them part ; and forsooth, how it was that none could persuade him that they were strangers and had never met before ; and even if that were true, he saw no reason, nevertheless, why he should not wed them. Surely these be witty conceits, and right merrily set forth.

We have not told our friends by what chance it was that we were suddenly stirred up to repair to Gretna Green, and when there, to tarry several days in the parish for the purpose of collecting, "interesting materials," such as should serve for this authentic history—but it can be done in a few lines.

It so befel for our pleasant recreation, we had been making a peregrination round the Highlands, and were returning homeward toward the dew-dropping south—ay, and had even crossed the Debateable Land, and arrived in the ancient city of Carlisle.

By another chance also, we here became acquainted with a funny, laughing specimen of hu-

manity, who had himself taken a wife to his bosom at Gretna, and who was full of anecdote touching the adventure, so soon as he saw how curious and amused we were. He eloquently narrated how impatiently his lady-love and himself sped over the border in the carriage, and never saw one bit of Solway Moss or the country, for the reasons before given ;—how he found “the blacksmith” so called, infinitely drunk, and fast asleep ;—how he shook him by the shoulders to arouse him to life and to duty imperative—how the said blacksmith rubbed his maudlin eyes, and cried out for another noggin ;—and how he could have been married for a shilling, only he came in a chaise, and so he paid half a guinea.

Such words were not without their effect ; the man was stirred up within us ; we repented us of our sin, and incontinently girding up our loins for the journey, we forthwith hastened back over the Sark, and took up our lodgment in the mansion hard by the Green.

There are several marrying-shops in this most remarkable and interesting parish, by the proprietors of which the trade is pretty much monopolized to the exclusion of many others who would set up for themselves in so profitable a line, if they could contrive it ; but when strangers rush hastily into the place, they must of necessity repair to some hotel or inn, there to abide whilst the ceremony is being perpetrated ; and thus the proprietors of such establishments possess advantages in monopoly which no private

persons can cope with, although any inhabitant may have equal right to marry the strangers, just as much as the innkeepers. Thus a kind of understanding has been set up, and entered into between the inn-keepers of Carlisle and the inn-keepers of Gretna : the former sending customers to the latter, their friends, and the latter playing back into the hands of the former by sharing the rich proceeds ; —and in this manner they reciprocally carry on a right slashing business.

The wisdom of such a situation as that of Simon Beatie close to the bridge over which every one must pass, will now manifestly be perceived ; for he knew how many rivals, enemies, and monopolizers prowled about the village ; and hence, by getting just within the border, he was determined to secure the first chance, and to forestal them as much as possible.

Gretna Hall,—before mentioned—or simply, “ the hall,” as it is there designated — is now the principal aristocratic and fashionable resort, since the new road has been made ; but formerly, when the great thoroughfare lay through Springfield, a little inn yeclaped “ The King’s Head,” situated in the centre of that village, was the temple whereunto the noble and the gentle repaired, as we shall soon take upon ourselves to set forth.

Besides these, and Simon Beatie, it is true there are one or two other minor beer-shops in which a man may ruin himself ; but these do not require especial mention now, though they may be touched upon

incidentally as occasion may suggest; yet friend Simon at the toll-gate must on no consideration be slighted; and, to be candid, we think we cannot do better than commence with him.

Upon a certain morning during our sojourn, we idly, but designedly, directed our steps down towards the bridge; and whether we were thirsty when we read the sign-board over the door, or whether we had any other motives for approaching Simon's abode, making this one the cloak, or whether we came for the purpose of collecting historical and traditionary notes, or whether we had any other reason whatsoever, but so it was, somehow we entered in and besought the tapster for a stoup of the best by way of preliminary. Simon Beatie himself, at that identical moment was seated upon a stool before a table, on which stood a looking-glass, a mug of hot water, and a circular pewter box: his chin, his lips, and his cheeks up to his ears, were covered with a fine white lather, and in his right hand he held a brush, which, on our entering, he was laying down in order to take from a red case a well stropped razor:—in short, he was just about to commence the cursed operation of shaving. Whatever ills the disobedience of Adam and Eve have entailed upon the softer sex, surely we may say that the curse of shaving has lighted grievously upon their masters. This, however, is not the curse of ancient Adam, but the curse of modern fashion. Ye gods! every morning in summer—ay, and even twice in one day, upon occasion of a very select

evening party, and in winter perhaps a little less often, (for, an you be a lady, gentle reader, we will tell you that the beard does not grow so fast in cold weather as in hot,) imperatively and assuredly does the task come round, even as regularly as the sun rises above the horizon. Simon, howbeit, shaved away in silence, as a martyr endures the rack without a murmur, when he knows that nothing can ward off his doom.

He called a deputy to perform the honours of his house, and, although he ceased not his occupation until it was completed, he was evidently wide awake as to the possible unrevealed motive for this visit. He appeared to think that the stranger had only come to negotiate, or arrange preliminaries—a thing he always does think whenever a stranger comes in—and that there was some nice girl concealed behind the hedge, or in the nearest cottage, who in five minutes would be produced, so soon as such preliminaries might be satisfactorily made out.

He soon started the subject which was near and dear to him, (because it was one of the most lucrative in which he dabbled,) and he readily entered fully and freely into it, wherever he might do so without revealing too many of the state secrets connected with the trade.

“So, Simon,” we observed, “you carry on two occupations at the same time; you collect tribute on her majesty’s highway, and you sell strong waters under royal licence?”

“You are right, sir,” said he; “but I should soon

starve upon those, if I did not carry on a third that pays better than both the others put together."

"Assuredly, then, that third trade must be an excellent one."

"Right again, sir. Do you want to be married?"

"Want what?"

"To be married. You know you are in Gretna parish, and that's the trade I mean."

"Stay, stay; you are too precipitate."

"I only thought that the young lady who is waiting for you whilst you spoke to me, would be tired."

"Oh! she is much indebted to you, indeed. But you really *do* marry?"

"No doubt of it; and I do more business than any priest in the village. Perhaps you have a wife already?"

"Perhaps not."

"Well, that may be; I canna say for certain. Once I thought you looked like a married man."

"Once, ay? and how did I look that once?"

"Why, sir, a married man has always got a different sort of look upon him to what another has; I canna say exactly what it is, but it's a something."

"What gay and happy, I suppose?"

"Oh no, sir, more t' other."

"And pray what is 'more t' other?'"

"Why, grave and thoughtful like, sad and broken down in spirit."

"Ha, ha, ha! that is admirable."

"Now, sir, you look for all the world like a bachelor."

"If, then, I really am a bachelor, as you say I look when I laugh, methinks you do not give me much encouragement to change my state."

"You may safely change it here; Gretna weddings always turn out well."

"Do they, indeed? Well, that is more cheering."

"If you are married, you have not been married at Gretna Green, I would venture a bawbee or two."

"True, I have not been married at Gretna Green. You say that weddings achieved here always turn out well: now, I think I know one couple, at least, who came here as fast as four horses could carry them, who now sometimes scratch each other's faces."

"Suppose you do, sir, there is no harm in that—"

"Oh! good morning—"

"Besides, I take it, they went up into the village, to the Hall, or the King's Head, instead of coming to me; so that, if they do fall out now and then, why surely it is more their fault than mine."

"Certainly, it is not yours if you had no hand in the matter."

"You Southrons are too long about these matters; you ponder over them too much, and that makes you hesitate, and hesitation brings mistrust; and when people begin to mistrust, it is all up with their happiness. They have no time here to ponder, to hesitate, or to mistrust; the thing is done as soon as thought of, and then they have only to set about making themselves as comfortable as they can."

"'Marry in haste and repent at leisure,' saith the proverb."

"I respect proverbs in most cases, because they are founded upon truth and experience ; but proverbs are not gospel, although you will find several chapters of them in the Bible."

"Just so, just so."

"By my position close to the bridge, you see, sir, I have the first chance of those who come over : those who come on foot are my own for certain ; but those who come in carriages generally make for the Hall, and drive so furiously I can't stop them. When, however, I see anything coming over the Moss at a fair round pace, I go and shut the gate. Whilst I am pulling back the bolts to let them through, I have time to find out what they are, and try if I canna get the job out of the hands of my neighbours. Now, sir, I tell you that during the first three years I kept this gate, I married two thousand couple.* What think you ?"

"That thou carriest on a slashing trade."

"Ay, and they have turned out well and happy. I have done more for the happiness of this world than any other man under the blue sky."

"Truly, then, the universe is much beholden unto you."

"I canna deny it, and I woona try : I married five

* These were the exact words of Simon ; and, notwithstanding that such authority ought to be considered good, we still doubt whether it is entirely to be depended on ; for, it came out, in evidence at a trial for bigamy lately at Cockermouth, that the small number of only thirteen hundred couple had been united at the toll-gate within the preceding six years.

couple only yesterday morning ; first two couple came in with their friends, and then the other three."

These facts are honourably presented unto the reader even as Simon Beatie delivered them ; and despite the jealousy which the villagers cherish towards this all-potent rival, many of them afterwards confessed to the truth of his assertions.

Simon Beatie is a large stalwart man, taller than many, and fatter than most ; he speaks by short, rapid, and detached sentences, like one having a nervous and mercurial temperament ; and furthermore, his speech is a rough comminglement of the Cumberland and Scotch dialects ; facts which, added together, render it very difficult for a southerner to comprehend him.

We did try by various innuendos, and even by more decided questions, to elicit from him what the "damage" might be for being wedded ? but these questions he civilly combatted and eschewed, manifestly thinking, with Shakspeare, that "two can keep counsel putting one away : " so he preferred the policy of keeping his own counsel in this matter to himself, and not sharing it with another. He answered by crying out against the exorbitant demands of his fellows in trade, and concluded by saying that, "he would do it just as well and effectually as they could if we would only produce the lady, and he would do it much cheaper, too."

This "brawny Scot" is discreet and wary as it should seem, and will not let his tongue cut his head off, as such unruly members have in aforetime

done for their wearers: nevertheless, notwithstanding Simon was cautious to maintain his secret for obvious reasons, yet there were plenty of others, his neighbours, who had not the same interest or inclination for doing so, but who, on being questioned, divulged all they knew of Simon and his practices. They said that neither he nor any other "priest" in the parish had any fixed charge, nor was there any settled demand established whether by law or custom; that the great aim was by them all, "to get as much as possible;" that when a stranger made application, he judged by the appearance or manner of the party, and asked accordingly; that the ignorance of the party making application, gave both him and his brothers in office the opportunity for undue exaction; that if his demand is preposterous, (as it often is,) he may be beat down; but that rather than miss a chance, and allow others to reap the spoil, he has been known to unite man and wife in the bands of holy matrimony for the most particular sum of one shilling!

These facts apply more or less to all the functionaries in the place, it being the object of each and all to drive bargains as lucrative to themselves as they possibly can; and for having enlightened the reader on these matters, we consider that we are entitled to some acknowledgment, seeing that if he now goes to Gretna in haste and precipitancy, he will not go ignorant of what concerns his interest, but will be able, through his knowledge, to save more money in his negotiations than will pay for this work twenty times over.

CHAPTER III.

Description of Gretna Hall, the principal Marriage-house.

Some matters touching Gretna Hall,
An inn of goodly fame;
The chiefest place where ladies call,
Who go to change their name.

WE will proceed to describe the edifice wherein the most notable the Prince of Capua pledged fealty to his beauteous bride. Dr. Dibdin, when peregrinating through the mazes of his northern tour, tarried a space at Gretna, either to change horses or satisfy his curiosity, as many others have also done; and he remarks, that the gossip and his gude wife of the hostry eagerly ushered him into the room wherein were united this noble Italian and the fairest fair one, Miss Smyth, as also Mr. Sheridan and the amiable Miss Grant. These were nuptials which have been noted by other writers as being remarkable for their positive and for their relative circumstances.

In the case of one of these weddings, this single celebration at Gretna was not held sufficient; but it was afterwards most indefatigably repeated in other

places, for the purpose of making surety doubly and trebly sure. Though a marriage here performed is legally held binding to all intents, and therefore, though the knot here tied cannot well slip afterwards, still we have many instances set forth in the archives, of a repetition of the ceremony under more regular proceedings. Such repetition may be rather designed to satisfy conscience, than to satisfy law. Law is not rendered sleepless at night by the procedure ; but conscience, especially where the deed has been done clandestinely or rebelliously by disobedient children, and feels sufficiently punctured by the sole act of disobedience, cannot sleep unless the forms of a more legitimate and approvable and moral and religious mode of union be gone through. If, however, it be held necessary to marry again in this more approvable way, why marry at all in the first instance at Gretna ? The reason is, that the performance at Gretna secures the tie in a legal sense irrevocably ; and then, when Pa and Ma find that the thing is done, and cannot be *undone*, and when the sinners themselves come to a like sense of this truth, they all feel that a great stigma attaches to so disreputable a practice, and will certainly hang upon them for ever, unless they devise some mode of wiping it out. What is to be done ? How can it be wiped out ? Why, forsooth, they lay their heads together, and they arrive at the determination that all parties and all consciences will be satisfied by the act of going to church, and by repeating the business according to the rubric.

According to this view of the matter, one celebration belongs to law, and another belongs to conscience ; and this refers to those who are of the established tenets of the land. But it sometimes happens that two persons come together who either are of dissimilar creeds, or else are of one creed, more especially abounding amongst the opinions of some distant clime, and not nurtured in Britain.

In such a case they satisfy the statutes of this realm in order to compass their own ends ; and then they subsequently yield to the requirements of their own religious tenets, by repeating the ceremony of espousal agreeably thereto whensoever a fitting opportunity shall be procured.

Wherefore, however strange it may appear at the first glance, we see that a man may marry several times in his life without either perpetrating polygamy or without ever becoming a widower, only by wedding the same lady repeatedly over and over again.

Gretna Hall, or " the Hall," situated near the Green, is now the aristocratic and fashionable resort ; that is to say, since the new road turned regicide, and cut off " the King's Head," together with the village of Springfield, as already explained. It was erected to its present purpose soon after the time of the alteration, so as to lie more conveniently on the great thoroughfare ; for the entrance to Springfield from England, where journeyers, peregrinators, and elopers used to pass, is circuitous, difficult, and inconvenient.

We were informed that the territory whereon

stands this famous shrine, pertains to Colonel Maxwell of Galloway; and that the estates lying round about the village were the patrimony of Sir John Maxwell of Springkale, Baronet in these her Majesty's realms; but that of late, the undoubted son of his body has succeeded thereunto, and goes by the name of Sir Patrick of that ilk.

The building itself is a comely looking establishment, especially when the grounds adjoining to it are taken into consideration; and albeit a hostelry in genus and reputation, open as it were to all comers, still it wears the complexion of privacy and seclusion. Such as may be posting from Carlisle city into Scotland will get a fair relay of horses there, and peradventure good entertainment; but it appears to be a sort of understood thing, that few abide long except those who come for "a particular purpose," and it has most indubitably a greater degree of sacred retirement pervading it than the roisterous way-side inns that greet the traveller elsewhere. Let none approach it with profanity and irreverence, it being that an ecclesiastical spirit hangs over it.

The figure is well nigh four square; the centre façade falls back or recedes about six feet, whilst two wings project beyond it that much, the one being on the right hand, and the other on the left. The door is entered by a flight of steps, placed in the middle of the said receding façade, garnished on each side with shrubs: there is a window on each side of the door, and there are several squarer and smaller windows for dormitories in the

story above, wherein the weary may take rest. With regard to the aforesaid projecting wings, they are externally set off with windows somewhat resembling the others, except that the upper ones are larger; and internally, they contain some rooms passably well furnished. The out-side of the house is



GRETNA HALL.

white—typical of the purity of its purpose; whilst gray bands, by way of adornment, are run round the margins of the windows, and down the corners, from the eaves to the earth. The roof, through which Asmodeus himself would have peered with astonishment, is well overlaid with pure slate; and last of all, albeit not least of all, several stacks of chimneys rise exhilaratingly over the whole.

Art curious to know wherefore we make particular mention of the chimneys? Anticipating that thou mayest be so, we take upon us to tell thee.

Know then, and take for an unerring truth that wherever you see a house with a good many chimneys, the owner thereof has a benevolent heart. This may seem strange ; but ten words will serve to explain that it is not so, and that it is nothing more than the natural consequence of the noble passion that produced them. For, where there are many chimneys, there will be many fires ; and where there are many fires, there will be much comfort ; and where there is much comfort, there is much good humour ; and where there is much good humour, accompanied by many blazing faggots, there will be much good cheer, much good fellowship, much good entertainment, and much generosity. Thus it is, that a man's right excellent qualities may with precision be always estimated by the number of chimneys that adorn the roof of his house. We were first made acquainted with this beautiful fact, by an ancient gentleman who was seated beside us on the top of a coach, journeying past the mansions of certain esquires.

“ There ! ” cried he in an ecstasy, as we passed a mansion which certainly was crowned with a most inordinate number, “ There now, I ’ll be sworn but a first-rate fellow lives there. Who does that place belong to, coachman ? ”

“ Squire So-and-so, that keeps the harriers that made such a capital run last week.”

“ Then Squire So-and-so is the best-hearted man I have heard of for the last month. I would give the world to shake hands with him.”

This old gentleman was right; and the chimneys on Gretna Hall are a source of delight to those who behold them.

In front of the building there is a grass lawn, green and pleasing to the eye, garnished in divers places with trees and evergreens of less size; and a carriage drive of 200 yards in length, more or less, leads from the entrance gate near the Green directly up to the door. Moreover, an adjoining field has been taken in and added to the grounds, that nothing might be wanting; round about the which run some shady and labyrinthine walks, where lovers may saunter at will in the cool of the evening; and many stately trees growing thereby, spread their nervous limbs abroad over head, whereon any who have too hastily done a rash act, may go and hang themselves up at pleasure. In fine, the place is altogether tastefully laid out, with care both for joyous pastime and pleasant recreation.

John Linton, keeper and purveyor thereof and therein, is not a fool in his way, any more than Simon Beatie: even like our friend at the toll-gate, he is also "wide awake," as the moderns phrase it.

His prey consists mostly of the tritons, whilst Simon, his fellow fisher at the bridge, is content to throw his net generally over the minnows. Now, Simon the angler, by his position, has greatly the advantage over John the angler in the question of numbers; but we opine that John at the Hall has the advantage over Simon at the gate, in the matter of profit—for one triton is oftentimes worth more

than a score of small fry. They do not catch Princes of Capua every day; but when, by a happy chance, they do get such a triton into their meshes, be sure that they make the most of him.

It should seem, also, that John Linton never sleeps; and that too, for the reason above given, *videlicet*, he is always, "wide awake;" he knows that his customers may suddenly come at any unexpected or unlooked-for hour like thieves in the night, and catch him unprepared; wherefore, like a careful virgin as he is, he always keeps his lamps ready trimmed, replenished with oil, and lighted, in order that he may welcome the coming of the bridegroom whenever it shall happen.

Nevertheless, John Linton has a son, and this son is indoctrinated to be, "wide awake," also, for vigilance at Gretna is the chiefest of the cardinal virtues; and if the father has occasion to go to his farm, or to look after his merchandise, he charges his son with vehement words to light his lamp and abide within doors instead.

This is a right excellent arrangement; and the necessity of it will be fully confessed when it is recollected, that where several merchants living in the same vicinage, carrying on the same line of business, and consequently often clashing in rivalry, self-interest, and competition, nothing short of the greatest care on the parts of Linton and Co., can secure customers to the Hall, albeit to the prejudice of every other congenious and connatural establishment. But every one at Gretna looks to the making of his own for-

tune rather than to playing into the hands of his neighbours—an unamiable and almost selfish procedure, at the same time, a procedure not wholly unknown in other places besides this, when men, trading in the same line, happen to cross each others' paths.

Vigilance and activity are the body and soul of business. It is vigilance that looks for and discovers mines of treasure ; and it is activity, following upon this discovery so made, that brings the hitherto hidden treasure to light, and secures it to those who practise these two twin qualities.

John Linton and son are not destitute of these virtues. They are incessantly on the look out for mines of treasure in the shape of rich and soft bridegrooms ; and when they have found any of the sort posting through Carlisle, their agents there located lose no time in conducting them where it shall seem best for securing an assiduous working of the said mines in the shapes of rich bridegrooms.

A man is never so generous in his life as at the time of his change of estate ; and where the feeling of blacksmiths, or whomsoever it may be, is left to his generosity, he is indeed a mine of precious metals that renders up his riches but too easily to the labours of these pseudo-clerical searchers into the bowels of his earth. He feels so happy at his triumph and success, in having at last surmounted every obstacle that had hitherto denied his possession of that sweet one, dressed in white and adorned with orange blossoms, who now stands beside him, that his

heart is opened most freely, widely, unreservedly; and when a man's heart is open, you may do what you like with his purse. Of a truth that same is open also.

Some centuries ago, our ancestors framed a statute, which was enacted to restrain and set bounds to the incontrollable generousness of new-made husbands. It actually lays down how much the delirious man shall give away on this overpowering occasion; a precaution which the legislature had found necessary, because many noblemen and gentlemen of fair possessions, had, in the excess of their softness, absolutely bestowed away all of this world's goods that had pertained unto them, and by so doing had well nigh brought ruin on themselves and their kindred.

It has been generally supposed that a man's evil principles only require checking or regulating, and that his virtuous ones may be allowed to run freely to their extremest extent; but these facts teach us to know, that even his best qualities, must sometimes be curbed, lest they run past the bounds of discretion—supposing it were possible to be too discreet.

When one friend has overwhelmed another with civilities, we may hear the obliged one exclaim, in the excess of his gratitude,—“ My dear fellow, you really are *too* good.” And if it be possible to be too good, why, surely it may be possible to be too discreet, or too generous; and where a man is too generous, and was unsparingly giving away his whole fortune, the law stepped in to restrain him.

Pity it is that the law does not put a limit to the generosity of bridegrooms at Gretna — that is, when the bridegrooms are feeing the landsharks who combine to fleece them there.

We have said that John Linton, like a careful virgin, always kept his lamp ready trimmed ; and that if any accident called him away to his farm or his merchandise, he never failed, at his departing, to charge his son with vehement words to light his lamp, and abide within doors at his post. By this it will be seen how little it matters the hour of the day, or the hour of the night ; let the truant, or the runaway, the eloper or the fugitive, arrive at the Hall before sun-down or after, day, night, late, early, either John Linton in actual self is there ready to greet him, or else the flesh of his flesh, the bone of his bone, the child of his body, is present to do the same.

Such is the arrangement and constitution of this place. Who shall say otherwise than that these facts, carefully collected on the spot in the spirit of philanthropy, for the instruction and edification of all mankind, but more especially for the young ladies to whom these pages are submissively offered, are supremely worthy of record in this important and veritable history ? Yet, oh dread lady-patronesses ! we beseech ye to understand aright the true reading of these facts, and not to be readily enamoured with the narrative of deeds which are too inconsiderately done at Gretna—deeds which, to say the best of them, are assuredly wrong and very indiscreet. They are not exhibited to your view that you

should be prepossessed in their favour ; but that the contemplation of evil ways, and the sight of the hideous form of sin, may rather make ye eschew iniquity than follow it. We will not now foolishly set about to persuade you not to fall in love, or if you do, not to give way to it ; because your fascinations, your winning virtues, and your charms, have too dearly taught us and convinced us, that love is a power which no determination on our part can banish from our natures, — a power that will not be reasoned with, that will not be argued down, and will not be persuaded away. But coolly and honestly, we think that Gretna Green should be the last place thought of in a hopeless case—that those who “ marry in haste ” too often “ repent at leisure,” according to our admirable motto on the title page,—that hanging by the neck, or walking over head into a pond, or looking into the muzzle of a loaded pistol with dire intent, may each be a fate no worse than what ye may bring upon yourselves by rushing unadvisedly into matrimony— and, in fine, that if it can in any possible way be so contrived, it is more comely, more decent, more sacred, and more respectable to be married before the altar beneath a groined roof with friends and neighbours around you, than in a country tavern by an innkeeper, or behind the hedge by a weaver or a toll-gate keeper. What think ye ?

CHAPTER IV.

Lord Erskine's Marriage at Gretna.

Here read some scandal, but, I wis,
Too bad to talk about ;
And yet, in such a work as this,
The truth must all come out.

To contemplate fallen greatness is very painful, and strongly conducive to lamentable tears—as ask those who wept over the ruins of Troy, of Carthage, of Tadmor, of Babylon ; and the salt fountains that gush forth from the sternest eyes, are beauteous to behold, because they tell of a sympathising heart, evidently situated in the right place.

Those peregrinators who enter into the village of Springfield, in the parish of Gretna, in the county of Dumfries, in that part of Great Britain denominated Scotland, would do well to draw their handkerchiefs from their pockets, and give free vent to their feelings when they contemplate that especial hostelrie ycleped “The King’s Head.” Here, in good sooth, they will survey fallen greatness ;—and, to survey fallen greatness, is a most overpowering thing, as we have just said.

The feeling, though a complicated one, that then occupies the bosom, is mainly composed of that pas-

sion which we call regret;—that is, that notwithstanding divers afflicting sensations combine to rack the mind, still the particular one called regret predominates far over the rest.

He who journeys forth into the parched and barren waste, and looks upon the overturned columns or mutilated sculptures of Thebes, experiences a strange depression of spirit pass like a blight upon him : he comes eagerly up to the spot full of curiosity, delight, and elation, full of self-gratulation and pleased satisfaction, that he now stands over the city of his long cherished desires, and full of that species of pride known to most travellers, which they taste of, after having reached in safety the end of some arduous, dangerous, or difficult undertaking, such as that of crossing an enemy's country, or a dreary desert, abounding in wild beasts, and equally wild strawberries. All these thrills of prospective joy belong to that which we term anticipation ; and anticipation is a bright picture, coloured from the glowing palette of the imagination, and representing a scene to come, or rather not to come ; for sweet anticipation generally terminates in disappointment. Thus, when he looks upon the city, elate with anticipation, it is not long ere this blight descends like a chilling vapour upon the beauteous painting which he had before drawn ; and then, the sight of desolation spreading itself on every side, the decaying temples, the broken statues, the effaced inscriptions, the corroded chiselings bereft of their pristine sharpness, the rank weeds springing out of the tessellated marble

floors—all these circumstances together, speedily call up that multiplicity of sorrowful feelings, the chiefest amongst which, as we said, is that same regret.

Locke defines this to be, an uneasiness of the mind upon the consideration of some good or advantage lost—in this instance, the prosperity of a great city or fine edifice—which might have been enjoyed longer—as if the city or building had stood in pristine glory,—or the sense of present evil:—that is, the sense of present desolation where once there existed pomp, beauty, riches, happiness, or a thriving population—all now lost.

The King's Head Inn stands in the midst of the village of Springfield, and mine host is ycleped Alexander Beattie, as the sign, blazoned forth over the door in glaring heraldic achievement, will advertise the traveller. Simon Beattie at the tollgate spells his name with one *t* only; whereas Alexander of the King's Head employs two; and albeit those did without question originally both come from the same clan, and both here disclaim fellowship in trade, neither the one nor the other have considered it necessary to append to his advertisement these especial words—"no connexion with persons of the same name."

This hostelrie is a glorious ruin; we say ruin because, forsooth, since the alteration of the road the tide of passengers and the channel of business have been turned aside into another course, and hence the prosperity of former days has dwindled away to a lamentable extent. It is not much now as a building, nor is the Colosseum at Rome, being much out

of good repair ; it is not what it is, but what it has been : —it is “ interesting from association.” Rare deeds will hallow a paltry hut ; and no place so mean but great exploits will consecrate.

In external appearance the edifice is ordinary and humble ;—no lawn or parterre in front ; no flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs ; no long carriage drive from the lodge up to the steps, for it stands flush with the street ; no grounds ; no sentimental walks ; no trees to hang on. It forms the coin or angle of two streets ; it is entered from the principal one



THE KING'S HEAD.

by a door in the centre of the façade ; there is a sash window on each side of the door, whilst three similar windows appear in the story above, ranged equidistant ; the roof is of slate, but the heart sinks when the eye surveys it, for with tears be it recorded, the said roof is but sparingly adorned with chimneys. Hence, in passing through Springfield, no pictures of profuse hospitality arise in the imagi-

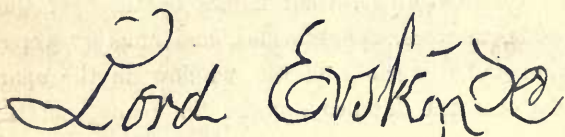
nation of the peregrinator; no visions of good cheer, or pleasant fellowship, and no bright ideas of rich entertainment gladden his spirit.

The splendour of the interior has faded, and passed away in an equal degree. On the left hand at entering, there is a kitchen, on the right-hand a parlour (wherein rare deeds have been done, as we will reveal anon); over the kitchen is an apartment that has suffered the general decay, and over the parlour an apartment that formerly was the principal sitting-room, at that time well garnished with comely furniture, but now desolate, and almost empty. Sic transit gloria—Capitis Regis in agro Gretnaniensis.

Visitors to this shrine have somewhat liberally amused themselves with writing, by means of certain diamond rings, their names or those of their friends, mottoes, apophthegms, and amatory verses. On one of the panes of the window in the apartment over the kitchen appears the name and title of a noble baron of these realms, now no more; and the same is seen also in the parlour, or room on the right of the entrance. By the non-conformity of style in these two reputed autographs, it is fair to conclude that they were not both traced by the same hand; the villagers, howbeit, contemplate them with infinite satisfaction, particularly the one down stairs, for there exist some misgivings as to the authenticity of the other. We took fac-similes of both on the spot: the apocryphal one stands thus:—

Lord Erskine

It was in the parlour below that the august rites betwixt this nobleman and Mistress Buck were performed, as the loquacious hostess narrated to us; and it was on the glass of this room that he amused himself with writing his name, after the ceremony was over, *ad rei memoriam*, with the title duly prefixed. Every one in the parish declares this last to be genuine beyond doubt, and no argument to the contrary would ever shake the stability of their faith therein. The following is the second fac-simile, as *ecce signum* :—



Now, we are particularly modest in thrusting forward our opinion uninvited, or our judgment unasked; nevertheless at this present, and under correction, we do impertinently hint to the forgiving reader, that we have no very implicit belief in the genuineness of either of these signatures. It is not at all likely that the noble baron would have amused himself after the execution, by scratching these words on the window under any view of the affair; and even conceding the fact that he really

might have done so, the existence of the prefix, "Lord," is enough in itself, to go no further, to suggest its spuriousness. We did warily venture to express thus much to mine hostess at the time, even as we stood surveying the window; but mine hostess at first laughed at our simplicity, and then, when we persisted in our simplicity, she changed her modulation, and became angered at our scepticism, wherefore we were enforced to desist, seeing that she was determined to combat all our doubts, and to have the last word—as what woman will not?

The other windows of the house, also, are profusely written upon; some panes exhibiting mere names, others apt mottoes, and yet others again stanzas of verse, (we do not say poetry,) expressive of the most impassioned sentiments; here a line ardent with glorious anticipation, and there a couplet full of triumph and actual possession. The following is a quatrain copied from the window over the parlour on the right-hand side of the entrance:—

“Transporting hope to clasp the charming Miss
In her fair arms, to what unequalled bliss;
What joys I tasted, when, from Gretna’s shrine,
I drew the maid, and swore she should be mine.—A. H.”

After reading this, oh! blush crimson shame thou spirit of Calliope, and all other spirits that have glowed with the fire of poetry. This is what Jonathan would call “real complete,” nevertheless, it is not above all criticism. The first line evidently is a burst of anticipation, replete with the fulness of a certain success. The words, “In *her* fair arms,” at

the beginning of the second line, are rather obscure, in so far that a lover does not clasp a lady in *her* arms, but clasps her in *his own*; and the remainder of this line appears to have been pressed into service more for the sake of the rhyme than for the sake of the sense. It is certain, howbeit, that rhyme is a terrible plague in writing verse; it fetters many a fine idea, and sorely cramps the imagination; and the best poets in all ages are agreed that rhyme is the perfection of poetry, and that the sense does not half so much matter, if the rhyme is pretty good. The last two lines bespeak triumph; he has won his lady—she is his—the deed is done—his difficulties, his anxieties, and his troubles are over. There is much more sense here; and, best of all, the rhymes are unexceptionable.

The above may be adduced as a pretty fair specimen of the verse that adorns and enriches The King's Head hostelrie; other out-pourings, equally fierce, albeit in cold prose, meet the eye in every direction; nor is it a despicable recreation either, to look them over in pleasantry, and to laugh out at each.

Wonderful is the power of love! It makes more poets than anything else in this 'varsal world, and everything else in the universe, either individually or collectively, all together. It is not only the most sweet of all themes of him who writes throughout his life, but it is generally the first prompter to him who had never written before. Love and poetry are twins. They were conceived together, they were

born together, and, what is more, they have not been separated since their birth, but, like Juno's swans, go coupled and inseparable. The man who is in love, and the maiden too, are for the time poetic; they burn with the poetic fire; they have only to express it in suitable and polished language. It is but a gifted few that are poetic on all subjects; but the most apathetic, the most dull, barbarous, heavy, or insensible, can be aroused into the perception of the beautiful, and into the consciousness of a refinement of sentiment high above the topics of everyday life, when the celestial and softening spirit of that same love has insinuated itself between the rugged folds of a heart, however sinewy. But you shall have this assertion in another form:—

I.

He who's in love, is, for the time, a poet :

Mark well that line—'tis far from being wrong :
I ween there needs small argument to shew it,
For what is poetry, and what is love ?

They both are full of passions fierce and strong,
They both are heavenly gifts come from above ;
Love is an art which Cupid taught to Psyche,
And poetry, they say, is *τεχνη μιμητικη*.

II.

Now is this what it is to be poetic :—

It is to be all tenderness within you,
Or else to be all sad and all pathetic,
And then to be all ardour and desire,

To breathe in lightning, have a soul all sinew,
Like steam in boilers—powder touched by fire ;
It is all deadly love and lively passion,
And then to feel all humbless and compassion.

III.

And love is much like this, ye will agree ;—

It is to be all meekness, ardour, feeling,
All charity, good-will, and goodly gree,
Benevolence and soft perceptibility ;

It is to trade in every gentle dealing,
And have a heart all sweet susceptibility,
To have a tender soul and tender mind,
To wish, in fact, all good to all mankind.

Thomas Erskine, Baron Erskine of Restormel, in the county of Cornwall, in England, was born into this wicked world in the year 1750. He was a short time in the navy at his first entrance into busy life ; but having little interest therein, and (consequently) not much chance of promotion, he quitted it for the army ; in this profession, howbeit, he strove against equal difficulties and lack of good patronage, wherefore, at the instigation of his mother, a lady of strong mind and mature judgment, he left it after a few years' service, in order to turn his thoughts to other things.

He fixed on the study of the law, a field wherein his mind ranged more readily, and found a pursuit more congenial with the nature and temperament of his disposition. He worked his way rapidly, he strode on honourably, and in due course he became eminent.

At the age of twenty, *videlicet*, in 1770, he wedded the amiable and accomplished Miss Moore ; he became a widower in 1805, she being the mother of several children his offspring.

After that he led a bustling and active life, astonishing the world by his triumphs of genius and his bril-

liancy of talent. An acute man, a first-rate lawyer, an ingenious arguer, a specious reasoner, and an orator that claimed the willing attention of his hearers, he at last rose to the exalted and honourable office of Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

Alas and well-way ! there is no stability in human nature, no reliance, no confidence, no trust. Oh what a fall was here !—honour, respect, high place, dignity—all, all, came rushing down to the dust.

If it be the historians's greatest delight to record mighty and noble achievements, so, also, it must be his greatest affliction to tell of weaknesses and acts unwise, that the heroes of his pages may have perpetrated ; yet he who takes pen in hand for the pleasure to be derived by discoursing on virtue, inflicts on his impartiality the necessity of submitting to the pain of writing on the errors of our nature.

Married his housekeeper—ye powers !—but hush !—hold your tongue.

The manner of it was this, to wit,—hush, hush !—cannot it be evaded ? Evaded ? how ? Shall the just and impartial chronicler record what he likes, and omit all that he chooses to omit ? There is no help. Besides, it is most certain that the account of the famous parish, the subject of these memoirs, would in no wise be perfect if we were to connive at the duty of our profession in this case, and more especially that part of this parish ycleped Springfield, and of Springfield the King's Head, and of the King's Head, the parlour down stairs, where the execution took place.

The manner of it was this—but stay—

Henry Brougham, Baron Brougham and Vaux, of Brougham in the county of Westmoreland, who is a great stickler *pro rege, lege, et grege*, has indited these sequent words of him :—

“That his private character was exempt from failings, can in no wise be affirmed ;” but the little blemishes in his private character, as Lord Kenyon used to say of this great man, were only as “spots in the sun.” And these “spots” did not appear until latterly. “It must with sorrow be added,” proceeds my Lord Brougham, “that, as the lustre of the luminary became more dim, the spots did not contract in their dimensions. The usual course on such occasions, is to say, *Taceamus de his* ; but History neither asserts her greatest privilege, [and particularly the history of Gretna Green,] nor discharges her higher duties, when, dazzled by brilliant genius, or astonished by splendid triumphs, or even softened by amiable qualities, she abstains from marking those defects which so often degrade the most sterling worth, and which the talents and the affections that they accompany may sometimes seduce men to imitate.”

Now, the manner of it was this. They got into the carriage, together with their children, in order to journey to Springfield ;—hush ! do hold your tongue.

The universally besetting sin in human nature—most sought after, most relished, and most dearly loved—is the fondness for gossip and scandal ; not, peradventure, for the sake of saying evil things of our neighbours, or for the sake of listening to charges

against their reputation, for we sometimes talk what is termed scandal of our good friends without ceasing to love them, but for the sake of a lively topic of conversation amongst those whose temperaments are not grave enough for abstruse subjects, for the sake of exercising that inherent quality called curiosity, whether it be in one sex or whether it be in the other, and for the sake of imparting to our fellow gossips the knowledge we possess of other folks' affairs. These motives are instigators strong enough in themselves, to say nothing of others perhaps not so harmless, which, on the other hand, might be adduced. It is difficult to say, with precision, where news of our friends, strictly so understood, or "kind inquiries" about them, given and received end, and where scandal begins. It is just and fair to inquire how our friends speed in the world, as manifesting sympathy and interest concerning them; but it is the abuse of that sympathy and interest, the prying unnecessarily further than concerns us, that then degenerates into "tittle-tattle." Who ever took a *tête-à-tête* drive round the park, but such light gossip was the chief amusement? or, who ever met half a dozen intimates at a snug tea party, (tea is a dreadful promoter of scandal,) but it was the reigning pastime all the evening? In such cases, it may be only a sympathetic talking of our absent acquaintances; but the transition from that to actual tittle-tattle is easy and pleasant to most people, not only of the female sex, (as some have maliciously said,) but of the male sex also.

We have made these observations on this dear passion, half thinking that the reader might suppose we were going to give way to it ourselves ; but we must intreat him or her to recollect that the historian is not a scandal-monger, although he shall discourse of events which befel, not in the remote ages of antiquity, but even in days near unto those in which we live. The only difference between history and written scandal appears to be this :—that the former treats of achievements which befel in times long passed away, whereas the latter touches on events which have happened almost within our own observation.

Well ! the manner of it was this, to wit—they both got into the carriage, accompanied by their children, in order to journey to Springfield ; and that they might the more surely escape observation, we are told by such rare chronicles as have made especial note of this matter, and eke by such cotemporaries as are now living and remember it, the noble baron laid aside his honours, and became a plain man by assuming an *alias*—even that of “ Mr. Thomas,” and that name, indeed, was returned to those who inquired whose carriage stopped the way.

Mr. Thomas passed unknown for a space ; but deception will endure only for a season, and the truth will eventually prevail. So it was here ; Mr. Thomas’s doublet was soon peered through, and the Lord Erskine was perceived withinside.

It even got about, through the horribly libellous exertions of the gossips of the day, that he travelled in

woman's attire, for the purpose of preserving a more certain *incog*. But this, most just reader, prithee do not believe, because it is not true, as we have discovered by searching into the stores of rare archives : it arose only out of a mistake or rather a misapprehension of appearances. Pleasant is the office of the peace-maker ; so also, is the office of him that corrects and clears up a calumny. We pray you to abjure all credence in this assertion ; to eschew harbouring it in any wise ; and to abhor the mention of it, and the sinner who first set it abroad. Such a scandalous report arose after this fashion,—namely, as my Lord journeyed in the vehicle, together with Mistress Sarah Buck, the lady of his especial election, and the two little pledges of his dearest affection ; he did, in fatherly love, and that he might beguile the way, and amuse these, the said little pledges, facetiously put upon his own head the bonnet of the herein-before-mentioned Mistress Sarah Buck. Now this is the historical relation of the fact, the clearing up the mystery, and the expungement of all slur and detraction. Wherefore, it is grievous to reflect on the natural depravity of human nature, that it should, out of a domestic and amiable incident, concoct a tale of defamation and hurtful slander. The children laughed and were pleased ; and mamma was pleased too, and patted their little heads with her “awful paws ;” ay, and papa was pleased as well — so they were all pleased, and, consequently, happy for the time, and, consequently, content with their lot ; and contentment with one's lot is gratitude to God

who assigned that lot to us ; and as ingratitude is the worst of sins, so gratitude, the contrary, becometh a positive virtue. And yet this innocent and happy party did not, even at that moment, escape calumny. But what says William Shakspeare, comedian of Stratford-super-Avon, in the county of Warwick ?

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny."

Alas ! then, for those who are not like either one or the other.

They sped on their journey at a fair pace, and for the reasons, somewhere before given, they are supposed not to have seen one bit of Solway Moss. Arrived at Springfield by the old road—for neither the present new one nor Gretna Hall were in existence—they repaired to the King's Head hostel, and in that hostel, to the parlour or sitting-room on the right-hand of the door at entering. Here they soon achieved the first half of our motto on the title page, they "married in haste : " and let us add also, if it were for no other reason than to shew how infallible this motto is, they shortly afterwards "repented at leisure," but with that we have nothing to do.

This execution was not unattended with certain strange circumstances, as were authentically related to us in the house by Dame Beattie.

"Here good sir," said she, going into the middle of the room ; "here it was that my Lord stood, together with Miss Buck ; here it was he pledged his allegiance, and gave up his heart and his hand ; here it was

he swore to love and to cherish and so forth ; and here it was he threw his cloak over his little ones that he had brought with him.

“ He wore an ample travelling cloak when he alighted down at the door,” continued she ; “ and he did not take it off when he came into the house. It was gathered round his neck by a collar ; and by flowing in long folds down to the ground, it served well to cover his whole person. Under this he took his children during the ceremony, in order, as I was told, that they should become his heirs.”

“ Surely then, he did this hostelrie much honour by the visit.”

“ Surely you are right, good sir, and the fame hereof has, in consequence, been much beholden unto him.”

“ Doubtless—doubtless.”

“ But, oh ! sir, only think of it—out upon your sex say I.”

“ Only think of what ? Out upon us, and wherefore ?”

“ Alas ! the inconstancy of man, the shallowness of his judgment, the instability of his resolution, and the insecurity of his love.”

“ Indeed ! you don’t mean all that, I am sure.”

“ Indeed, sir, but I do though.”

“ And what then ? I knew all that before. I thought you had discovered something new.”

“ I trow not ; for many a man ere now has sworn one way to day, and gone another to-morrow.”

“ Very bad—very bad.”

“And what is plighted faith, or promises pledged, or oaths pronounced if they abide not?”

“Some poet says, (and poets always say true,) that oaths are but words, and words but breath; now, words are only heard for the moment, and leave no trace of the thing they were; and breath is but as the idle zephyr of heaven, which bloweth where it listeth, and which no eye can discern, and no art can render stable for a moment.”

“And such be the oaths and promises of men.”

“How so? How so? Even allowing, Mistress Beattie, that poets always speak true, I will not say that I always believe them; and albeit promises be made up, as they say, of breath only, and so on, yet would I have a man not utter an airy and an invisible promise, or an intangible oath, unless he has stability of purpose such as will keep him well up to it ever after. True, words be but breath; but words are the issued coinage of the inward soul, and if that soul thinketh one thing and speaketh another, that soul becometh a liar.”

“Now that is what I like. But he who makes a promise to-day, fully meaning to keep to it, yet afterwards falls away, either through fickleness of temper or natural inconstancy, or innate proneness to change,—that man is not a premeditated liar, but rather a weak and frail creature in whom there is no dependance.”

“Most eloquently spoken: yet what are you driving at, for verily I am lost? You say that man is inconstant—fickle, without stability, reliance, or

dependance ; not, however, a premeditated liar—only a weak creature ; a liar because he does not keep his promise, yet a liar through omission and weakness, and not depravity ;—mighty fine, and doubtless passing true, but what then ? ”

“ Why, Sir, you see that my Lord came here of his own free will, through his own yearning and desire, and of his pleasure wedded the lady of his election.”

“ Very good, and many others have done the same.”

“ Just so ; and very good thus far. But will you believe what came after ? ”

“ I don’t know.”

“ Why, he tried to get a divorce.”

“ A what ? ”

“ A divorce.”

Of a truth, friend reader, this was a good moral for those who marry in haste. At these words we were, as some tender poet saith, “ struck all of a heap.” It was enough to ruin the fair fabric of romance which the imagination of Gretna marriages is so ready to build up ; and enough to make a man pucker himself like a snail into his shell, when he meets with anything that greatly offends him.

“ I tell you what it is, Mistress Beattie ; I will incontinently sit down and write a book about Gretna Green : and mark me, I will have a rare motto on the title-page.”

“ No doubt, Sir, many good things besides on the title-page, might be put into it.”

“Plenty of gossip, plenty of tittle-tattle, plenty of scandal.”

“This is what the world loves, no matter where or how.”

“The first half of the motto shall contain the fact; the second shall set forth the moral.”

CHAPTER V.

Poverty in relation to the married state.—Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, which put an end to Fleet Marriages, and gave birth to those of Gretna.—Disquisition on Gretna Marriages.

An apophthegm by Coleridge writ,
Which is not bad, of course :
Lord Hardwicke's character for wit,
And other fit discourse.

“SHEW me one couple,” said S. T. Coleridge, “unhappy on account of their limited circumstances, and I will shew you ten who are wretched from other causes.”

Riches and poverty are relative circumstances depending on an infinitude of surrounding contingencies. One man is rich on a thousand a year, whilst another is poor (or fancies himself so) on ten thousand. It depends on the natural disposition of the individual, his covetousness, his insatiable desire for more wealth than he possesses, and consequently his belief that he must be poor, since his idea of what it is to be rich is far above the state of his actual revenues or his ambition, which always looks upwards, and so, by comparison, makes him appear low. The idea a man has of his really being poor, also depends on his position in society—a position which perhaps makes his expenses, in order that he

may keep up a standard shew of splendour, greater than his income, although that income may appear liberal. He who moves in the first circles of society, cannot do so without spending as much, or appearing to spend as much as those acquaintances at whose houses he visits; at least, if he does not spend as much, or does not appear to spend as much, he is looked upon as a poor man by them, and by himself too. If he has ten thousand a year, some people will be disposed to pronounce him a wealthy man; but if he finds that he cannot maintain his rank in society without certain outgoings to the amount of fifteen or twenty thousand, in fact, he is in reality a poor man. But if, with his ten thousand a year, his necessary expenses, in order to make a sufficient shew of comfort amongst his neighbours, need not exceed five thousand, or half his income, why the same man in that case, not only by those neighbours but by himself as well, is looked upon as decidedly rich.

To the end, then, that every person should feel rich they ought to mix only with comparatively poor friends, since the comparison will tend to that effect; but there is that foolish vanity in human nature, which impels every one to aim at rising above his circumstances, to associate himself with richer people than he is, because then he thinks, that by identifying himself with such rich persons, the world will think him equally rich also. This course is merely a course of vanity, pride, and discontent; and in order to pander to these vile passions, and to maintain a respectability to which they are not entitled, they

will submit to privations at home in secret, they will run into debt, swindle or cheat their tradespeople, and often leave their children penniless when they die.

If people would only learn to be content with what they have, to banish this criminal ambition from their minds, and to be pleased to seek their associates amongst those whose fortunes are nearly on a par with their own, they would appear fully as respectable in the eyes of the world, they would be just as much beloved by those about them, and they would be a great deal happier in their own consciences.

The ambition which prompts us to rise by the activity of our talents, and by the industrious exercise of our natural powers, is an honourable ambition, highly praiseworthy, beautiful for our friends to look upon, and satisfactory for our own minds to contemplate. It is the ambition of pride, accompanied with idleness and envy which we condemn.

The poverty which is the most wounding, is, where people of rank and education, who, by their birth and former position, are entitled to move in a certain elevated circle, but who, through some untoward event have been deprived of the wealth which they once possessed, and who are consequently now enforced, with much inconvenience to themselves, to keep up former appearances as much as they can, that they may not relinquish powerful connexions which may still do them benefit; or else they are obliged to the painful humiliation of descending from that circle which is their right, and of putting up with that which is inferior and uncongenial.

Those who ruin themselves by their ostentation or extravagance, and bring such a reverse on their own heads thereby, only meet with their proper deserts, and scarcely deserve pity ; but it is where the change has been brought about by the villany of others, or even by misfortunes unforeseen and non-resistible,—where the persons brought down are totally incapable of assisting themselves by business in the great world, through reason of their former secluded, luxurious, or refined education ; here, in such a case as this, the deprivation becomes one of peculiar pain to the sufferer, and one deserving of sympathy from all others.

But Coleridge says, that for one instance of domestic unhappiness from limited circumstances, he could produce ten of wretchedness from other causes.

It cannot be doubted that poverty in the married state is a great sourer of the temper. The not being able to satisfy our wants, is a fact that will naturally enough excite the feeling of discontent within us, although, at the same time, we know that we are but aggravating the catalogue of our former sins by allowing such a wickedness to come over us. And when we become peevish by being unable to satisfy these wants, hoping that they be just ones, though they are not always so, nothing happens more readily than the venting of our ill-humour upon those persons who are nearest to us, and these persons are too often the different members of our household.

Where, however, the gods have united in the bands of holy matrimony two dispositions that accord well with each other, that agree with each other, that

possess a similarity of taste, or a similar turn of thinking, and that find pleasure in each other's society, the pinchings of want, or the pinchings of everything else, never can breed that domestic misery which otherwise is so likely to arise.

In the society of those we love, and who love us, we find alleviation to every vexation from without ; and it is only where people are not well matched, that the peevishness created by vexations from without are vented upon each other in the shape of hasty observations and short answers.

We are of opinion that the happiness of the married state depends more in the fact of having the tempers well matched, than in the possession of any and all other advantages besides, not excepting rank or riches. It is even true, that a decidedly bad temper, if only united to another that suits it, will produce harmony ; and it is also true, that a sweet disposition, if mated with one with which it does not accord, will produce misery, whilst the event would have been very different had it only found one which happened to chime in with its peculiar nature. Even two bad tempers coming together, will live in harmony, if their propensities, turns of thought, likes and dislikes, chance to conform themselves to each other ; whilst two abstractedly good ones, mild, gentle, lively, will be at everlasting jars, when it so befalls that they are not so matched.

This consentaneity is independent of riches or poverty, or anything besides, and will bring happiness when nothing else can.

Gentle reader, do you agree with us ?

But, from generalities, we will go to Gretna Green, and discourse of particularities.

Albeit marriages have been celebrated in this parish, and other parts of Scotland, after the mode here set forth, for an immense long space of time, yet the English have resorted thither more or less at different periods for convenience, as the constrictions of the laws of their country rendered agreeable : at one period, when the law of England was lenient, and gave facilities, they stood in no need of the usage of a foreign territory ; at another, when a new statute threw impediments in their way, they eschewed them, and fled over the Border. In the Commons' House of these realms, on the 17th day of March in the year 1835, Dr. Lushington spoke as follows on the subject in hand, to wit :—" By the ancient law of this country (England) as to marriages," said he, " a marriage was good, if celebrated in the presence of two witnesses, though without the intervention of a priest. But then came the decision of the Council of Trent, rendering the solemnization by a priest necessary. At the Reformation, we refused to accept the provision of the Council of Trent ; and, in consequence, the question was reduced to this state—that a marriage by civil contract was valid ; but there was this extraordinary anomaly in the law, that the practice of some of our civil courts required, in certain instances, and for some purposes, that the marriage should be celebrated in a particular form. It turned out, that a

marriage by civil contract was valid for some purposes, while for others, such as the descent of the real property to the heirs of the marriage, it was invalid. Thus, a man in the presence of witnesses, accepting a woman for his wife, *per verba de præsenti*, the marriage was valid, as I have said, for some purposes; but for others, to make it valid, it was necessary that it should be celebrated *in facie ecclesiæ*. This was the state of the law till the passing of the Marriage Act in 1754."

Now this Act of 1754 certainly had the effect of abolishing irregular and clandestine connexions; but, as it compelled all persons, of whatever denomination, with the exception of Jews and Quakers, to conform to the ritual of the Church of England, it laid an onerous constraint on those who dissented from that said church in opinion, a restraint which was only remedied by the law passed during the session of parliament in 1836. It was the old and natural feeling amongst the people, that the presence of a man in holy orders added a greater measure of sanctity to the ceremony, and tended to render the union more sacred and indissoluble; and this belief was the cause that set abroad the first framing of the new law.

The motives of this enactment were thoroughly moral and excellent; but like many other theories which are concocted in the snug study, it did not work out of doors practically exactly as its originators in-doors had intended. This is the case with many a beautiful theory, many a fine mechanical in-

vention, and many a scientifically constructed machine. Mathematical theorems, logical inductions, and sapient dogmata, are admirable to argue upon, and truly valuable as data for the purpose of working out obscure problems ; but unless these problems, apparently so perfect to look at, can be proved of practical utility when applied to men and things, in contradistinction to their being only speculations of the mind, they will never fulfil the praiseworthy objects of their framers.

Lord Hardwicke was, perhaps, the greatest magistrate that this country ever had,—says the Earl of Chesterfield of him.

He presided in the court of chancery above twenty years, and in all that time none of his decrees were reversed. This, most assuredly, is an irrefutable proof of the acuteness of his perception of consequences, of his rare discernment, and of his solidity of judgment, especially when we are further told that their perfect justice was never questioned.

Though avarice, further observes the Earl, was his ruling passion, he never was suspected of any kind of corruption ; an unusual and meritorious instance of virtue and self-denial, under the influence of such a craving, insatiable, and increasing passion.

He had great and clear parts ; understood, loved, and cultivated the *Belles Lettres*. He was an agreeable, eloquent speaker in Parliament, but not without some little tincture of the pleader.

Men are apt to mistake, or at least, to seem to mistake, their own talents, in hopes perhaps, of mis-

leading others to allow them that which they are conscious they do not possess. Thus Lord Hardwicke valued himself more upon being a great minister of state, which he certainly was not, than upon being a great magistrate, which he certainly was.

And it is a strange thing that men should, in this perverse manner, run away from the talents which nature has given them for their adornment, which they indeed would be, if they were only estimated according to their value, and cultivated and brought forth as they might and ought to be, in order to run after the talents which belong to other men, which again, in other men, are also held lightly of, that they themselves may peradventure essay to discover to the world the endowments which pertain to their neighbours. In this ungrateful manner, we most of us go on despising that with which we ourselves are gifted, just that we may satisfy a craving after that which is not our own. It is a most foolish and short-sighted policy too, if we only look into it; for it is certain that we are much more likely to excel in those paths of learning or genius for which nature at our birth destined us, than we ever can in those for which we have no innate ability; and therefore it is plain, that if we attempt to display the works for which we have no talent, and neglect those for which we have, we are going the very way to publish our weakness, rather than our strength.

Thus, he who is not born a poet, if he persists in writing metre, betrays his inability; and he who is not born with the pathetic soul of harmony, if he

tries to perform a piece of sentiment and feeling, immediately betrays his inability likewise ; whereas, had these two short-sighted geniuses reversed their attempts, and cultivated the real benefactions which Providence had conferred on them, they would probably both have risen to a high degree of celebrity

Lord Hardwicke's notions were all clear, though none of them were absolutely great ; but this very clearness ensured the success of his measures, after they had been planned by him.

Good order and domestic details were his proper department ; for he had not naturally a bold, ambitious, or stirring temperament. The great and shining parts of government, though not above his acuteness to conceive, were above his timidity to undertake ; and notwithstanding that he was a man of business for a long series of years, still, all this public training could not alter the original turn of his mind. A more ambitious spirit would possibly have made himself more conspicuous for the time, before the eyes of his country, but would scarcely have achieved greater good in the end.

By great and lucrative employments during the course of nearly one-third of a century, and by still greater parsimony, he acquired an immense fortune, and established his numerous family in advantageous posts and profitable alliances.

Though he had been solicitor and attorney-general, he was by no means what is called a prerogative lawyer. He loved the constitution, and maintained the just prerogative of the crown, but without stretching it to the oppression of the people.

He was mild and humane in his disposition, rather seeking to mitigate the doom of offenders, when he held their sentences in his own hands, than trying to turn the whole wrath of a jury, or the iron rigidity of the law, upon them ; so that when, by his former employments, he was obliged to prosecute state criminals, he discharged that duty in a very different manner from that of most of his predecessors, who were too justly called “ the blood-hounds of the crown.”

In his conversation he was communicative and instructive, because he was open, free, and unreserved ; in his manner he was pleasant and cheerful, because he was not a man of disappointments, as most of the inordinately ambitious are ; he was averse to great and noisy manifestations of display, such as some public characters do not shrink from, because he was retiring, quiet, and even timid on some occasions ; and, with the exception of avarice, which, however, in no wise extended to a discreditable verge, he was free from the tainture of any reprehensible vice.

This was Lord Chancellor Hardwicke ; a nobleman who, though he never could become a great minister, as he mistakenly essayed to become, nevertheless shone forth as one of the most astute magistrates that Britain ever produced.

Perceiving the anomalies in the old marriage law of England, and the moral evils attendant thereon, he turned his thoughts to the framing of something that might obviate these things, and bring a higher idea of sanctity on this institution so lightly held in estimation. As mentioned by Dr. Lushington, the

validity of the compact did not insist on the co-operation of a clergyman ; but, we have before observed, the ancient and rooted feeling of the people was, that the agency of a priest in holy orders added a more perfect measure of sanctity to the ceremony, and tended to render the union, especially amongst those who are much wrought upon by externals, more sacred and indissoluble ; and this belief was the cause of the Fleet marriages, and other clandestine marriages in London, of which a recent writer has given the following account :

“ Among the singular customs of our forefathers, one of the most remarkable was matrimony, *solemnized*, we were going to say, but the fittest word would be ‘ performed,’ by parsons in the Fleet prison. These clerical functionaries were disreputable and dissolute men, mostly prisoners for debt, who, to the great injury of public morals, dared to insult the dignity of their holy profession, by marrying in the precincts of the Fleet prison, and at a minute’s notice, any persons who might present themselves for that purpose. No questions were asked ; no stipulations made, except as to the amount of the fee for the service, or the quantity of liquor to be swallowed on the occasion. It not unfrequently happened, indeed, that the clergyman, the clerk, the bridegroom, and the bride, were drunk at the very time the ceremony was performed. These disgraceful members of the sacred calling had their ‘ plyers,’ or ‘ barkers,’ who, if they caught sight of a man and woman walking together along the streets of the neighbourhood, pestered them as the Jew clothesmen in the present day tease the passers-by in Holywell-Street, with solicitations, not easily to be shaken off, as to whether they wanted a clergyman to marry them.

“ One of the most notorious of these scandalous officials was a man of the name of George Keith, a Scotch minister, who, being in desperate circumstances, set up a marriage-office in May-Fair, and subsequently in the Fleet, and carried on the same trade which has since been practised at Gretna Green. This

man's wedding-business was so extensive and so scandalous, that the Bishop of London found it necessary to excommunicate him. It has been said of this person and '*his journeyman*,' that one morning, during the Whitsun holidays, they united a greater number of couples than had been married at any ten churches within the bills of mortality. Keith lived till he was eighty-nine years of age, and died in 1735. The Rev. Dr. Gaynham, another infamous functionary, was familiarly called the Bishop of Hell.

"Many of the early Fleet weddings," observes Mr. Burn, who has recently published a curious work on the matrimonial registers of these parsons, "were *really* performed at the chapel of the Fleet; but as the practice extended, it was found more convenient to have other places, within the rules of the Fleet, (added to which, the Warden was compelled by act of parliament not to suffer them,) and, thereupon, many of the Fleet parsons and tavern-keepers in the neighbourhood, fitted up a room in their respective lodgings or houses as a chapel! The parsons took the fees, allowing a portion to the plyers, &c.; and the tavern-keepers, besides sharing in the fees, derived a profit from the sale of liquors which the wedding-party drank. In some instances the tavern-keepers *kept a parson on the establishment*, at a weekly salary of twenty shillings! Most of the taverns near the Fleet kept their own registers, in which (as well as in their own books) the parsons entered the weddings." Some of these scandalous members of the highest of all professions were in the habit of hanging signs out of their windows with the words 'WEDDINGS PERFORMED CHEAP HERE.'

"Keith, of whom we have already spoken, seems to have been a barefaced profligate; but there is something exceedingly affecting in the stings of conscience and forlorn compunction of one Walter Wyatt, a Fleet parson, in one of whose pocket-books, of 1716, are the following secret (as he intended them to be) outpourings of remorse:—

" 'Give to every man his due, and learn y^e way of truth.'

" 'This advice cannot be taken by those that are concerned in y^e Fleet marriages; not so much as y^e Priest can do y^e thing y^t it is just and right there, unless he designs to starve. For by lying, bullying, and swearing, to extort money from the silly and unwary people, you advance your business and gets y^e pelf, which always wastes like snow in sun shiney day.'

“ ‘ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The marrying in the Fleet is the beginning of eternal woe.’

“ ‘ If a clerk or plyer tells a lye, you must vouch it to be as true as y^e Gospel, and if disputed, you must affirm with an oath to y^e truth of a downright damnable falsehood.—Virtus laudatur & alget^r.’* ”

“ ‘ May God forgive me what is past, and give me grace to forsake such a wicked place, where truth and virtue can’t take place unless you are resolved to starve.’

“ But alas, for the weakness of human nature ! This very man, whose sense of his own disgrace was so deep, and apparently so contrite, was one of the most notorious, active, and money-making of all the Fleet parsons. His practice was chiefly in taverns, and he has been known to earn nearly sixty pounds in less than a month.

“ With such facilities for marriage, and with such unprincipled ministers, it may easily be imagined that iniquitous schemes of all sorts were perpetrated under the name of Fleet weddings. The parsons were ready, for a bribe, to make false entries in their registers, to ante-date weddings, to give fictitious certificates, and to marry persons who would declare only the initials of their names. Thus, if a spinster or widow in debt desired to cheat her creditors by pretending to have been married before the debt was contracted, she had only to present herself at one of the marriage-houses in the Fleet, and upon payment of a small additional fee to the clergyman, a man could instantly be found on the spot to act as bridegroom for a few shillings, and the worthless chaplain could find a blank place in his Register for any year desired, so that there was no difficulty in making the necessary record. They would also, for a consideration, obliterate any given entry;

* “ ‘ On Saturday last a Fleet parson was convicted before Sir Ric. Brocas of forty-three oaths, (on the information of a plyer for weddings there,) for which a warrant was granted to levy 4*l.* 6*s.* on the goods of the said parson ; but, upon application to his Worship, he was pleased to remit 1*s.* per oath ; upon which the plyer swore he would swear no more against any man upon the like occasion, finding he could get nothing by it.’ ”—*Grub Street Journal*, July 20, 1732.

The sham bridegrooms, under different names, were married over and over again, with the full knowledge of the clerical practitioners. If, in other instances, a libertine desired to possess himself of any young and unsuspecting woman, who would not yield without being married, nothing was easier than to get the service performed at the Fleet without even the specification of names, so that the poor girl might with impunity be shaken off at pleasure. Or, if a parent found it necessary to legitimize his natural children, a Fleet parson could be procured to give a marriage-certificate at any required date. In fact, all manner of people presented themselves for marriage at the unholy dens in the Fleet taverns,—runaway sons and daughters of peers,—Irish adventurers and foolish rich widows,—clodhoppers and ladies from St. Giles's,—footmen and decayed beauties, soldiers and servant-girls,—boys in their teens and old women of seventy,—discarded mistresses, 'given away' by their former admirers to pitiable and sordid bridegrooms,—night wanderers and intoxicated apprentices,—men and women having already wives and husbands,—young heiresses conveyed thither by force, and compelled, *in terrorem*, to be brides,—and common labourers, and female paupers, dragged by parish-officers to the profane altar, stained by the relics of drunken orgies, and reeking with the fumes of liquor and tobacco! Nay, it sometimes happened that the 'contracting parties, would send from houses of vile repute for a Fleet parson, who could readily be found to attend even in such places, and under such circumstances, and there unite the couple in matrimony!

"Similar transactions were carried on at the Chapel in May Fair, the Mint in the Borough, the Savoy, and other places about London, until the public scandal became so great, especially in consequence of the marriage at the Fleet of the Hon. Henry Fox with Georgiana Caroline, eldest daughter of the Duke of Richmond, that at length,—not, however, without much and zealous opposition,—a Marriage Bill was passed, enacting that any person solemnizing matrimony in any other than a church or public chapel, without banns or licence, should, on conviction, be adjudged *guilty of felony*, and be transported for fourteen years, and that all such marriages *should be void*. This act was to take effect from the 25th of March, 1754."

Although Gretna Green was famous long before this period, as hereinbefore mentioned, yet the rigidity of this law did much toward driving people thither to evade its strictures. Gretna is much beholden unto my Lord Hardwicke; and although the act of 1836 aimed a fearful shaft northward, by the facilities it introduced into England, still the fame of Gretna is so well established, and there is so sweet a prejudice in its favour, that most romantic run-aways (for they are always romantic) would rather fly over the border and pay handsomely for it, than listen to the persuasion of an English magistrate, although he should promise to do the business as cheap as the barber promises to shave his customers—that is, for nothing, and a glass of drink into the bargain.

In the year 1771 Pennant passed through the parish, when on his Scotch tour; and he observes of it then:—"It is the resort of all amorous couples, whose union the prudence of parents or guardians prohibits." This was seventeen years after Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1754, and the place seems to have been in the full bloom of its celebrity.

Dr. Dibdin, when engaged in his "Northern Tour," also passed this way; and his remarks are worthy transcription here, both as illustrative of a true History of Gretna Green, (as this certainly is,) and as purveying palatable dainties for the reader's fancy. As he journeyed along the road which has been already described for the benefit of all lovers that have travelled that way and have never seen, for reasons given, to wit, that their eyes are always di-

rected in the carriage instead of out, but which both ourselves and Dr. Dibdin really did see, he speaketh of the driver's exultation as they neared the border, *videlicet*,—" 'Yon,' said the postboy, 'yon is Gretna Green.' We heard it without any extravagant emotion; and, although *January* and *May* may be often seen hastening thither in the same conveyance, with countenances not quite so composed as were our own, yet a father and a daughter would necessarily approach that far-famed spot, or rather mansion, impelled by curiosity alone, to hear of unions which are at once a disgrace to our laws and a scandal upon the moral character of *both* countries."

With much indignation he continues:—"The spot is the smuggler's cave, where no officer dare enter to seize the purloined property; it is the too frequent receptacle of passion without principle, and of cajolery without one spark of common sympathy." The honest indignation of Dr. Dibdin is not overwrought, notwithstanding it may appear somewhat vehement.

When young persons are urged thitherward by the uncontrollableness of an intense, generous, disinterested affection, some excuses may be pleaded for the step, although, of course, it cannot be strictly justified; but where it is made a convenience of, for the sake of sordid gain, without a spark of affection in the case, or where it is done through passion without principle, or cajolery without sympathy, or for selfish reasons in defiance of all moral rectitude, then, indeed, the act becomes one of inexcusable turpitude.

According to the ancient law, it was merely necessary that two persons who intended matrimony should mention their determination before two others, who acted as witnesses, and this simple form constituted a binding marriage. Thus it was, that the ease with which candidates for the holy estate could formerly compass their desire in England, rendered it not requisite that they should repair to Scotland or elsewhere.

But, we are told that this laical mode of procedure at last attracted the consideration of the clergy, as being too profane a way of celebrating an act of union which had been planned in Heaven and first instituted in Paradise. The Church, therefore, enjoined, that from thenceforward the intervention of one of their ordained body should be in no wise dispensed with, seeing that it would tend to the glory of God, and the good of their own souls.

We do not say that this change was brought about through the desire of the Church to usurp into its own hands a greater share of power over the people at large than it had previously possessed; but this decision, so strongly pronounced, and so positively enforced by the ecclesiastical powers of the time, certainly engrossed a far greater measure of domination over the laity, than before it could consistently lay claim to. The priesthood had established to its members the privilege of passing whithersoever they might choose, without demanding permission, and without taking denial; but it was now the duty of the people—a duty imposed with the most irresistible

authority—not to dare entering upon any new connexion in life without first obtaining the Church's approval and a priest's assistance.

As, at the Reformation, we abjured all allegiance to the Pontiff of Rome, we cast from us this law, along with a thousand others at one throw, and then it happened that the marriage ceremony merely became what is understood by a civil contract. But the notion that something of a holy, exalted, and religious nature pertained inseparably to this compact, was always so deeply enrooted in the minds of the English, that unless the active concurrence of some official could be procured, the consciences of the newly wedded pair could not rest assured that the blessing of Heaven was upon them.

Dr. Dibdin, after having visited Gretna, and having had an opportunity of seeing the real truth with his own eyes, and not resting upon the vague, popular, or false reports of others, expresses himself very warmly on the reprehensibleness of the system. To this he was led by his high sense of right and his detestation of wrong; and, in speaking of the chief establishment in the place, he exclaims:—

“It furnishes the knave with a cloak,” as when a crafty villain shall hasten thither bent on making some connexion of base self-interest, covered with the hypocritical vesture of a sincere and ardent lover—“and the assassin with a dagger,” as he indeed is an assassin who hardens the confidence of his innocent prey, “which may not be wrested from him till the death of his victim or himself.”

Certes, there is a great deal of veracity in this ; and we never will attempt to palliate the iniquity of many who repair to that village for such motives. In the next sentence he gives the lie direct to William Shakspeare.

“Of all species of daggers,” says he, “*speaking* daggers are the most terrible.”

We mean no disparagement to the worthy doctor ; at the same time, we must say, that we would rather he had not quoted Shakspeare, merely for the sake of contradicting him. Surely it is a dereliction of allegiance to the prince of writers, to whom all subsequent scribblers owe fealty, and whose subjects they become the moment they put pen to paper, to deny his words point-blank in so positive a manner.

“Speak daggers, but use none,” says the literary monarch ; and yet here is a citizen of the republic who tells us not to speak daggers, because speaking daggers are more terrible or deadly than any other daggers whatever ; and if he counsels us not to use speaking daggers, he infers that if we employ any, we shall do less evil by at once seizing upon coldsteel.

Of course he does not advise us to use metal weapons—he was too moral and amiable a man for that ; but he only assures us that a slanderous, sarcastic, and abusive tongue, can cut a deeper gash than ever a blade of well-whetted steel can do.

“Every day may receive a wound from its point,” he continues ; and we conclude that he refers to the possible recriminations that may be bandied backward and forward between man and wife, as soon as they

shall discover that they did a foolish thing by running blindly to Gretna ; and especially at such time when they begin to repent of the step. Then they will be awakened to the truth of our excellent motto ;—then they will see that those who “ marry in haste ” have afterwards to “ repent at leisure ; ”—and then they will cease never to cut and thrust at each other with poignant speeches.

“ Every day may receive a wound from its point, and every day induce the wish, or the prayer, that such wound may prove mortal ; but years succeed to years of bitter taunt and inhuman reproach.

“ Here, peradventure, is the fountain head, the Marah, of the bitterest waters that flow.”

In sober truth, these passages ought to be enough to terrify any elopers from running over the border ; the vivid picture of retribution which they so ardently essay to depict, might serve to recall lovers, labouring under the delirium of passion, to sense, to reflection, and to the determination of abandoning an enterprise so hazardous.

“ Behold this far-famed mansion,” he observes, when turning to the marrying hostelrie of which we have heretofore spoken, “ which, at least, has nothing in its exterior (except the chimneys) that can be called seductive. Its attractiveness is, questionless, from within.

“ No particular curiosity seemed to be excited, as, on turning a little out of our way to the right, we alighted at the door. The waiter’s movements were measured and sedate. The ‘ cunning man ’ had had

no *intimation* of our arrival. No messenger, mounted on quadruped, breathless from the swiftness of his pace, and dust and pebbles whirled around him, had *preceded*, to announce the almost instant arrival of the principal figurantes in the hymeneal scene. Nothing necessarily, of this kind, could precede our approach."

From these latter observations we learn, that it was then the usual custom with those who were hastening northward to perpetrate matrimony here, to despatch a precursor to Gretna Green, in order that he should have everything in readiness by the time the "principal figurantes" arrived; an arrangement designed to lose no time, and to secure the tying of the knot before any hostile parties could overtake them and stop the proceedings.

They manage these things better now: and from what we have already said in reference to the vigilance, activity, wide-awakeness, and preparedness of Linton and Co., the reader will understand, that to such a pitch of systematic readiness have they ordered things, that no precursor is necessary to hurry forward for the sake of making them trim and light their lamps.

We have shewn, that either John Linton in actual self, or else the true son of his body, always stands with his lamp full of oil and well replenished, ready for the coming of the bridegroom, at any hour whatsoever, whether of the day or of the night; and that such bridegroom could at any time get married in five minutes after his arrival, even although he had not sent any forerunner to prepare the blacksmith or other official for his coming.

In the days of which we speak, however, matters had not attained to that nicely-arranged pitch of clockwork to which they have latterly been brought ; so that, if it be that messengers were at all needed in Dr. Dibdin's day, they are scarcely requisite now.

"As we had no *business* to transact," he remarks very significantly, "the man quickly left us to ourselves, and to our own unassisted meditations ; not, however, without telling us to enter the apartment in which the nuptials of the Prince of Capua with Miss Smyth, and of Mr. Sheridan with Miss Grant, had been solemnized. The room had a very commonplace aspect in paper and decoration. There should have been a print of Wilkie's *Penny Wedding*, instead of *Tam O'Shanter* ; and another of *Two Tigers fighting* ! the latter, methinks, in many instances too metaphorically true."

We cannot agree that the *Penny Wedding* of Sir David would in any way give the visitor a correct idea of the economy or otherwise that attends those who marry at Gretna. It is the notion of hundreds who never went within a railroad day's journey of the parish, that it is the cheapest possible place for lovers to repair to ; and even those who have actually been in the house itself, have departed away with a greater thought of economy than is usually discovered to be the real truth by those who make the experiment : but when we come to treat of the expenses of marrying at Gretna Green—a topic so important as to demand a whole chapter to itself—we shall duly enlighten the astonished reader here anent.

CHAPTER VI.

Gretna Marriages—Wakefield and Miss Turner.

Now, reader, keep your temper, pray,
For here come chafing deeds :
Such deeds are not writ every day
For every one who reads.

HAD not the facts—most extraordinary, most astounding—which we are now about to enter upon, been brought before the public in the newspapers at the time of their occurrence, we should have hesitated to mention them here. As the case is, we reveal no secrets ; we only repeat what has been before told. The matter might have been allowed to die a natural death ; but how could we, as the professed historian of Gretna Green, omit noticing one of the most remarkable transactions that have ever taken place within its confines, whether in ancient or in modern times ? The historian who is true to his name, has no choice ; he must take up each event chronologically as it happened, and must know no partiality towards any individual or any party.

Had we been writing an epic, which we take to be a fiction in its details, we might have connived at, or glossed over, or omitted, painful facts, and in their

places have substituted the flights of an unfettered imagination, as it is, we are supposed to have no imagination ; but are in duty bound to plod onward in a direct line, whether our labours conduct us through savage wildernesses of vice, or through smiling gardens of virtue.

It was about an hour or so after high noon, on the 8th of March, in the year 1826, when a green carriage and four ran over the bridge that spans the Sark, through the turnpike-gate, after the manner of "a greased flash of lightning," too quick for Simon Beatie to stop,—and tearing up the hill "like mad," as Fanny Kemble says, made direct for the Hall. Here the postilions thrust their feet forward and threw their heads back, the consequence was, the curbs were pulled tight, and the horses stood still. Off they bounced, and ran to the carriage door. John Linton, landlord of the said hostelrie, came to the entrance to welcome the travellers to his house. They alighted and went in, but the room was small and cheerless.

"Frances, girl, go you up stairs and light a fire in the drawing-room directly," said John Linton.

But we are especially curious to know who came in the carriage—what are their names, and where—

Don't be in a hurry. The priest will be with them in a minute ; in fact, he had been sent for as soon as they arrived. They waited about twenty minutes or half an hour, and then, sure enough, "the parson, or whatever you call him"—"The blacksmith you mean," as Mr. Sergeant Cross exclaimed in court

during the subsequent trial—to wit, David Laing, came to wed them *in propria persona*. He looked as clerical as may be; and the timid ones felt a sort of sinking within them, as nervous people do upon such particular occasions. There were two gentlemen and a young—a very young lady; the bridegroom seemed old enough to be her father. But where is the prayer-book? Oh! never mind that; we shall do just as well without it here. Now, when they were all collected together—not under a groined roof before the altar—but in the room of a country inn, with tavern-keepers, postboys, and pedlars, all together in company, David Laing, the so-called blacksmith, (who never was a blacksmith,) asked them if they were willing to become man and wife. And before the witnesses there in presence, they answered they were willing.

And then they took a ring for the lady's finger—a wedding-ring. Now, it was David who put it on, “the parson, or what you call him.” But the ring is too large by a mile—it is too large for her finger; what is to be done? Oh! it will do till we get to Calais, we will buy a smaller one there. The fact is, there was no opportunity for taking a fit before hand, such were the circumstances of the case; it was quite a guess. It goes on very well, but the lady must take care and not lose it.

A piece of paper like a placard was then produced, at the head of which stood the royal arms of the united kingdom; and underneath were certain words printed, the lines of which were broken and inter-

rupted here and there by divers white spaces therein left unprinted. Now, in order to the thorough consummation of the ceremony, it was expedient that these spaces should be filled up with the several names of the parties joined together in (holy!) matrimony, and with the names of the witnesses.

“There is nothing more than to fill up these spaces,” said Laing; “there—just so. Now sir, you will put your name in the right hand corner; and, ma’am, you will put yours under it—so. The witnesses will put theirs in the other corner. It is the custom to join hands and salute. “Now,” cried David Laing, parson, merchant, day-labourer, pedlar, or what you will, “Now I declare you to be man and wife, ‘and so on,’ before these witnesses.” And the said David wished them well, and shook hands with them.

The signatures were Edward Gibbon Wakefield—Ellen Turner—Ellen Wakefield!

Then Mr. Wakefield asked of his priest what sort of wine John Linton might have in his cellar, and this presupposed by innuendo that he had before that time had a dip therein; moreover, this presupposition seemeth not to have been preposterous, because David answered that “there were three or four different sorts of wine, with the best of *shumpine*.” The bridegroom inquired which he would take; “I said *shumpine*,” answered David, “and we had a bottle of *shumpine*.” *

* See Laing’s evidence as reported in the account of the trial published by John Murray.

Dinner was then announced, so David Laing withdrew down stairs for half an hour or so, when he returned and finished the champagne, of which he was especially enamoured. Then came the day of reckoning—the moment of retribution. The following is a scattered extract from the published trial.

DAVID LAING *sworn.* Examined by MR. PARKE.

Mr. Laing, I believe you reside at Springfield?—Yes, I do. Near Gretna Hall?—Yes.

Do you recollect being sent for to marry a couple on the 8th of March last?—I do. (The trial being in March the year after.)

Did you go to Mr. Linton's house, at Gretna Hall?—I did. Who did you find there?—I found two gentlemen, as it may be, and a lady—one lady.

* * * * *

What did the gentleman want you to do?—He wanted me to do what I have done to many a one before.—Was that to marry him?—To join them together—to join hands, and so on.

* * * * *

Did you give a certificate of the marriage?—I gave the lady a certificate.

Did you get it filled up?—Yes.

Is that your writing?—(*handing the certificate to the witness.*)—That is my handwriting, sir.

Is that the signature of the gentleman and lady at the bottom?—Yes.

* * * * *

Did you marry them in the usual form in Scotland?—In the Scotch form.

Was there a ring produced?—There was, sir.

Was it put on the lady's finger?—It was.

By whom—by the gentleman?—By myself.

* * * * *

Did you ask the lady for anything?—I told the lady that I generally had a present from them, as it may be, of such a thing as money, to buy a pair of gloves.

Well, did you get any from her?—I did, sir ; she gave it me with her own hand ; but where the lady got it from I cannot say for that, you know.

What was it you got ?—A 20s. Bank of England note.

* * * *

Cross-examined by Mr. BROUGHAM.

You got some money as well as champagne for this job, did you not ?—I did.

How much ?—Perhaps £20 or £30.

Perhaps £40 ?—May be ; I cannot say to a few pounds.

* * * *

DAVID LAING *again called, and examined by Mr. PARKE.*

Mr. Laing, you say the marriage was in the ordinary form—the marriage ceremony was performed in the ordinary form ?—Yes, the old form of Scotland.

How was that done—was a prayer-book produced ?—No, there was not.

Mr. Brougham. Don't tell him what he is to say.

It was done in the old ordinary form of the church of Scotland, was it ?—Yes.

Cross-examined by Mr. BROUGHAM.

What do you mean by the ordinary form of the church of Scotland, when it had nothing to do with the church ?—That is the way it has been done for centuries.

It would occupy too many pages of this veritable history, if we were to make copious extracts, or to enter much into details ; wherefore, somewhat against our disposition at this present, we are enforced, through the suggestions of this reflection, to desist from quoting any more just now.

CHAPTER VII.

Gretna Marriages.—Wakefield and Miss Turner.

Now, if your choler grew full hot,
By reading chapter last,
We earnestly entreat you not
To let it rise so fast.

As most of the persons principally engaged in this conspiracy are still living, it is not without some hesitation that we enter upon an historical narrative of it, considering that their feelings might receive fresh wounds by the fact of bringing it before our readers in these pages. This is well so far: but in justification we plead, that by printing these things here we are not violating any secrecy, as most of the circumstances of the transaction appeared in all the public journals of the day, pretty freely commented on too, and the detailed minutes of the trial at Lancaster, in March 1827, were issued from Mr. Murray's press in the form of an octavo volume.

Mr. Turner, the father of the young lady, was a gentleman of fortune residing at Shrigley Park, his estate, near Macclesfield, in the county of Chester. Ellen, his daughter and only child, was at school,

under the instruction and care of the Misses Daulby at Liverpool, where she had been during the space of several years. Her schoolmistresses were personages of talent, good acquirements, and trust ; Miss Turner herself was an amiable, sensible, and agreeable girl ; approved of by her teachers, and loved by her youthful companions.

A plot was hatched for the purpose of marrying this young heiress. One of the contrivers was a lady, wife of Mr. Edward Wakefield, the father of Edward Gibbon ; but on this occasion she took her maiden name, Miss Davies.

In the autumn of 1825 she, the said Miss Davies so called, went over to Paris with her father Dr. Davies, (in which city, during a previous visit, she had been married,) and she now, for the first time, became acquainted with Gibbon Wakefield, her step-son, and his younger brother William, the principal actors on the arena which we are about to spread before you. Although they were veritable Englishmen, they chose to make the French capital their chief residence ; and there, either for their edification or their pleasure, or their fancy, they had established a little cot rie, or society,—together with some few selected acquaintances.

“ This conspiracy,” said Mr. Sergeant Cross, in his opening address at Lancaster Castle, “ was hatched in this little coterie at Paris ; there it was that the thing was first propounded. I don’t mean to say that at Paris they had conceived the foul design of carrying off the young lady by force, or committing

all the frauds that they have practised since, but there the plot was first hatched. In the course of a little while Dr. Davies and his daughter (still called Miss Davies), returned home to Macclesfield. And then Miss Davies began her operations at Shrigley, where Mr. Turner resides. Mr. Turner had resided there, I understand, for about eight years. The first thing that Miss Davies did, was to call upon a lady in the neighbourhood, who was a common acquaintance of both,—both of herself and of the family of the Turners; and she was particularly urgent to have an introduction to the family at Shrigley. She proposed to this lady, that the first time she made a visit there, she might have the pleasure of accompanying her in her carriage. The lady assented to this, and the visit was made at Shrigley. When the ladies got there, they saw Mrs. Turner, the mother of the young lady. Miss Davies made many inquiries about Miss Turner, whom, I believe, she had never seen, and of whom she knew nothing, except that she was an heiress to a large fortune. She said she should be particularly happy to have the pleasure of her acquaintance; she lamented that, as she was returned to school the day before, she must wait some time before she could have that pleasure; but begged, as soon as ever Miss Turner returned into the neighbourhood, she might have the pleasure of seeing her. This was the first step."

It was about the first of March 1826 that the two Messrs. Wakefield quitted France for England, apparently to look after their own affairs, and follow up

the prosecution of the plan only a little while before begun by the visit at Shrigley: they made their way to Macclesfield, and having arrived at that town, took up their abode in the house of Dr. Davies. This done, they diligently set about the work. In conjunction with their step-mother, they spent several days in paying judicious visits to certain neighbours whose interest might be favourable—in getting introductions, through her, to two or three likely families that lived within a short distance—in acquiring information touching the Turner family, by casual conversations with those on whom they called—and in taking rides about the estates at Shrigley, by which they had opportunities of personally reconnoitering the ground.

Miss Davies also learnt from Mr. Grimsditch (Mr. Turner's solicitor in Macclesfield), that both he (Mr. Grimsditch) and Mr. Turner were going to London on Monday the 6th of March, that identical day in which she was speaking to him being either Friday or Saturday, the 3rd or 4th, only two or three days before, and Sunday being one of the intervening days. This, then, was the favourable time; there was not a moment to be lost, although so rapid a course of proceeding might have come upon them more suddenly than might have been at first contemplated: the opportunity, however, of having these two formidable personages out of the way, was such as might not again happen for a length of time; and although they had scarcely been able, since their arrival, to mature their plans with much deliberation, the chance

before them must not be allowed to escape. They then, in this posture of affairs, came to a resolute decision, and determined to act at once.

Wakefield accordingly started to Liverpool, where the Misses Daulby's school was, taking with him one Edward Thevenot, a Frenchman, who acted as servant.

Wakefield having alighted, Thevenot alone drove up to the school, Miss Turner being in the house, and, according to his instructions, delivered the letter to Miss Daulby, of which the following is a copy :—

“Shrigley, Monday night, half past twelve, March 6th.

“MADAM,

“I write to you by the desire of Mrs. Turner of Shrigley, who has been seized with a sudden attack of paralysis. Mr. Turner is unfortunately from home, but has been sent for ; and Mrs. Turner wishes to see her daughter immediately. A steady servant will take this letter and my carriage to you, to fetch Miss Turner, and I beg that no time may be lost in her departure, as, though I do not think that Mrs. Turner is in immediate danger, it is probable she may soon become incapable of recognizing any one. Mrs. Turner particularly wishes that her daughter should not be informed of the extent of her danger, as, without this precaution, Miss Turner might be very anxious on the journey, and this house is so crowded, and in such confusion and alarm, that Mrs. Turner does not wish any one to accompany her daughter.

“The servant is instructed not to let the boys drive too fast, as Miss Turner is rather fearful in a carriage.

“I am, Madam, your obedient servant, JOHN AINSWORTH, M.D.

“The best thing to be said to Miss Turner is, that Mrs. Turner wishes to have her home rather sooner, for the approaching removal to the new house ; and his servant is instructed to give no other reason, in case Miss Turner should ask him any questions. Mrs. Turner is anxious that her daughter should not be frightened, and trusts to your judgment to prevent it. She also desires me to add, that her sister, or niece, or myself, should she continue unable, will not fail to write to you by the post.”

The unsuspecting girl was given up by Miss Daulby, who had no idea but that all was right and true : and, on getting into the carriage, she was forthwith driven to Manchester, accompanied only by the pseudo domestic, Thevenot.

Here, for the first time, she beheld the two Mr. Wakefields, who took occasion to introduce themselves, severally, at the inn in that town, whereat she had alighted. Edward Gibbon, the principal, regretted that her father, whose dear friend he was ! was not present to introduce him, so that he was under the necessity of performing that office for himself ; but excused this step by saying that Mr. Turner had sent him to her, with the request that she would accompany him to her father.

Surprised, uneasy, and anxious as she was, she gladly complied with a request so welcome ; she desired nothing more than to meet with those whom she knew and loved, since she was now surrounded only by strangers, a position to a girl of fifteen, both annoying and formidable.

To all her questions, however, as to where Mr. Turner was, she got evasive, perplexing, and unsatisfactory answers ; in fact, it was here necessary to work forcibly upon her fears and her credulity, as, indeed, the sequel will shew. Nor did the smallest part of the plot centre in the necessity of keeping her in ignorance of all that concerned her parents ; of making representations to her in which there was no truth, and in terrifying her mind by fabrications of distress recently come upon them. He took occasion

to tell her that her mother's illness was not the true cause of her being sent for (and here he was right), but that it was the unfortunate reverse in her father's affairs; in this way terrifying her with an appalling picture of ruin just lighted on the family. He said that Mr. Turner had lately lost much money through the failure of certain banks, which he duly specified; a piece of information that threw Miss Turner into a heart-rending state of sorrow and apprehension. Then, in order to excite the feelings of gratitude and obligation in the sensitive bosom of this young lady towards himself, he added, by way of consolation, that a generous-minded uncle of his had actually lent Mr. Turner the sum of sixty thousand pounds.

Mr. Wakefield, having now worked the young lady up to a pitch of extreme terror, set about to allay her apprehensions by suggesting how these immense evils might be averted: he said he had received a letter from Mr. Grimsditch, her father's lawyer, in which a plan was proposed and approved of by them, and which he would at once proceed to explain; and he also had to mention, that the liberation of the whole family from destruction, and the warding off of the peril which was about to overwhelm them, centered in herself entirely: in fine, that if she would only accede to the proposal propounded by her father and his lawyer, as set forth in the letter, she could be the means of restoring them all to prosperity and happiness.

The words in the opening speech of the trial, on the part of the prosecution, are these: "An expedient has been suggested," said the learned counsel,

imitating the language of Mr. Wakefield, "for relieving himself (Mr. Turner) and all your family from this distress, by Mr. Grimsditch, your father's confidential adviser, from whom I have received a letter ; and what do you think it is ? Why that you should marry me ! and then my uncle, if you do, will settle matters between you and me, and it will save your father from being turned out of doors, and all your family from destruction."

Miss Turner was perfectly astounded at this proposal ; and after she had been pressed about it several times, she very properly said, "I must see my papa first, before I can answer upon such a matter as that."

That Mr. Wakefield is a clever, shrewd, and acute man, the whole scheme and prosecution of this plot everywhere evinces. There was an immense deal to do ; a great many difficulties to combat ; a host of obstacles to overcome. There was as much ingenious and plausible fiction to invent as would fill a romance ; there were several episodes, as it were, besides the main fiction, which must be kept as reserves to fall back upon ; so that if any member or portion of the principal thread of the invention should miscarry, or fall under detection, one of these detached episodes of reserve might be brought up to carry on the business without an hiatus. It was an ingeniously contrived affair, and gone through likewise with equal skill : the only lamentation is, that the talent herein displayed was not devoted to a better purpose.

Miss Turner, as we have said, was taken in the

carriage from Liverpool to Manchester, and here wrought upon, as the reader knows. The rubicon now being passed, every expedient was urged that would consummate the scheme with all despatch. The design was, to marry her to the principal in the affair, according to the proposal pretended to have been set forth in the said letter; and to this end it was necessary to lose no time in getting to Gretna Green. They told her that Mr. Turner was flying from the sheriffs' officers, who were in pursuit of him in consequence of his reverse; that he was endeavouring to escape into Scotland, where they had no power to touch him; and that, as he had fled northward with this intention, they must follow him immediately, if she desired to see him as she wished.

This innocent child, suspecting no evil, and yearning after nothing so much as to throw herself into the arms of her parent in his affliction, and more especially so, as she had been given to understand that the power of delivering him from his enemies was in her own hands, readily and willingly consented to go anywhere in the world where her father might be; and with this ostensible purpose they quitted Manchester without delay. They travelled all that day from the morning they left the school, and all the succeeding night, nor stopped until about ten o'clock before noon of the next day, when they got to Carlisle.

Here they did not tarry much longer than to change horses; but here they practised upon their prey the most torturing scene in the whole drama.

On arriving at the inn the two Mr. Wakefields alighted, leaving Miss Turner in the carriage. At the door of the inn, and in the street, several idlers had collected, to satisfy their curiosity by looking at the strangers, as they generally do in most towns on similar occasions. These two, who accompanied her, either walked about within sight, or went into the house, sometimes near her and sometimes away, whilst she remained where she was. Although the servants of the establishment came and offered her their civilities, she rather preferred not to get out; nor indeed do her companions appear to have been very anxious that she should escape from the cage in which they had put her.

After some little tarrying, they came to speak to her at the carriage window, and poured forth into her affrighted ears such a torrent of afflicting news, as might well have overwhelmed the strongest mind; no wonder, then, that she was sorely troubled. They assisted each other, either separately, together, or corroboratively, in informing her that her father was really arrived before them, together with his friend Mr. Grimsditch; that he was endeavouring to effect his escape over the Border into Scotland from the bailiffs, who were searching for him; that, in fact, those very bailiffs were now standing round the door of the hotel, and that her papa was actually at that moment in the house, but dare not discover himself for fear of being taken.

Still working on her terrors and her affection towards her father, they went on to say, that they had

been into the inn, and had positively seen both Mr. Turner and Mr. Grimsditch concealed in a back-room, hid away in bodily fear; that they would come out to her if they dare: that they had twice that morning tried to escape into Scotland, but could not effect it on account of the sheriffs' officers: but that her father had sent her out a message, commissioning them to deliver it to his child, and which was, *that if she ever loved him she would not hesitate to accept Mr. Wakefield for a husband!*

Most indignant reader! art thou in an honest passion? art thou as justly furious at perusing this narrative as we are at writing it? We would venture a small hazard that thou hast not coolly gone through these pages with an indifferent mind.

It may not be uninteresting to add part of the evidence, as given by Miss Turner's own lips in the court of justice at Lancaster, in illustration of the above particulars. The court on this occasion was crowded to excess, since the most intense desire to hear the proceedings was manifested by both sexes and all conditions. Not only did a great many from the neighbouring English counties, and even from the more distant ones also, flock thither to be present on the occasion, but persons from Scotland likewise repaired to Lancaster, so great and so extended was the curiosity and the interest.

After several witnesses had been called, and minutely examined, amongst whom was her father, it was signified that Miss Turner's evidence would be required next. Infinite anxiety spread itself all

through the building at this moment ; the longing to see the youthful and innocent victim was intense ; the feelings of pity and commiseration burst from the hearts of every one towards her. Edward Gibbon Wakefield was seated at a short distance, where he was necessitated to withstand the gaze of a multitude that looked not kindly on him ; at the same time that certain others who had promoted the conspiracy, had sociably to undergo the like public exhibition.

At last Miss Turner appeared.

Every breath was stopped ; every tongue was hushed ; and every eye was fixed on one object.

Nothing so much engrosses the sympathies of the human heart as the contemplation of youth and purity being in imminent peril. Our whole soul is turned to that object ; our whole desire is for its rescue ; our whole yearning for its safety.

CHAPTER VIII.

Gretna Marriages.—Wakefield and Miss Turner.

The actors and the stage revealed
The devil wide awake,
His imps walk with him o'er the *field*,
And follow in his *Wake*.

It is a formidable thing to be an object on which a thousand eyes are intently fixed, all at the same moment.

And yet, pray let us ask, why should it be thus formidable? Can a thousand eyes do us more injury by being fixed upon us, than a single pair; or than no eyes at all? Assuredly not. If we have done no wrong, and if we possess a clear conscience, what signifies who looks at us, or how many, or how intently?

The fiction of the evil eye has been exploded. It was once believed that rays were emitted from the eye, like rays out of the disc of the sun; and that they fell upon the object towards which that eye was directed: and then it was thought, furthermore, that if one person looked at another with hatred, revenge, or other malignant passion, the rays

so emitted were of a deadly nature, and could work injury to the person on whom they fell. The dread of the evil eye, therefore, in a superstitious, and credulous, and ignorant age, was often very extreme in those who fancied they were the object of its gaze; and he who was looked upon by a thousand eyes at once, peradventure thinking that many of them might be the malignant eyes of his enemies, might well cower under the infliction.

But now we know better. We know that rays do not proceed from the eye, and therefore we know that eyes cannot cast any injury upon us merely by being directed towards us: and yet, in spite of knowing this and feeling this, we cannot place ourselves before a hundred spectators without finding our courage shaken when we become the object of their fixed look.

Why is this, when our conscience is clear and unsullied, and pure? We believe it to be a sensation of modesty, which is a component of human nature, but which is of various degrees of intensity in different individuals—some being more modest than others. We may just as well ask why a virtuous and innocent girl blushes when she is looked at, or spoken to—why she should be conscious of shame when she has done no wrong? It is an inherent modesty which heaven has implanted in our natures, doubtless for some wise purpose. We are not quite satisfied that the operations of mesmerism are not referable to this fact in a great measure; and that the timid, modest, and shame-faced, will

be much more readily wrought upon than the fearless, brazen, and bold.

The feeling of modest shame is more powerful in youth than it is in the period of more advanced age; because then our strength of mind to overcome it, our usage in the world, which makes us familiar with publicity, and our powers of reflexion, to reason down the rising blush, are by no means so strong as they are when we are a little older and more experienced. Nature then shows herself in her true colours—the modest reveal their timidity, and the bold their effrontery; but afterwards we become hardened to innocent shame, do not betray our internal emotions so readily, and more completely acquire what is termed “a command of countenance.”

For one so young, so unused to appear in public on any occasion, and especially on an occasion so much concerning herself, and one which called the gaze of hundreds upon her, and for one of her sex, naturally averse to publicity, her self-possession, her collectedness, her presence of mind, and her courage, were remarkable to a degree, and prepossessed every heart favourably towards her the moment she came forward. Part of her evidence ran as follows:—

MISS TURNER *sworn.* Examined by MR. SERGEANT CROSS.

Miss Turner, I believe you are the daughter of Mr. Turner of Shrigley?—I am.”

[It would occupy too much space were we to make our extracts copious: we will, therefore, only keep to the point in hand.]

What was the communication that William Wakefield made to his brother?—He said he had seen my papa at Carlisle.

And what else?—And that Mr. Grimsditch was with him.

Go on, if you please?—That he was there concealed in a small room at the back of the house.

Go on, if you please?—That he had made two attempts that day to cross the Border, and could not.

What Border was that?—The Border between England and Scotland.

Did he say anything more had passed in the room with your father and Mr. Grimsditch?—He said the persons whom I had seen round the carriage door were sheriffs' officers.

Sheriffs' officers! what about?—In search of my papa.

Was anything more said about Mr. Grimsditch?—That Mr. Grimsditch had entreated Mr. William Wakefield would not stop in the room, or they should be discovered.

Well, anything else?—And that he had taken him by the shoulders and turned him out of the room.

Did he bring any message from your father to you?—He said that my papa requested, if I ever loved him that I would not hesitate.

By Mr. Baron Hullock. Hesitate to do what?—To accept Mr. Wakefield as a husband.

What did you say to that?—I consented.

What induced you to consent?—The fear that if I did not my papa would be ruined."

Surely this course of proceeding towards a youthful damsel was somewhat novel, in order to obtain her consent to a marriage. And he, too, who played the principal rôle, a widower with a family of children! "*The fear that if I did not my papa would be ruined!*" a sweet consentment, in sober sooth, for a lover to win from his bride: a disinterested lover of Shrigley Hall, and papa's broad acres. Well has it indeed been said, that money is the root of all evil.

One short extract more and there an end.

Cross examined by MR. SCARLETT.

Will you allow me to ask you two or three questions: I sha'n't trouble you at any length. You went through the form of ceremony of marriage in Scotland, did you not?—Yes.

And you had a ring?—Yes.

The ring was too large for you I believe, was it not?—It was rather.

Another was bought for you at Calais, afterwards, I believe?—Yes.

When we have to explain the manner in which the ceremony is performed at Gretna, we shall have to recur to the minutes of this trial, in the evidence of David Laing, “The blacksmith,” so called (who never was a blacksmith); but as far as regards the present, we desist from transferring to our pages any more, thinking that we have given enough to serve every purpose of information.

We have already been present at the precipitate arrival of this party at Gretna Hall, (when we commenced the history of this particular case of abduction,)—we were present at the execution, whereat there was no need of a wedding garment,—we have shewn how that they sat down to dinner after it was over, and how the aforesaid David, marrier-general to all comers, relished his champagne; and it only now remains to shew how the young lady was hurried away thence by these miscreants all through England, from the extreme north even to the south, and then across the Channel to France, incessantly travelling for days and nights, and having

no time allowed her for rest, for sleep, and scarcely for refreshment.

This over, we think the reader will be satisfied.

It will not appear astonishing that the party should hastily depart from Gretna Green, and fly to some sanctuary beyond the reach of English pursuit. This they did without long tarrying, when they had handsomely fee'd the various functionaries at the Hall; and directing their course for London, they passed again through Carlisle, Penrith, Manchester, &c., and arrived in the great metropolis without accident or hinderance.

All along the road, as they proceeded through the various towns, the same conduct towards Miss Turner was sedulously kept up as had been previously maintained, with regard to her father and his affairs,—the same statements were sent forth, and the same suspense and uncertainty inflicted upon the poor girl.

In those who trade for lucre, there is no feeling—no sympathy—no consideration—self is the only thing cared for. The crosses, poverty, or reverses of others pass unheeded, so that such mishaps do not retard the progress of self. What if others weep—what if others hunger—starve—die? the sordid worshiper of self does not feel it. Why? Even because perchance those others may hunger, starve, or die to enrich him.

The fugitives immediately hurried their young female companion out of London to the coast; and there, taking the packet, they got to Calais.

Here they appear to have been a little less appre-

hensive ; either resting on the hope that their retreat would remain undiscovered, or else fancying that pursuit could not reach them beyond the straits—but in both these suppositions they were mistaken.

Miss Daulby had not been very long deprived of her young charge before there arose in her mind certain suspicions that all was not right ; and as she received no account from Miss Turner of her safe arrival at home, and no news or letter from any other persons touching her, those suspicions, after they had been once started, every hour gained ground rapidly upon her.

In this state she continued for a time, tossed about “upon the troubled sea of uncertainty,” as some gentle poet touchingly saith ; one while giving herself up to fear, which, as John Locke sagaciously tells us “is an uneasiness of the mind upon the thought of a future evil likely to befall upon us,”—her uneasiness being the dread of loss of her good name in the care of her establishment, and loss of pupils in consequence ;—and at another, clutching to her the sweet passion of hope, which, as the same logician sets forth, “is that pleasure of the mind which every one finds in himself (or herself) upon the thought of a profitable future enjoyment of a thing which is apt to delight,”—to wit,—that peradventure, she should receive such good news shortly as would sweep away her former fears, and assure her that all was well, and she might rest at ease.

When, however, it got bruited about by the philanthropy of her neighbours, that, forsooth, a young

lady had been stolen away from her protection, most likely through her carelessness, or lack of caution, or unfitness for her calling ; and when some said, " I am sure I would never send *my* daughter to such a school," and when others (who were too poor to pay the half-year's bill) cried out vociferously, " Well, I think it is time I take my daughter away—she sha'n't stay there,"—then, indeed, this worthy teacher of archery to the young idea, conceived another passion within her bosom, *videlicet*—" an uneasiness of the mind upon the thought of a good lost, which might have been enjoyed longer, or the sense of a present evil ;"—which passion, in the vulgar tongue, goes by the common name of " sorrow."

The " good lost," as mentioned above, was the young lady herself—or, under correction, the fair round sum she yearly received with her ; or, to do her justice, the reputation of her school, touching which, she put herself into an infinite fluster :—a good " which might have been enjoyed longer," that is, if the misfare had not befallen. So, also, " the sense of the present evil " was neither more nor less than the reflecting on these sad matters.

Unable to control these passions any longer, together with one or two others ycleped " suspense " and " impatience," she resolved to journey forthwith to Shrigley, and ascertain the real truth ; for suspense and incertitude are worse than death ten times over.

When she had arrived there and stated her case, there was, indeed, a fine to-do in that house ; the brooks were augmented with tears, the winds with

sighs, and the thunders of heaven with oaths ten fathom deep. The inquiries were minute, the lamentations great and loud, the conjectures many, and the resolutions various.

At last, when they had sufficiently cooled down into a state of reflection, preparations were made for instant pursuit. Having, from some hasty investigations, obtained a clue as to the direction which the abductors had taken, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimsditch, and others, started for London, whereunto all rogues repair, whatever honest men may do; here they traced them to the coast, and fled onwards in search.

Mr. Turner was so overcome by the shock, so overwhelmed at the loss of his only hope, his only heir, his only pride, his only offspring, that he was seized with an ailment so piteous as to prevent his continuing the journey; he could go no further—he was stricken down: wherefore he was left under the care of certain medical men, whilst the others made the best of their way to France.

The rencontre here was belligerent to a degree. The young lady was secured in another room of the hostel to which they had been traced, whilst Wakefield resolutely fought for the retainment of his bride, face to face with his opponents. He, at first, obstinately refused to give her up, asserting his superior right to her over her father or any one else, as being her husband; but they, on the other hand, assured him that he was *not* her husband; for since he had used deception, intimidation, and falsehood in obtaining her, the marriage was illegal, and, indeed, was

no marriage at all. The battle raged long and fiercely: he, unwilling to be convinced that the marriage was void; and they "quoting William and Mary upon him until he was tired of their majesties' names," in proof of the truth of their assertion.

They also demanded to see Miss Turner—to have her produced from her place of concealment—that they might learn from her lips the particulars of a proceeding so strange and so iniquitous. This he was reluctant for a long time to submit to, seeing that a host of evils to himself, and the probable annihilation of his whole scheme, now so nearly perfected, would ensue thereon. But there was no help.

He was constrained to promise that he would go and fetch her; they would not suffer him to be in the room during the interview, but granted that he should come in amongst them after she had told them the truth unrestrained by his presence.

A few words served to convince her of the peril wherein she had stood, and to open her eyes to the conduct of the man who had thus stolen her. She was told that the marriage was deceptive and illegal; and when the real state of the transaction rushed upon her, she turned from him in horror and disgust, and threw herself into the arms of her uncle, who was one of those who had come over for her.

She was then taken back to England, despite his every attempt to retain her, and restored to those who were bewailing her loss.

The following letter from Mr. Edward Gibbon Wakefield to his brother William, which, by the by,

was never intended to meet the public eye, was written soon after the rumpus at Calais; and is curious enough to amuse the reader, if the preceding narrative may have done so.

Calais, Thursday.

MY DEAR WILLIAM.—I write in haste to save the post, only to give you news, and nothing else. Mr. Robert Turner, Mr. Critchley, and Grimsditch, arrived by the packet to-day, with warrants, &c. I soon knew what they were come for, but would not attempt to avoid the question. Shortly I saw them, and found that, with Ellen's consent, they could take her away. They insisted on seeing her: I could not object. She *told all*, and was anxious to leave me, *when she knew all*. I expected as much, and therefore made a merit of necessity, and let her go. They tried to take me, but for that they were on the wrong side of the water, as I well knew. However, I offered to go with them, but begged Mr. Critchley to believe that I would be in England to answer any charge, as soon as I had seen my children and settled my affairs. Nothing could be more hostile than the whole spirit of their proceedings. I could readily have escaped with Ellen, but their account of Mrs. and Mr. Turner's state, made such a step impossible. I made, and gave in writing, a solemn declaration, that she and I have been as brother and sister. How this may affect the validity of the marriage I know not, nor could I raise the question: I was bound, and it was wise, to give some comfort to Mr. Turner.

I am now in a stew about *you*, and wish that you were safe. There can be no doubt the law can punish us. For myself, I will meet it, come what may; but if you are able, get away as soon as possible: I do not care a straw for myself. The grand question now is—is the marriage legal? They all said no, and quoted William and Mary upon me till I was tired of their majestics' names. Pray let me know that. But I write to Nunky. Do not stay—you can do no good. I shall go to England as soon as possible; upon this you may depend. I shall not write again till I hear from you, for fear of accidents. Percy came with the trio, and has witnessed the row. We start early in the morning. Pray write, but say nothing to anybody. I am the person to speak.

Yours ever,

E. G. W.

Thus the matter ended on the other side of the Channel; but the reckoning was not paid—the day of retribution was to come.

The marriage at Gretna took place on Wednesday, March the 8th, 1826; she was rescued at Calais on the 15th of the same month, having been married (so to speak) for the space of seven days; and the trial at Lancaster came on the 23rd of the same month also, and in the subsequent year, 1827.

The indictment set forth:—"That, on the seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, at Manchester, in the County of Lancaster, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, * * William Wakefield, * * Edward Thevenot, * * and Frances, the wife of Edward Wakefield (Miss Davies), * * not having any right or authority whatever to take and convey the said Ellen Turner out of or from the possession, and against the will of the said Margaret Daulby, &c., unlawfully, wickedly, and injuriously, and for the sake of lucre and gain, did conspire, &c., by divers subtle stratagems and contrivances, and by false representations, unlawfully to take and convey, and to cause and procure to be taken and conveyed, the said Ellen Turner, then and there being a maid unmarried, and within the age of sixteen years, to wit, of the age of fifteen years, from, and out of the possession of, and against the will of, the said Margaret Daulby, &c., and unlawfully to cause the said Ellen Turner, &c., to contract matrimony with the said Edward Gibbon Wakefield:"—and so on.

Throughout the whole of the proceedings, the

learned lawyer was not very reserved in the severity of his epithets and nouns, as applied to one and all of these conspirators. Certainly, he spoke very freely, to say the least of it; and appeared nothing fearful of action for libel by so doing.

By the statute of 3rd of Henry VII. cap. 2., it is enacted, "That whereas women having substances, or being heirs apparent, &c., for the lucre of such substances, have been oftentimes taken by misdoers, contrary to their will, and after married to such misdoers, or to other, by their assent, or defiled:—what person or persons, from henceforth, that taketh any woman, *so against her will unlawfully*, such taking, procuring, or abetting to the same, and also receiving, wittingly, the same woman so taken against her will, knowing the same, shall be felony," &c.

And the crime of felony in those times was punished with a severity which not only showed how carefully the law lent its aid to the protection of youthful heiresses, but also proves in how great abhorrence that wretch was held who would abduct one away from her home.

In subsequent reigns the statute underwent certain modifications, but the offence was still punishable according to its heinousness.

The existing state of the law was thus explained to the Court by Mr. Sergeant Cross:—"By the statute law of England, carrying away a young female under the age of sixteen, *whether with her own consent or not*, from the custody of her parents or instructors, and afterwards marrying her, *whether*

with her own consent or not, is a high misdemeanour, that subjects the offender to five years imprisonment, and a fine at the discretion of the Court ; and subjects the female herself, if she consents to such a marriage, to the forfeiture of her inheritance as long as the husband whom she has chosen shall live."

The words in italics we have laid particular stress on, that the attention of our youthful ladies patronesses may be more especially attracted thereto ; wherefore, we pray ye to lay up the above well in your memories, as a wholesome check against the temptations of some agreeable villain, who would whisper *elopement* and *Gretna Green* in your ears.

Whatever befalls, don't say we didn't warn you.

Alas ! how much more easy it is to give advice than to receive it.

Who was that humble and excellent divine that used to exclaim from his pulpit to his congregation, "Do as I say, but not as I do ;" well knowing his own weakness as being a morsel of human nature, yet wherewithal passing humble in confessing that it was difficult indeed to act up to the good advice which he could give.

Shall we gravely advise you never to fall in love at all, by way of being on the safe side of the question ? Nay, that we will not do : fall in love by all means, only do it discreetly and wisely. But it is hard to be wise in this matter, since passion ever sways us more than sober reason ; and some one demands, "Who ever loved and was wise ?" as we have heretofore said.

It is below, and up to the age of sixteen, that the statute as above propounded refers; that is, sets forth how you may be persuaded to wed as with your own consent; yet, to run upon destruction, to ruin your husband, and to forfeit your inheritance; after that age this law does not affect you, but leaves you to the guidance of your own discretion, a stable guidance assuredly, and one of which you all are possessed long before you attain to those years.

Some two months after the trial, the prisoners were transferred from Lancaster Castle to London; and the final sentence was passed upon them in the Court of King's Bench, in May 1827. "An affidavit," we are further told, "on the part of Edward Gibbon Wakefield was read, alleging the imprisonment he had already suffered, and the expense entailed upon him by the prosecution, (£3,000*l.*) in mitigation of punishment."

Whether this affidavit effected anything in his behalf or not, certain it is, he was sentenced to three years durance in Newgate prison; and his brother William suffered incarceration within the walls of Lancaster Castle for an equal period of time; a lenient punishment, indeed, for the injury they had done.

By way of diverting his mind, and drowning the dismalness of his gloomy cell, in Newgate, he amused himself by covering the walls with maps of various parts of the world; and here he speculated on such

plans of colonization as he has been more deeply engaged in since his liberation.

In commenting with due severity on Edward Gibbon Wakefield's case, the Edinburgh Review makes some sound remarks on the Scottish marriage of English parties.

"It seems a most extraordinary posture of things," says the Northern Writer, "that while our neighbours have guarded, by extreme precaution, against an improvident contract on so important a matter, all those precautions should be evaded or frustrated by so easy an expedient as a journey to Scotland—no difficult thing to undertake from the Land's-End, but easier than going to the county town, in the provinces bordering on Scotland.

"By the Marriage Act, ever since the reign of George the Second, a person under the age of one and twenty can only marry after public proclamation in church for three successive Sundays, and consequently a fortnight is given for notice to parents or guardians, unless their consent is formally interposed, in which case the marriage may be immediately celebrated by licence. Moreover, the solemnity must be performed by a regular clergyman in orders. To the English it has appeared that this is by no means too complicated a machinery for effecting so important a purpose; or that greater facility could safely be given for entering into so weighty and so indissoluble an engagement. The more delay, they say, the more time for reflection, the better at a time of life when the passions are so much stronger than the judgment; and the interposition of parental authority and advice is the mildest and most appropriate check that could be devised upon the imprudence of youth.

"With us, in Scotland, however, the law is wholly different. The civil law doctrine prevails here in its full force. Mere consent of parties, deliberately given, is alone sufficient to constitute a marriage, without a moment's delay, without any consent of parents or guardians, or any notice to them; add to which, that a mere promise of marriage, followed by consummation, or a living together as man and wife, without either formal consent or promise, amount also to a marriage, being deemed by operation of law to involve presumptions of consent.

"We speak with all reverence of our country's institutions ; and we know that in point of fact less evil has practically resulted from them than might have been apprehended ; but we must admit that it is not unnatural for our neighbours to wonder how such a law can prevail in a civilized state of society, where marriage is, as it were, the very corner stone of all the social edifice. A person under twenty-one years of age cannot sell or pledge, or in any way burden an acre of his land ; but a boy of fourteen, and a girl of twelve, may unite themselves, on an acquaintance of half an hour, indissolubly for life. Nay, the heir to vast possessions and high honours may be, at that tender age, inveigled by a strumpet of thirty, into a match, which, by its consequences, shall carry to the issue of her bed all his castles and dignities. This seems strange ; and it is impossible to deny that it does expose our youth occasionally to most tremendous hazards. We have already said, however, that the practical evils are far less than might be expected, owing, perhaps, to the characteristic caution of our race ; and we might say, that there are hazards and evils in the opposite system, which we, in our turn, wonder a little that the English should overlook. We do not propose, however, on this occasion, to enter into any comparison of the two laws ; but merely to consider the consequences that have arisen from their conflict, and from what we cannot but think the inconsistent principles upon which their respective pretensions have on different occasions been adjusted.

"The law of England, by allowing the validity of Scotch marriages between its own domesticated subjects, plainly renders that law quite nugatory, wherever there is a temptation to evade its enactments, that is, wherever the mischief exists, to punish which they were devised. The tradesman and his wife, and their children, are married regularly by banns ; the person of maturer age and easy circumstances weds by licence ; the consent of parents or guardians is given as a matter of course where the match is prudent. But wherever the parties ought not to marry—where there is disparity of years, or of station, or of fortune, then the law becomes a dead letter : these being the very cases for which its aid was wanted, and to regulate which its provisions were contrived—provisions, *in every other case*, rather incumbrances than advantages. The journey to Scotland is plainly a mere fraud upon the law of England—an escape from its penalties—an eva-

sion of its authority. The residence in Scotland, which allows the Scottish law to regulate the contract as *lex loci*, is hardly colourable, or rather, it is no residence at all. The parties may remain within our territory during the half minute necessary to utter the words of mutual consent, and then recross the line and re-enter England. Straightway they are married to all intents and purposes ! and all English rights, from the succession to a dukedom down to the inheritance of a cabbage-garden, become irrevocably affected by the solemnity, or rather the mockery, enacted in Scotland. No matter how *illegal* the whole affair may have been—for it is illegal even in Scotland, and the parties are liable to censure, and strictly speaking, even to punishment ; but this is never inflicted, unless a clergyman most needlessly lend his aid ; and whether inflicted or not, the marriage stands good. “ *Fieri non debuit, factum valet*,” says the law of Scotland ! “ *Contractus habent vigorem secundum legem loci*,” echoes the English law ! with a view to frustrating its own most specific and positive enactments, upon the most important of all subjects.

“ Now, that such a state of things is eminently pregnant with inconvenience and mischief, needs hardly be stated ; it obviously must be so. That it is peculiar to the Law of Marriage, is equally certain. In no other matter do our municipal laws suffer themselves to be evaded. A man cannot get into a boat at Dover, for the purpose of escaping the stamp laws, by drawing a receipt, which may be afterwards available in an English Court of Justice. He cannot go to Scotland and execute a will of lands in England, without three subscribing witnesses. If he could, whatever fraudulent devices any one had to set up, would be alleged to have been made at Gretna Green, and the check afforded by examining attesting witnesses, would no longer exist ; and we should hear of Gretna Green wills to defraud the heir-at-law just as we now do of Gretna Green marriages, to defeat the marriage act immediately, and in their consequences to affect heirs-at-law likewise. Is, then, the subject of marriage to be the only one where the Law of England permits the most gross and barefaced evasion of its provisions, merely because this is of all contracts the most momentous in itself, and the most grave in its consequences ?

CHAPTER IX.

Ancient Marriage Customs.

Some ancient marriage customs cited,
Some modern customs shown,
Some evil customs not yet righted,
Some good ones used and known.

WE hope it will be long before any other idea than that a halo of religious sanctity hangs over the marriage ceremony in Great Britain, will pervade the national mind. That marriage should be looked upon in a sacred light, and not merely as a legal contract, by which one person is bound to another for life, as an apprentice is for seven years, is especially desirable to the unthinking, the volatile, and the rash, to say nothing of the vicious and the wicked. Many a thoughtless person will unreflectingly enter upon a civil contract, however binding, (and peradventure to their sorrow afterwards,) when, on the other hand, had the sanctity of the church hovered like a descending dove over the contract, that same person would have hesitated to proceed thus blindly. And then, from hesitating to go forward with precipitancy, time would be given to

reflect, and reflexion might bring reason, and reason might save that person from doing an action which would be the misery of all after years, had it been done. Even the greatest sinners that tread this earth under foot, that desecrate the sabbath, or live a life of blind iniquity, still feel an awe when they enter a church to go through the ceremony of a binding obligation. It is a fact, that many an atheist, who knows not what the words "God," or "religion" mean, or who will never scruple to tell any the most horrible lie to suit his purpose, will, nevertheless, shun repeating the same thing, either before the altar, or with his right hand placed upon the bible; and yet this atheist openly derides and disbelieves every word that the bible contains, and always says in his heart, "There is no God." Even to such a one as this, there is an indescribable, inscrutable, and mysteriously dreaded something connected with the sound of that word religion, which all his disbelief cannot overcome, and which all his philosophy cannot persuade away. If the idea of a God be not innate, then we will give way to Locke, and concede that we are born without ideas, of a truth: but if the most barbarous, ignorant, neglected, or abandoned that ever stepped on British soil, have not clear notions on this subject, still, there never was a person, however benighted, but owned to a superstitious fear of some undefined power beyond the world superior to himself and his control; and this is the crude commencement of belief.

The love of being united beneath the groined ceiling of Mother Church, is a taste so intimately belonging to the public mind in this country, that we trust no new law, enacted for the convenience of sectarians, will be able to banish it from the preference of those who, not being sectarians, are not necessitated to relinquish it. To the thoughtless it makes the tie more sacred and more serious, and hence is not so likely to be lightly undertaken; and when undertaken, not so lightly held in estimation.

Previously to the statute 26 George II. c. 33., the simple fact of two persons associating together for a time, constituted a marriage in this country, and was so recognized by the common law: this statute, however, was enacted to ensure a greater degree of security to the parties contracting than such a negligent practice enforced, to secure their several interests with greater certainty, and to remove the evils arising out of such negligence. This statute, notwithstanding, says Richard Mathews, Esq. of the Middle Temple, barrister at law, and so forth, "committed the palpable error of permitting the solemnization of matrimony only by the clergy of the established Church, *in facie ecclesiæ*; an error which has been handed down through a series of enactments to the present time, and only now about to be abrogated." That is to say, abrogated by the recent act of 6 & 7 William IV. c. 85.

Albeit this recent law does not compel persons, as heretofore by the former compelled, to repair to

the altar ; still there is something about the ceremony so imposing and so solemn, that it is difficult for the mind to be persuaded to consider it in any other light than in a religious one. "The opinions which have divided the world," says another man of law, "or writers, at least, on this subject, are generally two ;—it is held by some persons that marriage is a contract merely civil ; by others that it is a sacred, religious, and spiritual contract, and only so to be considered." According to my Lord Stowell, it is neither one nor the other, or both ; it is more than either, or peradventure more than both. "According to juster notions of the nature of the marriage contract, it is not *merely* a civil or religious contract ; at the present time it is not to be considered as, originally and simply, one or the other."

Again, in another place, says the same noble and learned lord :—"In the Christian church, marriage was elevated in a later age to the dignity of a sacrament, in consequence of its divine institution, and of some expressions of high and mysterious import respecting it contained in the sacred writings. The law of the church—the *canon* law—(a system which, in spite of its absurd pretensions to a higher origin, is, in many of its provisions, deeply enough founded in the wisdom of man), although, in conformity to the prevailing theological opinion, it revered marriage as a sacrament, still so far respected its natural and civil origin as to consider, that where the natural and civil contract was formed, it had the full essence of matrimony, without the intervention of

a priest ; it had even in that state the character of a sacrament : for it is a misapprehension to suppose that this intervention was required as a matter of necessity, even for that purpose, before the Council of Trent. It appears from the histories of that Council, as well as from many other authorities, that this was the state of the earlier law till that council passed its decree for the reformation of marriage : the consent of two parties, expressed in words of present mutual acceptance, constituted an actual and legal marriage, technically known by the name of *sponsalia per verba de presenti*—improperly enough, because *sponsalia* in the original and classical meaning of the words, are preliminary ceremonials of marriage.”

Another learned man of law, and one of her majesties counsel, in commenting on the above, says : — “ It is to be noticed, that these observations, though general in their tenor, were made in a case in which the marriage in issue did not depend upon the rules of English law, but in the case of a marriage contracted in Scotland [of course Gretna Green, for Scotland is not Scotland without Gretna], which was to be decided therefore by the rules of the law prevailing in that country.”

We know we have power now to enter into “ the holy estate ” independently of clerical co-operation and clerical blessing—(but what will now make it “ holy ” when such adjuncts are wanting ?) we know that there are such personages as superintendent registrars, and such places as superintendent regis-

trars' offices, but so wedded are the English, as a nation, to the love of Mother Church in these matters, that, with few exceptions, and those mostly arising out of necessity, they cannot voluntarily wed under any other roof than a groined one, with a "dim religious light" falling upon them.

Let not the ultra high church in principle rashly declare that the recent statute has been enacted either in defiance of conscience or neglect of all religion; but rather as a measure of charity, and consideration, and Christian tolerance to those who do not (we hope conscientiously) think as we do in the matter of our creed and tenets:—as a measure enacted to meet the scruples of the many different sects of Christians who, in a land of liberty, are entitled to freedom of opinion and exemption from persecution:—as a measure enacted to prevent their being driven to Gretna Green to be married, as they complained the rigidity of the old law compelled them to do.

Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers considered the intervention of a priest necessary—a presumption that they considered the ceremony in a religious point of view; and, with certain exceptions, superinduced rather from circumstances than choice, so also have the majority of their descendants in this country. Clandestine marriages, however, had become somewhat prevalent with the less scrupulous on the Continent; and to correct this practice, Pope Innocent III. issued bulls enforcing it under severe denunciations that the contract should be entered upon in the

church—in *facie ecclesiæ*, so that all men might witness thereto. Indeed, this said innocent Pope is reputed to have been amongst the first who proclaimed the ceremony in a holy light; for before his time it had been looked upon merely as a civil transaction.

During the middle ages in our own country it was not the custom to be wedded before the altar in the church as now, but to stand at the church door during the greater part of the ceremony. The way appears to have been, for the bride and bridegroom to come up to one of the principal entrances of the building, “with their friends and neighbours,” where they met the priest, and where he asked them certain prescribed questions, and duly commenced the service as the rubric directed. At the proper place also he joined their hands (supposing their hearts to have already been joined before), calling upon them to love, and to cherish, and so forth, as is quaintly described in some ancient missals which refer respectively to the cathedrals of Hereford and Salisbury. The *dos ad ostium ecclesiæ*, there at the porch, was likewise bestowed upon the bride before they quitted their stand; but when the priest came to that part which is now followed by his turning to the altar and repeating the psalm, they all ascended the steps, and walked towards the eastern extremity of the edifice, where his blessing was given to the newly married couple.

We are told by Warton, that on the southern façade of Norwich Cathedral there is a sculpture

in stone setting forth the espousals or sacrament of marriage according to this old English custom, but we have not had an opportunity of seeing it ourselves. If, also, we may believe the representation of a rare engraving by Mr. Walpole, we may conclude that this mode of procedure was not confined to the humble, the poor, or the inferior in degree, but that the noble, and even the royal submitted to it. This engraving shows us King Henry VII. together with his queen and a group of courtiers, standing together at the western portico of a Gothic cathedral, where the shaven and stoled ecclesiastics are about to celebrate the union of these two Roses of York and Lancaster.

Geoffroi Chaucer alludes to this same usage in speaking of the "Wife of Bath." He says,—

"She was a worthy woman all her live,
Husbands at the church door she had had five."

Sir William Blackstone tells us, in speaking of "*Dower ad ostium ecclesiæ*," when a man endowed his wife with his worldly goods, even there at the church door, that the custom was to ascertain and specify minutely, with a clear voice, the amount of his lands about to be conferred upon her: and in discoursing of certain other species of dower, he sets forth how it was enforced, that they be thus publicly bestowed to prevent fraud—in fine, that they be made *in facie ecclesiæ et ad ostium ecclesiæ: non enim valent facta in lecto mortali, nec in camera aut alibi ubi clandestina fuere conjugia.*

In the middle ages, at such times when the feudal system of tenures of frank-tenement and knight service were at their most universal pitch of prevalence, the husband was not permitted to endow his wife *ad ostium ecclesiæ* with more than one-third part of the lands whereof he was at that time seized, albeit, he might endow her with as much *less* as he pleased: and the reason of such a law was, that if more liberal endowments had been allowed, the generous husband might injure his superior baron, of whom he held his fee or territory.

By this it is plain to see, that husbands (always tender) are more especially so at such moments than at any other moments of their lives,—so very tender, and so very generous to their sweet wives, that their generosity was obliged to be restricted by law, lest they should ruin themselves by giving away the uttermost of their possessions.

The priest inquired of him what he gave his bride? and if it were lands, an appropriate part of the service was repeated—“*sacerdos interroget dotem mulieris; et si terra ei in dotem detur tunc dicatur psalmus iste,*” &c. He described the nature of the gift,—“*quod dotat eam de tali manerio cum pertinentiis,*”—and when he did so—“*ubi quis uxorem suam dotaverit in generali, de omnibus terris et tenementis,*” he repeated the words, “with all my lands and tenements I thee endow.” When, however, he endowed her with personalty only, he said, “with all my worldly goods, (or, as the Salisbury ritual has it, *with all my worldly chatel*) I thee endow; which entitled her to her thirds,

or *pars rationalibus* of his personal estate, as is provided for in Magna Charta.

According to Tacitus, who wrote about the practices of the Germans many and many centuries ago, the ancient ladies of that nation—or rather the ladies of that ancient nation—enjoyed great privileges in the matter of marriage settlements, entered upon and stipulated, not at the church door forsooth, when the execution was half over, but at their own homes before they had so much as commenced any part of the business. Caius Julius Cæsar also sets forth how shrewdly the Gauls drew out cunning documents betwixt each other in negotiations of a like sort: wherefore, good reader, it is rational to suppose that they had no Gretna Green to go to; since at Gretna these things are, for the most part, done with expedition, and often without the tedious process of achieving unpoetic parchments. No one does a thing tardily at Gretna, no one moves slowly, no one stops to question, no one stays to reflect, it is all expedition there, all lightning, all wildfire: and thus it is, that as they mostly so well manage to “marry in haste,” they sometimes also now and then manage to “repent at leisure” afterwards, when they have time to look round them and cool.

Dr. Granville tells us that it is the custom in Saint Petersburg for the young candidates to assemble at the church door, much after the manner of our great-grandsires in Britain, it should appear; and here they were met by a priest vested in rich habiliments, attended by a deacon. The former then

placed a lighted taper in the hands of each, made the sign of the cross three several times on their foreheads, and conducted them through the church direct to the altar. As they proceeded, the priest, assisted by the choristers, recited a litany, whilst other holy functionaries smoked them pretty dry with the fumes of incense. Arrived at the eastern extremity of the building, two rings were produced, which were laid upon a table; the priest turned to the altar, recited a prayer or invocation, and then, veering round again to the young tremblers, blessed the rings, and delivered them to those whom it might concern. Whilst they held them, he cried with a loud voice, "Now and for ever, even unto ages of ages." This declaration he repeated three times, the bride and bridegroom exchanging rings at each repetition. This was not all: the rings were once more delivered to the curé, who now having crossed the foreheads of the future wearers, himself placed them on the right-hand fore-finger of each. He then turned to the altar to read the remainder of the service, during which allusion was made to the several passages in the Bible wherein the ring is mentioned as the symbol of union, honour, and power.

The most critical, interesting, but nervous part of the whole affair next followed. The priest took both parties by the hand, and led them to a silken carpet that was spread for the purpose, and it is the steadfast belief, that whichever shall first step thereon, will enjoy the mastery over the other throughout life; and in this instance the lady was fully alive to the

securing of her own interests, for Dr. Granville adds, "the bride secured possession of this prospective advantage with modest forwardness."

A more ancient way of securing the same great good, is mentioned by Anthony Jenkinson, who was in Russia about the middle of the sixteenth century. He is describing what happens in the church after they have been actually united.

"They begin to drinke; and fyrst the woman drinketh to the man, and when he hath drunke, he letteth the cupp fall to the ground, hasting immediatelie to tread vpon yt: and soe doth she, and whether of them tread fyrst vpon yt must have the victorie, and bee master at alle tymes after, whiche commonlie happeneth to the man, for he is readiest to set his foot vpon yt, because he letteth yt falle."

The lady has gained by the change of times; for her chances of securing a place on the rug are as good as his.

Surely the fairer moiety of creation must be possessed of a most ambitious temperament—surely this moiety must be innately indued with the qualities that cause personages of great genius, like balloons, to be ever striving towards ascent—surely these gentle creatures in England have universally adopted, or are ready born with that article of dress about them, which, setting aside all the nonsense of stepping upon rugs, of stamping upon drinking cups, will secure to a wife the supremacy; for albeit nothing be visible to the impertinent eye but a nice neat little white lace frill round the ankle, yet that little harmless looking

frill is enough to warn the reflecting and the considerate of how great an engine of power is really attached to it, although in inscrutable concealment.

Matrimonial dominion is not to be attained through the previous act of a feat of agility or of legerdemain, but by a course of subsequent forbearance mutually urged and reciprocated the one towards the other; and this forbearance more especially enforced during the first year; for after that time, the forbearance, at first a duty, will have become a habit, natural and easy to follow.

“Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation;” says the worthy Jeremy Taylor: “every little thing can blast an infant blossom, and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when first they begin to curl like the locks of a new-weaned boy: but when, by age and consolidation, they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have, by the warm embraces of the sun and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken. So are the early unions of an unfixed marriage; watchful and observant, jealous and busy, inquisitive and careful, and apt to take alarm at every unkind word; for infirmities do not manifest themselves in the first scenes, but in the succession of long society; and it is not chance or weakness when it appears at first, but it is want of love or prudence, or it will be so expounded; and that which appears ill at first, usually affrights

the inexperienced man or woman, who makes unequal conjectures, and fancies mighty sorrows by the new and early unkindness."

These are excellent words, and deserving of a second reading: happy those who will store them up and abide by them. If we can only get over the first year in peace, the way is smooth afterwards.

CHAPTER X.

Essay on Marriage.

When you have read this chapter through,
With most attentive brains,
We think it probable that you
Will know what it contains.

THE Hon. Mrs. Norton declares that men are sadly degenerated since the days of Adam. We cannot tarry to investigate this opinion now, but as the gifted lady has often said so many good and true things, we are inclined to pay all deference to her assertions.

The old established code on the subject of matrimony, she observes too, is founded on the superior intelligence, wisdom, and perfectibility, supposed to distinguish the male sex from the female; and which, in the days of the aforesaid Adam, she devoutly believes, really did distinguish it. In this she coincides with John Milton, who, as Johnson remarked, never in his writings omits an opportunity of asserting such superiority. Milton's motive for this, however, was not altogether a thoroughly amiable one; for he was a little bit of a misogynist, and held the intellects of

the fairer moiety of creation at a lamentably cheap rate. This will not be wondered at by those who read his biography ; particularly when it is remembered that his acquaintances used to allow that he had not a gentle or accommodating temper in his private relations.

It is a sad thing that we should seek to cast de-traction upon those whom we love not, or with whom we have fallen at jars ; yet it is very certain, that if any circumstance makes us quarrel with our neighbours, we are immediately disposed to find out and cast against them a hundred faults, which before then we had overlooked or connived at. And if we can do thus with individuals, so also, by extending the same principle, we can do it in regard to a whole race ; wherefore Milton, who had enough to do in maintaining over his first wife such a measure of authority as so rigid a lord of the creation thought compatible, extended his maxims of matrimonial domination which he exercised over his refractory partner, to all husbands to be exercised by them over all their wives.

He never omits an opportunity, as we have said, of letting the reader know that Adam belonged to the superior sex ; but if it really were, as Mrs. Norton believes, that Adam had the advantage of Eve in certain mental attributes, still we are of opinion, living in this modern day, that many women do now exist whose wits tower high above the wits of many men their contemporaries.

What think ye of this ladies ? what think ye ?

Why, we will answer the question for you. You say that we are right — very good.

In adverting to the greater intelligence of the one sex over the other, it is remarked, that the acknowledgment of this fact was instrumental in the peculiar framing of the marriage code; a code wherein one clause sets forth how that the inferior shall obey the superior, and no where that the superior shall obey the inferior, because that would be foolish indeed, as every one must allow.

But Mrs. N. declares that men are sadly degenerate since the passing of this bill; and does not say that women have degenerated in an equal degree, a circumstance which, if positively found to be true, will completely turn the balance of intellect. We confess, too, that we have in some sort agreed with her above, where we have said that many women do now exist, whose wits tower high above the wits of many men their contemporaries; an admission which goes far to admit that one half the world has gone down in the scale of perfectibility, but that the other has thus necessarily ascended,—in effect, if not in reality.

In this state of things it were almost necessary that the said code be altered to suit present facts—a course which would not be preposterous in its way, for all the ancient statutes of the realm require modification now and then, as times go on and constitutions change. And so, the herein-before-mentioned authoress continues, that, “even the pious composers

of the marriage ceremony would allow, that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the woman to love one who constantly neglects or ill-treats his helpmate ; to honour a fool, a gamester, a liar ; or to obey one whose commands seem more the result of temporary insanity than of reason and judgment." This is pretty strong language ; and yet it *must* be very difficult for a woman to love or obey any man who is all or any of these.

But she does not spare her own sex ; for she further says, that it would be hard for a man to love and cherish a creature whose soul is in her looking-glass, and whose pledged hand is oftener clasped in that of some whispering coxcomb than in his own. In this, as a man, we declare she is most perfectly right : indeed, it is certain she never spoke truer words in all her life.

" Where there is only an ordinary show of gentle usage on one side, a grateful feeling will soon be engendered on the other ; and so also, where a system of neglect, coolness, or estrangement is commenced by the one party, the other will not be long in taking up a similar course, and that too in a more superlative degree.

" On the other hand, it is certain that women are affectionate by nature, and are easily won by kindness ; that attention without jealousy, indulgence without carelessness, firmness without tyranny, will change an indifferent and reluctant bride into a devoted and excellent wife."

This is very well said—very well indeed ; we have read many a worse passage in our day.

But it is a most wearisome task to essay to fight one's way into the affections of another who is averse ; to enact a long-continued series of attentions when they are not welcomed, under the hope that they will be welcomed eventually ; and that is the reason why men will not take the trouble to change an indifferent and reluctant bride into the devoted and excellent wife, which such (at first) forced attentions might accomplish.

We rather prefer giving way to our evil passions, than being at the pains of conciliating ; we would liefer return a short answer than a soft one, such as would turn away wrath ; and we love better to contradict and bicker, than we do to explain and apologise.

We are so jealous of our little authority, that we will tyrannise overmuch and unwarrantably, sooner than appear to give in ; and where we find a man who has somewhat of the Miltonian spirit in him,—that is, who is a great stickler for the superiority of his own sex, this unyielding pertinacity for the maintenance of the supposed natural right is pushed to its greatest verge.

Pride, in numberless instances, is the cause of this obstinacy. It is wounding to the man's pride to succumb to the woman, if he is one of this school ; for, to allow that he was mistaken in judgment as to the event of any negotiation wherein it required an exercise of the mental qualities to form that judgment,

or to allow that he has made a false guess, wherein the same powers were exercised, would be to allow that his mental faculties in this instance at least, were inferior to hers, supposing that her opinion as to the end of the negotiation, or her guess on any matter of surmise, has turned out the more correct. In such a position, he will argue for half an hour to prove that she is positively wrong, and he, of course, positively right; or, if this would be too palpable, he will explain away his own defeat so as to make it appear he was not so very far out after all.

Owing to his better knowledge of the world, he can often bring stronger sophisms to his aid than she can to hers, and these he will not hesitate to seize on, if, in the first place, he has too much ill-nature to conciliate, and if, in the second, not honour enough to give the merit where the merit is due.

We believe this to be the secret why literary men are averse to literary wives; they are afraid of encountering too sturdy an opponent. Byron very much disliked learned ladies, and sought every occasion to quiz them. They are very delightful to meet as friends, and talk to now and then, when one is in a rational mood; but to make them wives is bringing them too near to our frailties, and giving them an opportunity of peering too minutely into the real amount of our ability. A man of ordinary intellect may pass for cleverer than he is for an evening, in the society of the most gifted and well-

informed woman, but, as a wife, she might not be long in discovering his true level ; and albeit he has pride enough to think not meanly of himself, still, not having had the means of discovering what the actual amount of her acquirements may be, he is fearful lest she should prove too clever for him.

But the man who is thus afraid, pays neither her or himself any compliment ; he indirectly tells her that he believes she would abuse her power of mind over him, and that is not saying that she is amiable, for we know that the amiable and the generous do not cultivate their talents for the sake of tyrannising over weaker intellects, but for the sake of being able to do them greater services. He pays no compliment to himself either ; for, by the act of shunning genius in a partner, and seeking imbecility, he infers that he is blindly seeking to establish his own authority, in a way, we may add, that does not speak much for his own magnanimity.

Great minds are never afraid of great minds. It is only narrow minds, puffed up with a little learning,—which, as Pope says, is a dangerous thing,—who are self-conceited upon what they think they know, that dread being brought to their true standing, in an intellectual conflict with others. Such minds cannot bear to come in contact with an equal, much more a superior ; and, therefore, in order to avoid such contact, will rather associate with that which they believe to be beneath them. He who associates with the little, appears to them to be great ; and thence his vanity is fed, and his pride is in no danger

of being wounded, and hence many men of some book learning, but who are not generous of heart, will endeavour to mate themselves with women of spiritless souls, or of uncultivated understanding.

Then the aforesaid accomplished writer cries out vehemently upon Miss Martineau divers times for help. She laments, wisely, that the considerations of a worldly interest, instead of the unsophisticated desires of a beautiful affection, should so often bring young people together. Alas! then, for the marriage ceremony; alas! for the rules of right and wrong; and alas! for the simplicity of those ages, now fled and gone, wherein our unluxurious ancestors, who looked not for equipages and a sideboard of plate, married from choice of the object selected, and not for the rich paraphernalia hoped to be got by the speculation.

“The pure and simple laws which our fathers framed, were made for pure and simple days, when young heart met young heart, and melted into one, and people married because they preferred one another to the whole world.” Those were times!

We have elsewhere laughed at the good old times, but we fear we may have been precipitate.

“Help me, Miss Martineau! What is there in improvement and civilization, which so roughens the road of life, by placing heaps of gold in one place, and blank poverty in another?”

“Help me, Miss Martineau! What is there in the present state of society which obliges young women to marry, as the easiest and most dignified

manner of procuring a subsistence, and makes young men eager about heiresses, in order to discharge debts contracted on the turf?"

Good heavens! Mrs. Norton, is the house on fire? For gracious sake, Miss Martineau, come and render your assistance immediately.

We agree with the lady who calls so loud, that the greater number of young couples do not come together for the sake of being companions or help-mates, but because the thirst of rank or riches, ambition or *pique*! have joined them; and hence, after such a junction, it is not marvellous that they should care little about each other's society.

"When Mrs. Bouverie ran away with her penniless husband, and married him at Gretna Green, (Gretna Green, quoth a?) as much from love of the frolic as love of the man, she acted upon impulse; but having her own reasons in later life for disapproving of such motives of action, she had avowed that she never *would*, and it was her boast that she never *did*, do anything without a plan." Oh, Mrs. Bouverie!

We should like to know how Mrs. Bouverie's match turned out. She did not marry for money, therefore she was not sordid and avaricious; and if she married as much for the frolic of going to Gretna as for love of her bridegroom, why, she must have been a funny, larking, merry girl to have done it.

By the latter member of the above sentence, at such time when she had attained to a discreeter age,

she seems to have come more to her senses, and we are almost disposed to assume that her case forms another exemplification of our well-chosen motto. That she "married in haste" is boldly avowed; and that she "repented at leisure" may be inferred from her dignified disapproval of such motives of action. The wisdom of a measure is shown by its events; and a precipitate undertaking has but little assurance of success.

CHAPTER XI.

The New Marriage Act.

We now minutely analyse.
The recent Marriage Act ;
Reject all fiction, all surmise,
And stick to stubborn fact.

IF it be argued, that the facilitating of the marriage ceremony will lead the rash and the inconsiderate to make unwise connexions, the recent Act may be supposed to conduce to that end. Against this, it may be stated, that the compulsory enactments of Lord Hardwicke's bill, and of the bills of other statesmen, did not always bring about wise marriages.

If people choose to marry, they will marry ; and no power on earth can stop them. It is the same with people who are bent on committing suicide : if you take from them one means of doing so, they will forthwith seek out another. People choose to go and jump off the Monument, and dash their brains out on the pavement : it is ordered that iron bars be put up, so as to prevent them—but they then go and jump off London Bridge. Well, pull down London

Bridge, cry the philanthropists, and you will be doing a Christian act : no, they will laugh at you, and jump off St. Paul's. Pull down St. Paul's, and they will leap off Shakspeare's, or some other cliff. Level all the cliffs in the country, and they will throw themselves into wells. Fill up the wells, they will hang themselves with their garters. Abolish garters for ever, they will plunge into the Serpentine. Drain the Serpentine, they will drown themselves in the Thames. Cover over the Thames with brick-work—never mind spoiling the trade of London—and they will directly rush into the ocean. Fill up the ocean with the cliffs you levelled—you can't, it's too big : besides, if you could, you would fail in deterring people from committing suicide, if they were determined on it. Supposing you dried up all the rivers and oceans to prevent their drowning themselves ; if you levelled all the trees, buildings, and hills, and make the whole world one dead plain, so that they should have nothing to jump from to dash their brains out ; and if you stripped them of all their habiliments whatsoever, by which they could not hang themselves with their neck-handkerchiefs, garters, or stay-laces, still they could beat their heads against the ground that they trod on, or strangle themselves with their own fingers.

Thus it is with people who are resolved on matrimony ; and thus it is, that although Lord Hardwicke forbade every one in England, except Jews and Quakers, to marry anywhere but in the church, before proper witnesses, he did not prevent their

going to Gretna Green. Being balked in one quarter, they resorted, like the suicides, to another; and had any member of the House introduced a bill for abolishing the facilities of Gretna, people would soon have found out some other manner of accomplishing their purpose elsewhere.

This being the state of affairs, it was considered necessary to revise the laws bearing thereon; to take into deliberation the extent of good or evil which they encouraged; to further promote the good, but to obviate the evil; to introduce a more generous toleration towards dissenters and foreigners professing strange creeds—a desirable measure in a country boasting equal rights and freedom to every one alike—and thus to afford convenience and ease of conscience to each individual, whether permanently or temporarily dwelling in this land.

By the enactment of the recent marriage act of 1837, the provisions of all the long list of former ones—from Pope Innocent III. down to the statutes of the Georges—have been either entirely swept away, or re-modified. By this act a person may be married in a church by a clergyman, or else by entering into an agreement in a registered building, or at the Superintendent Registrar's office; or again, by most especial licence, at any time and in any place whatsoever it may seem meet and convenient.

Special licences are granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. By virtue of stat. 25 Henry VIII., c. 21., this high dignitary and his successors are empowered to dispense such obligations to the needy,

either immediately from his office, or else from Doctors' Commons, or from the Faculty office in Knight-rider-street; at either of which places they may be procured. The privilege of marrying in this way is usually restricted to persons of a certain station; and Archbishop Secker, in 1757, ordered it that such privileges should be granted only to peers and peeresses in their own right, dowager peeresses, privy councillors, the judges of Westminster Hall, baronets, knights, and M.P.'s; but this regulation does not bar the favour being given to others of less rank, if it shall seem fitting. The same form in obtaining this licence is observed as in that which exempts from publication of banns; only it is particularly mentioned that the ceremony may be performed, "at any time, in any church or chapel, or other meet or convenient place."

The Anglo-Saxons did not celebrate weddings in their churches, but at the house of the bridegroom, whereunto the bride had been conducted; and it was customary to consider this as a civil contract only, and one not requiring any religious intervention, until Innocent III. ordered it otherwise, in the excess of his innocence.

By the recent marriage act of 6 and 7 Will. IV. cap. 85., which has been further explained and confirmed by her present most gracious Majesty in 1 Victoria, cap. 22, it is enacted, that those who purpose entering the holy estate, must attend to and go through a certain routine of proceeding. If they intend to be united by licence, and according to the rubric of the established church, the parties must

send to the superintendent registrar of the district in which he or she has dwelt during seven days previously, and give him a notice of their purpose according to the form following:—

NOTICE OF MARRIAGE.

To the Registrar of the District of *Hendon*, in the County of *Middlesex*. I hereby give you notice, that a Marriage is intended to be had, within three calendar months from the date hereof, between me and the other party herein named and described; (that is to say,)

Name.	Condition.	Rank, or Profession.	Age.	Dwelling Place.	Length of Residence.	Church or building in which marriage is to be solemnized.	District or County in which the other party resides when the parties dwell in different Districts.
<i>James Smith.</i>	<i>Widower.</i>	<i>Carpenter.</i>	<i>Of full Age.</i>	<i>16 High Street.</i>	<i>23 Days.</i>	<i>Sion Chapel, West Street, Hendon, Middlesex.</i>	<i>Tonbridge, Kent.</i>
<i>Martha Green,</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>— —</i>	<i>Minor.</i>	<i>Grove Farm.</i>	<i>More than a Month.</i>		

Witness my hand, this *sixth* day of *May*, 1842.

(Signed) JAMES SMITH.

The reader will observe that the italics are to be filled up as the case may be. No charge is made for giving in this notice, simply because it is not any certification of a deed done, but only the advertisement of a deed proposed to be done at some future understood time; that is, within the space of three

months and a week after the sending in of this notice. It is requisite, however, to have this duly registered in a book kept by the officer for that purpose, and his fee for so doing is the sum of one shilling lawful money of this realm. Then, after the expiration of seven days, one of the parties must appear *personally* before the superintendent within whose district the marriage is intended to be solemnized, and make oath or affirmation to the effect that no impediment exists to the said marriage. For doing this, the fee of half-a-crown is demanded. This done, the following certificate is procured, on payment of the sum of one shilling more. To wit :

REGISTRAR'S CERTIFICATE.

I, *John Cox*, Registrar of the District of *Stepney*, in the County of *Middlesex*, do hereby certify, that on the *sixth* day of *May*, notice was duly entered, in the Marriage Notice Book of the said District, of the marriage intended between the parties herein named and described, delivered under the hand of *James Smith*, one of the parties : (that is to say,)

Name.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Age.	Dwelling Place.	Length of Residence.	Church or Building in which marriage is to be solemnized.	District and County in which the party dwells where the parties dwell in different Districts.
<i>James Smith.</i>	<i>Widower.</i>	<i>Carpenter.</i>	<i>Of full Age.</i>	<i>16, High Street.</i>	<i>23 Days.</i>	<i>Sion Chapel, West Street, Stepney Middlesex.</i>	<i>Tonbridge, Kent.</i>
<i>Martha Green.</i>	<i>Spinster.</i>	<i>— —</i>	<i>Minor.</i>	<i>Grove Farm.</i>	<i>More than a Month.</i>		

Date of Notice entered, 6th of May, 1842.	} The issue of this certificate has not been forbidden by any person autho- rized to forbid the issue thereof.
Date of Certificate given, 27th of May, 1842.	

Witness my hand; this *Twenty-seventh*, day of *May*, one thousand eight hundred and forty-two.

(Signed) JOHN COX, Registrar.

This certificate will be void unless the marriage is solemnized on or before the *sixth* day of *August*, 1842.

The above certificate is printed in red ink — a fact which the law enforces for certificates with licence, and the word “Licence,” must be laid or manufactured in Roman letters in the substance of the paper.

The names of *James Smith* and *Martha Green*, together with the other words in italics filling the different compartments, have just been added as *noms de guerre*, as they were in the example from which this was taken; but in the certificate which you are yourself about to procure, these spaces will be left blank, and you will fill them up with your own name, the name of your adorable, and the places of your several abodes, &c. Be not terrified, gentle swain, from matrimony, because you have all these perplexing forms to attend to, nor be discouraged because you have to undergo so much trouble; for remember, that if your lady-love is worth getting, she is worth all this trouble, and ten times more.

You must now go to the superintendent registrar *yourself*,—for no proxy will do—and present him with the certificate as afore, supposing no notice of your loving intention has already been given him, and he will let you have a marriage licence, after

the manner of that which we subjoin below. For this licence he will charge £3., and to which may be added ten shillings for the stamp upon it, making £3 10s., together with a few more expenses, which we will presently explain, in all amounting to £4 4s. 6d. And for this paltry sum you will be bound to a lady whose worth in virtue, grace, and beauty, will amount to riches unspeakable—whose fascinations will be above the calculations of all arithmetic—whose wit will perpetually engage you with the most enticing sallies—whose ravishing charms will keep your pulse always at 150—and whose incessant acts of untiring affection will never let your feelings subside below the state of absolute rapture.—Don't you long to be married?

LICENCE OF MARRIAGE.

A.B., superintendent registrar of to C. D. [*bridegroom's name*] of and E. F. [*bride's name*] of sendeth greeting.

Whereas ye are minded, as it is said, to enter into a contract of marriage under the provisions of an act made in the seventh year of the reign of His Majesty King William the Fourth, intituled [*here the title of this act is inserted,*] and are desirous that the same may be speedily and publicly solemnized : and whereas you, C.D. [*or you E.F., whichever party appears before the registrar*] have made and subscribed a declaration, under your hand, that you believe there is no impediment of kindred or alliance, or other lawful hinderance to the said marriage, and that you, C. D. [*or E. F.*] have had your usual place of abode for the space of fifteen days last past within the district of——, and that you C. D. [*or E. F.*] not being a widower [*or widow*], are under the age of twenty-one years, and that the consent of G.H., whose consent to your marriage is required by law, has been obtained thereto, [*or, that there is no person having*

authority to give such consent,] I do hereby grant unto you full licence, according to the authority in that behalf given to me by the said act, to proceed to solemnize such marriage, and to the registrar of the district, [*here is inserted the name of the district in which it is to be solemnized,*] to register such marriage according to law ; provided that the said marriage be publicly solemnized in the presenee of the said registrar and of two witnesses within three calendar months from the [*here is inserted the date of the entry in the notice book of the superintendent registrar,*] in the [*here is described the building in which it is to take place,*] between the hours of eight and twelve in the forenoon. Given under my hand, this — day of — One thousand eight hundred and forty.

(Signed) A. B.

Superintendent Registrar.

Such is the licence.

And now, oh ! most amorous swain, having thus paved the way through preliminaries, it only remains for you to take your bride to church, where the form is gone through as laid down in the prayer-book, which you have read from beginning to end long ere this, and doubtless so also has she. We will venture to say that her book readily and spontaneously falls open at "The Solemnization," &c., for all young ladies' prayer-books do ; and why should she be different from others of her sweet sex ? except that in your eyes she is more devoted, more warm, more passionate, and more loving ; and all which attributes, forsooth, will indeed render her the more likely to have done so.

The fee for marrying you will be ten shillings ;
so that your expenses stand as under :—

	£	s.	d.
For entering the notice	0	1	0
For obtaining the certificate	0	1	0
For the licence	3	0	0
Stamp on the licence	0	10	0
Stamp on the affidavit, or oath	0	2	6
To the registrar, for attending at and registering the marriage	0	10	0
Total			
	£ 4	4	6

If these be all the absolutely legal expenses of the affair, it is, nevertheless, not impossible but certain customary and incidental ones might, peradventure, be added thereunto : but what then ? we have hinted at the unspeakable wealth in virtue and grace that your bride will bring you—the comparison is odious : we have heard about throwing a herring to catch a whale ; but now you are throwing a few paltry pounds to catch a bride.

Such as intend being married by banns, will proceed as heretofore, the new law having made no alteration in the mode of doing it : their expenses in this case will be these :—

	£	s.	d.
For entering the banns	0	1	6
To the clergyman, on the marriage	0	5	0
To the clerk, on the marriage	0	3	0
Total	0	9	6

But those who intend not to be married by special

licence, nor by licence as above, nor by banns, but by a clergyman, can procure a certificate as before for one shilling; on presenting which to the clergyman, he will accommodate them; that certificate sufficiently assuring him that they are not acting illegally or clandestinely. They must give notice to the superintendent registrar as already mentioned, and pay a shilling for having it entered in the book, and must then wait *twenty-one* days (instead of *seven*) before they can get the certificate of him; and the fee at the time of the marriage, instead of ten shillings, will be five.

The following, then, are the expenses of being wedded by certificate without banns:—

	£	s.	d.
Entering the notice	0	1	0
Ditto for wife, if she lives in another district	0	1	0
The certificate	0	1	0
To the clergyman	0	5	0
Total	0	8	0

To those persons, not being of the Church of England, or to those who choose to make the ceremony only a civil contract, and not a religious sacrament, the statute provides differently. They give the notice as before; wait twenty-one days; procure the certificate; and then they proceed to some registered building, or the superintendent's office, together with two creditable persons who shall act as witnesses; and there, with open doors, between eight

and twelve in the forenoon, they make the following declaration :—

“ I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, A. B., may not be joined in matrimony to C. D.”

The woman then repeats the same words, only altering the order of the names. Each of the parties also says thus reciprocally to the other :—

“ I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, A. B., do take thee, C. D.,” [or that I, C. D., do take thee, A. B.] “ to be my lawful wedded wife,” [or husband.]

The entry is then made in the register book, signed by the parties, the two witnesses, and the registrar, the fee for so doing being five shillings.

This last mode of proceeding is vastly like a Gretna marriage.

The indulgent reader must excuse us for having gossiped thus much about the New Marriage Act of England ; but we have done so that he or she may understand the law and the custom here, and by so understanding, be the better able to perceive what differences obtain north of the Tweed, or in our case, north of the Sark, to which locality we will now transfer our discussions with all reasonable expedition.

CHAPTER XII.

Rivalry of the Gretna Priests.

The practices of Gretna priests,
Where each is each one's rival ;
And how they fight like savage beasts
For every new arrival.

A RECENT talented author has given some excellent advice to young ladies, as to the motives which should sway them in the bestowal of their hearts and hands, or rather, of their hands. We say, especially of their hands, for their hearts are always bestowed as their disinterested love directs, but their hands, too often, according to the suggestions of worldly gain, selfishness, prudence, money, or the like.

“ Whatever may be the accidental and ultimate advantages in respect of fortune or social station,” says this writer, “ expected to be realized by a woman, in forming a union with one who would be otherwise regarded with indifference, or dislike, or disgust, she may rely upon it that she is committing an act of deliberate *wickedness*, which will be attended probably for the rest of her life with consequences of

unutterable and inevitable misery, which even the obtaining of her proposed objects will not compensate, but only enhance.

“It is equally a principle of our law and of common sense, that people must be understood to have *contemplated* the natural and necessary consequences of their own acts, even if hastily, but by so much the more, if deliberately done. When, therefore, they come to experience these consequences, *let them not complain*.

“A marriage of this description is, so to speak, utter dislocation and destruction to the delicate and beautiful fabric of a woman’s character. It perverts, it *deflects* the noblest tendencies of her lovely nature; it utterly degrades and corrupts her; she sinks irretrievably into an inferior being; instead of her native simplicity and purity, are to be seen, henceforth, only heartlessness and hypocrisy; her affections and passions denied their legitimate objects and outlets, according to their original weakness or strength of developement, either disappear and wither, and she is no longer *woman*, or impel her headlong into coarse sensuality, perhaps, at length, open criminality; and then she is expelled indignantly, and for ever, from the community of her sex.

“It is not the mere *ring* and the *orange-blossoms* that constitute the difference between *Virtue* and *Vice*.”

Certes, there is a something despicable and degrading in forming connexions of this kind; and yet, until a better state of morals shall have been

infused into society in general, we fear it will be o'er long ere it will be much otherwise.

Whilst friendship betwixt man and man, and sometimes, though less frequently, betwixt woman and woman, and again, betwixt woman and man, depends on the entertainments which they can give each other, or on the number of carriages or servants they keep, the wherewithal to procure those carriages and servants will constitute the ultimatum of worldly desire — he or she who is richest will be the most amiable creature ; and, therefore, to acquire lucre, whether by honest or by vicious means, will be the great object of every transaction in life. Thus, young hearts are bought and sold for bullion ; thus, people love one way but marry another ; and thus, discontent, misery, dislike of home, criminal love, or adulterous affection, are fostered and nurtured throughout the land.

Pride is the root of this evil, or rather, train of evils. If people could cure themselves of the pride of making a great show towards their neighbours, who, after all, only care for them as long as they can get dinners out of them, marriages would oftener be made in heaven than in hell, as they are, though celebrated on earth, and much happiness would accrue.

It is not to be concluded, that, because there are marriages at Gretna performed by such as David Laing deceased, after the manner of those we have described, that a wedding is *never* celebrated in the parish church by a clergyman. Such a supposition has gone abroad, and spread itself over divers regions

and districts of the great world ; but it is a mistake, an error, and one which, out of consideration to the less headlong Scotch, we would now correct.

It is the strangers, the fugitives from England, who go to the Hall, the King's Head, the toll-gate, or elsewhere, but the native dwellers on the soil eschew such practices as unmeet ; they are always united to each other by the clergyman in the church in preference, and need not resort to other expedients, except, peradventure, under peculiar and extreme circumstances.

We were informed that, in this parish, it was the custom for those who wished to marry to be proclaimed in the holy building three several times by the precentor or clerk, that is, by one of them, for there are two. They must be proclaimed three times and no less ; but it is not imperative that this public advertisement and proclamation take place on three separate Sundays ; they may be thus proclaimed all three times in one day, if absolutely necessary. Neither, said our informants, is it required that the minister be present ; but only that there be a few persons in the church, enough to constitute a congregation, and the precentor gives out that he is reading a proclamation of marriage between John Stiles of so-and-so, and Mary Baker of such-a-place, as the case may be, concluding, after the manner of publishing banns in England, this is the first, second, or third time.

Although this form differs but triflingly from that of this our sister kingdom, the resemblance between

the two is not so exact as to make them one and the same ; in fact, they are precisely alike, all but the difference. The Scotchmen, as well as ourselves, where there is no need for going to fearful lengths, prefer a man in holy orders to perform the ceremony, as it gives a greater force and sanctity to the compact.

“ In that part of the kingdom,” says a recent writer, “ nothing further is necessary in order to constitute a man and woman husband and wife, than a declaration of consent by the parties before witnesses, or even such a declaration in writing, *without any witnesses* ; a marriage which is considered binding in all respects. Still, a marriage in Scotland, not celebrated by a clergyman, (with the exceptions we are about to mention,) is rarely or never heard of, [that is, by the Scotch themselves,] a result of the nearly universal feeling which is in favour of a religious celebration of the contract, and which would look upon the neglect of that solemnity as disreputable.

“ What the Scottish people, however, eschewed as evil, the more lax English, under certain circumstances, did not fail to avail themselves of ; and the rigid Marriage Act of 1754 had not been many years in force, before ‘ love found out the way ’ of evading its enactments, and still, to a certain extent, playing propriety. It was only requisite that the knot should be tied *in Scotland*, to set at defiance all parents and guardians, for matches so made appear to have been almost exclusively ‘ stolen or ‘ runaway,’ and the parties all English.”

My Lord Hardwicke’s rigid Marriage Act of 1754 alluded to in the preceding extract, compelled all persons in England to wed each other through the agency of a clergyman within the walls of mother church ; a practice which had not been necessary for many years before ; and we believe it did not show the considerate toleration towards Jews, Turks,

Infidels, and Heretics, and the body of dissenters from the established religion, that it should in christian charity have done ; so that, finding impediments to matrimony throughout that land wherein this law had dominion, they fled over the northern Border to escape its severity.

To this statute we may ascribe the great celebrity of Gretna Green, during the later half of the last century, as a fane dedicated to the rites of Hymen ; a celebrity which the new Act of 1837 would be likely to impair, if the English were less fond of considering the contract in a religious light than we rejoice to say they are.

It has been observed elsewhere, that the trade here is sadly monopolized by a few fortunate individuals, to the exclusion and detriment of a host of others, equally qualified, but not equally favoured. This usurpation of priesthood is grievously complained of by the excluded, who have no participation in the business, and the profits thereof ; they wish “ the trade to be thrown open,” and see no reason, forsooth, why it should not be so, just as well as the China trade.

The difficulties, however, are enormous, much more so than ever existed in the East, and for this one manifest reason, that the obstacles there have been removed, but not so those at Gretna.

If it be true that any inhabitant in the parish may marry, how comes it that every person really does not perform the office ? And then, if so, no complaint could be urged against this monopolization.

Why, it is thus :—

Supposing one of you, our ladies patronesses—yet no, not any of you, for we would not have you marry there, as we have heretofore declared ; but supposing, for instance, that one John Stiles were to drive from the ancient city of Carlisle, right over Solway Moss, but without seeing one bit of it, and to arrive at his destination with this loving intent ; his driver or postilion would of course take him to some hostelrie which he well knew through knowledge attained by former visits ; whereas himself, being a stranger, (for it is mostly strangers from England who go there,) would not know where to put up for the nonce, but would be entirely in the hands of this driver, to stop just where he might please.

Thankful, then, to attain to some inn, whereinunto he may enter, not only for the sake of eschewing the gaze of certain strangers who have perchance more curiosity than wit, but also for the sake of hastening on the catastrophe of his journey, he asks for the best private sitting-room, and officiously escorts his intended bride to it.

Well, mine host knows in the “wynkyng of an e’e” what is required, and what is the motive for this visit. We have before hinted that these Bonnifaces here are always wide awake, and can see as far into an oak plank as most folks ; that they are all careful enough never to sleep, but have their lamps ready trimmed, replenished, and lighted ; and that the principal one, yeleped John Linton, or else his son, will ever abide at home ready for the coming of the bride-

groom, whether he come at high noon-day, or whether he come like a thief in the night.

We have also observed that a wink is as good as a nod to a blind horse ; and that even much less than either a wink or a nod would be necessary to these wide-awakes, who neither are blind, nor yet ever sleep. These things being pretty well understood, no explanations are needful.

If the lord and governor of this comminglement of the temples of Mercury and Hymen both under one roof, be not his own "priest," he has an understanding (to share the profits) with some friend in the village, to whom he sends a messenger ; and rest assured this friend doth not tarry long by the way, but uses all convenient haste to attend the pleasant subpœna.

Now, as the stranger and the lady of his election, are in his house, and peradventure the carriage and horses in his coach-house and stables, he has the power of sending to whom he may please, and none but whom he may please to favour can enter and do the agreeable to these new comers, that is, of tying them up in a knot after the fashion of Gordius, a knot very difficult to undo.

If the whole population of the parish were to insist on entering the hostelrie, and boldly to prefer their equal right to marry the visitors, it is probable that John Linton and son would stand in no want of good company at Gretna Hall. If the said visitors were not particular in their choice of an altar, but should

prefer being wedded out in the open fields, the case might be different; any one who chanced to be on the spot first might play the priest, and the especial friend of mine host would have to argue the privilege with many rivals.

The particular priest who does business for Alexander Beattie at the King's Head, is Simon Laing, son of that David Laing who united Mr. Wakefield and Miss Turner, and many others of estate. He is by trade a weaver; and to say the modest truth, there is much more of the weaver than of the parson in his external; and of the weaver, about as dirty a specimen as ever Spittalfields produced.

Thus, it will be understood, with regard to this personage, that if any pair of fugitives who are wearied of single cursedness, arrive at the King's Head, Alexander forthwith sends for Simon to come and do the needful, first having agreed between themselves to share the golden fleece of which they shear the bridegroom, and, indeed, sometimes the bride, as we will tell ye anon.

In this way the trade is monopolized by the innkeepers and their friends, to the unspeakable regret of the many hungry starvelings of the village.

With the bold design of breaking through this tyrannous monopoly, an enterprising citizen, whose great name is Thomas Little, hath opened an opposition shop at about the distance of a bow-shot east of the King's Head, and on the opposite side of the way. This shop, or rather beer-shop, for such it is beareth emblazoned over the lintel of the doorway,

a most tempting and popular sign,—to wit—the
“GRETNA WEDDING.”

Behold here its form and portraiture :



The bridegroom (so called because he grooms down the bride) is represented in this achievement as taking the matter very easily; he is fierce in regimentals, and over-belayed with broidery and gold lace. The lady, who had before yielded up her heart, is now yielding her hand; and that too, with downcast eye, and air as modest as ever was assumed by that Empress of Modesty, Diana. The blacksmith on one side of the picture, and his helpmate on the other, having lost all reverence, are both of them right merrily grinning.

The scene here is laid in a blacksmith's shop, and by the appearance of the “priest” who is doing business, one would be disposed to conclude that

the candidates for his help had but newly arrived, like thieves in the night, and had caught him at unawares, and certainly in dishabille ; for he is set forth without coat or any other such external vestment, but with his lawn sleeves drawn up his arms and tucked above the elbow : his loose collar is unbuttoned and thrown back, even as if he had, up to the moment of the arrival, been hard at work ; and the cap of labour (not of liberty) rests upon his head : the anvil is before him, whereat he had been engaged welding iron ; and so hastily has the affair been driven on, that this anvil, being the first thing at hand, is converted into an altar, on which is laid the book. His fellow-labourer in both trades, stands forth in much the same fashion and costume. Furthermore, the extreme yet characteristic suddenness of the whole transaction, is also demonstrated by the dresses of the “ happy couple :” the bridegroom has not had sufficient time to doff any part of his out-door riding appurtenances, whilst his better half appears in her travelling dress, and with her hat and feathers upon her head.

The reader may fancy that we have been needlessly prolix in our notice of this sign ; but with all deference, and under correction, we beg to insist that the emblazonment lays greater claim to consideration than may at first appear. One reason is, it portrays the popular and local ideas respecting the common fashion of doing these things at Gretna ; another, that it was done by a native artist, who collected his ideas on the spot ; and a third reason is, that

he has laid the scene in a blacksmith's shop, and made the priest, so called, a blacksmith. This part of the picture will perfectly agree with the prevailing belief of the world at large, that a blacksmith is in the habit of performing the ceremony; but in spite of all our inquiries, diligently made actually at Gretna Green, we could not discover that a blacksmith ever married any person there. The reader is possibly sceptical, because this is a fond notion that has taken deep root in the popular mind; but many other erroneous ideas, besides this one, have, ere now, gone abroad into the wide world; and, with respect to this especial fancy, we have only to say that a portion of this most authentic history will shortly be devoted to the subject, and then, like a true historiographer, we will set down the whole course of our investigations, together with the results at which we arrived.

CHAPTER XIII.

Qualifications or non-qualifications of the Gretna Green Priests.

This chapter shows how parish priests

Are sometimes not in orders ;

But mostly out of order, those

Who live upon the borders.

FREQUENTLY hearing the word “priest” used in conversation, when these officials were the topic of conversation, or were the subject of discourse—mentioned not as if derisively or in irony, but gravely and soberly as a matter of course, and as it were a right proper word—we had the audacity to inquire of those who stood around, as to whether any clerical act of consecration had been achieved over them ; for how should Southeron strangers and errant perigrinators know what particular laws of church, or state, or custom might obtain here, within the bounds of this most strange of all parishes in the “varsal world?” In furtherance of obtaining light upon this point, we demanded whether those, forsooth, who took upon themselves the responsibilities of this office, really did undergo any prescribed course of initiatory study, what terms they kept, and at what

college or university, what examinations they submitted too, and were they often plucked, what degrees they took, how they were ordained, and by whom, or by what bishops?

These questions we held to be important; but after having put them most assiduously all round, we received one universal answer, namely, "Ha! ha! ha!" or, in other words, everybody "haw-hawed right out."

"Good Master Southerner, for such you be by your speech," cried they; "when we say *priests*, we mean *Gretna priests* (rendered verbatim); 'tis a convenient word, and expresses our meaning as understood by ourselves; that is, he who is employed by any innkeeper to marry any strangers who come over the border to his house; such person is a 'priest' or 'Gretna priest,' according to our acceptance of the term."

"Then I am to understand, that to become one of your priests, it is not indispensable that any previous course of study should be gone through, or that any of higher privileges has conferred the office?"

Here they haw-hawed again.

"When we ironically make sport of them, or cast scorns at them, we generally dub them *bishops* at once; but *priest* is the current coin here, and is as common as a bawbee. You, sir, or myself, or any of this company here in presence, might marry just whom we might please, either in this same room, or out there in the middle of the street, or else

yonder under the hedge ; at morning, noon, night, late, early, summer, winter, or what not ; no matter the place or the time. To prove the truth of what I say, I will marry you, sir, now this moment."

Oh ! will you ? Let us begin another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Erroneous idea that the Priest of Gretna is a Blacksmith.

This shows how false reports sometimes
 Fly o'er the land like treason ;
 And how folks choose to cling to them
 In spite of sense and reason.

AFTER all, it is not a matter of much wonderment that the world should be full of false reports, when we know, that as soon as a man is born he goeth astray and speaketh lies.

Divers false reports touching various matters foreign to this history have, from time to time, grievously run over the land, whereby people have too often been misled and deceived ; such, however, we leave to those whom it may concern ; but there is one particular false report about Gretna Green, with which we have much to do in discoursing of this place ; and for the enlightenment of the shades of error, we will immediately set about enkindling the torch of truth.

Now, the erroneous idea to which we refer is this, — that it is almost universally supposed that the personage who marries at Gretna Green, is by trade a blacksmith.

We have heard of a thousand anecdotes wherein it is mentioned, how certain parties were united by a brawny blacksmith; and how the said parties had no sooner jumped over the broomstick, when the enraged papa, post-haste from England, rushed into the house — but just one moment too late to save his run-away daughter.

We made this much contested subject a particular point of investigation when we were on the spot: but in spite of all our inquiries, and searching, and scrutiny, we could not discover that a blacksmith had of late years performed the ceremony, nor indeed, that a blacksmith had *ever* done it at *any period whatever*.

One of the most noted priests here at present is Simon Laing, by trade a weaver, as before remarked, and no blacksmith at all. His father, David, who married Wakefield, also before mentioned, earned his bread, according to his own account, entirely by the practice of marrying (and easily earned it too) during the immensely long space of eight-and-forty years; but he never wielded a sledge hammer in his life, nor was he ever connected with the business; before his time, full fifty years ago, the chief priest was a man of the name of Parseley or Paisley—Joseph Paisley—and he was a tobacconist, but no blacksmith; and prior to him the principal functionary carried on the occupation of a fisherman, in the waters of the Solway Firth, as we will presently shew, on the authority of Pennant.

Thus we have traced the apostolic succession back through nearly a century; but beyond this time no authentic record remains to satisfy our curiosity—in-

deed, at that period, the laxity of the laws of England rendered it unnecessary to resort thither: and the trade was not monopolized into the hands of a few then, even as it has been since.

That David Laing never was a blacksmith, despite such a supposition so tenaciously clung to, we were positively assured by twenty persons in the village who knew him, and amongst others, by his son Simon, as well as Simon's wife, whom we especially questioned.

It seemed to be pretty generally agreed by the majority of those to whom we put the query, that this veteran had, in his younger days, been a day labourer, ready to do any rough job to gain a subsistence, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another. When he was produced at Lancaster on the trial of the Wakefields as a witness, and was examined and cross-examined as to his business and occupation, he perseveringly shewed great reluctance in discovering all that the counsel desired to wring from him. He fenced the question as long as he could, and then, when he could not escape making a confession, he tried to raise the rank of his trade, by attaching to it a name of greater consideration.

The following extract exhibits the course of torture inflicted by my Lord Brougham:

DAVID LAING *again called and cross-examined by MR. BROUGHAM.*

Are you a Scotch clergyman?—No, I am not.

What are you?—are you any trade at all?—Nothing at all.

Do you mean to say you never were an ostler?—Me an ostler!

No.—

How long have you been engaged in this traffic of making this sort of certificates?—Eight-and-forty years.

How old are you?—I am beyond seventy-five.

Well, before the last eight-and-forty years what did you do to get your livelihood?—that is my question.—Why I was a gentleman—sometimes poor and sometimes rich.

Well, when you were poor, what did you do to get your bread?—what occupation did you follow?—I followed many occupations.

Let me hear one of them.—I was a merchant.

What do you mean by a merchant—a travelling merchant—a pedlar?—Yes.

What else were you? Were you anything else?—Never.

Thus, after some little chaffering and reluctance, David confessed that he had been a pedlar. The learned lawyer above asks him whether he had not been on ostler? but this question he receives with indignant surprise, and negatives in a very decided manner. We do not know what reason Mr. Brougham had for this intimation, unless it was that he had been informed that the pedlar might once have rubbed a horse down, by a chance, for the sake of turning a penny, although it was not his trade. It is extraordinary he was not asked whether he had been a blacksmith;—we say extraordinary, merely on account of the popular notion; but as he was not asked the question, it is a strong negative argument in favour of what we assert. Had he ever made it his business, of course the fact would have been mentioned in this cross-examination; and if he had ever by a chance lifted a sledge hammer upon the anvil, as by a chance he may have groomed a horse, it is rational to suppose that the lawyer would have heard of it, and taxed him accordingly, even as he did about

the ostlership, particularly as the current report would so naturally have led to it. It is only curious that the idea itself, without any thing else, did not lead to such a question : but the fact of its having been omitted, proves how little this priest and the trade of a blacksmith were coupled together in the imaginations of persons present.

There is a tradition in Springfield that a pleasant dialogue, referring to these matters, took place at the above trial, between Laing and the lawyer ; albeit this dialogue certainly does not appear in the minutes as they were published at the time : no matter, the good people of this village tell the anecdote.

They say, that whilst he was giving evidence, certain expressions were elicited from him, which either then first attached the title of blacksmith to him, or else renewed, raked from oblivion, and confirmed it to him ; supposing he had ever before been so called, or had ever been connected with the trade. in some almost forgotten way, until thus raked up They say, that the counsel, being aware that he went by the name of "the blacksmith," plainly asked him *why* he was so designated, since, upon inquiry, it appeared that he neither was a blacksmith then, at the time of the trial, nor had he ever been so during the whole course of his life ? To this question, they add, he returned a facetious answer, to wit :—"Because," said he, "I weld two people together with the quickness and strength with which a blacksmith welds two pieces of hot iron."

Some people affirm, that tradition is not always to be implicitly believed, and that history is truer

than fiction—and so forth. This we had always denied up to the present time: but when people declare that the word blacksmith, as applied to the marrier-general of Gretna Green, only originated through this anecdote at the trial of the Wakefields in 1827, we decidedly think they lie—under a mistake. Our faith in the infallibility of tradition was never shaken till now: but if tradition asserts that this term is no older than 1827, we think that tradition is in error; for certainly it did exist long before that time. It is possible, however, that David Laing was the first to whom it was given, since the commencement of his career dates as far back as the year 1779, or forty-eight years before the trial. We have not discovered any person or any chronicle, or better still, any tradition, that can make the designation so old as this remote period.

This man died in the year 1827, in a house in Springfield, situated in the street, on the opposite side from that on which the King's Head stands, and at about a bow-shot higher up, or towards the triangular Green of Gretna. It is said that he caught cold at the trial at Lancaster in March of that year, that he had been exerting and heating himself by exercise in the first instance, and then possibly sat in a draught afterwards; an imprudence that is believed to have given him too severe a chill for a man of seventy-five to get over. He lived three months after the shock, but was never thoroughly well, and then he died; but such an apparently slight cause as a chill—a cold—the effects of sitting in a draught after being warm, has killed many a younger person than David Laing.

That philosopher said well, when he exclaimed—"There are no such things as trifles in the world." Serious ends sometimes arise out of apparently trivial beginnings—a sequel that proves those beginnings were not so trivial as they were supposed to have been.

A short time, comparatively, before his decease, he had occupied a house near his son's present abode,—that is, on the same side of the street as the King's Head, but lower down, or in the direction towards England; and in his younger days, long previous to that, he had dwelt in a cottage a short distance from Gretna church, opposite the Hall, and near the divergence of the roads to Dumfries and to Glasgow. This cottage has since been pulled down.

So much for David Laing.

In chronologically tracing back the apostolic succession of Gretna priests, we next come to Joseph Paisley, or old Joe Parseley, as they are pleased to pronounce him in his own locality.

He had grasped into his own hands the great share of the business before he died, and left it to Laing, who had for some years been his partner. It will be natural to ask then: Was Paisley a blacksmith, and did the term originate with him? The answer is decidedly, No; for a dozen people in Springfield, some of whom were aged and recollected him, confidently declared that he was by trade a tobacconist, and not a blacksmith. From all accounts, it appears that, before his era the lucrative occupation had not been so exclusively monopolized, as it was after-

wards: that the regular line of priests does not go back very decidedly beyond him, except peradventure to one individual mentioned by Pennant: and that he was the first person who so carefully thus studied to monopolize it—or at all events, the first who gained much celebrity by the practice.

Before the present host and hostess tenanted the King's Head, that hostelrie was for seven years occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. Sowerby; and they, together with such honourable local authority as Simon Beatie of Toll-gate fame, the reverend Laings, and divers others of especial mention, not knowing the origin of the term blacksmith as applied to these worthies, conceive that possibly it may have been palmed upon Paisley merely from his personal appearance: he was a tall, stout, and stalwart man; compact and firm in build and proportion; brawny and muscular in the configuration of his limbs; and therewithal possessing great strength. Hence, as he looked like a blacksmith, or one of powerful exterior, some have conjectured that the expression arose in him; yet all, at the same time, uniformly agree that he never had to do with the trade, but was a tobacconist.

The house in which he died stands immediately opposite the King's Head in Springfield. It is related of him, that as he lay on his death-bed, waiting for the grim Angel of Death to open the Janua Mortis and lead him through to the next world, several carriages and four hastily drove into the village, making such a noise and clatter as would have roused the

dead in their graves : wherefore he, who was not actually dead, although very near it, opened his eyes at the sound. They contained three loving couple from the south, who had gone like fury over Solway Moss. The place was in infinite commotion, since every one divined that this arrival would prove a good catch. The old priest lay in a condition so extreme, that it was considered useless to apply to him to do the needful ; but like loyal subjects who profess love and allegiance to a dying king, they begun to turn their thoughts towards his successor. He, however, became wide awake, when he heard the rumbling of those wheels, well knowing that they were tired with gold rather than with iron. By an effort he summoned strength to make inquiry touching the new comers ; and feeling the ruling passion strong within him still, he declared his willingness to play the blacksmith once more, by welding them together in holy matrimony. This, it is said, he really did, even as he lay there ; and it is further said that, when the business was achieved, he found himself no less than £300 richer than he was before.

Shortly after this, the said Angel of Death verily did enter the house and come up to his bed-side. It cried out to him, “ Now, Paisley, come along.” He made no answer, for by this time he was dead !

Now then, we come to the era before Paisley.

Not even on the spot could we discover that the pursuit had been engrossed by any individuals exclusively to themselves, prior to him : but in default of tradition, Pennant furnishes us with an historical

information—and if we cannot procure from rumour, that which we desire, we must e'en be content to put up with authentic history.

This great peregrinator, and learned man, was at Gretna Green in the year 1771 ; and albeit he says, “ here the young couple may be instantly united by a fisherman, a joiner, or a blacksmith,” he subsequently mentions that the chief priest was a fisherman by occupation. It is true, he tells us of a blacksmith—the only notice of the sort we have fallen upon—but he speaks of him incidentally, together with others of other trades, clearly shewing that the business was then open to all artisans whatsoever, and blacksmiths among the number :—and where is the village that does not contain such a functionary, who shoes horses and mends ploughshares for the farmers ?

“ This place,” he continues, “ is distinguished from afar by a small plantation of firs, the Cyprian grove of the place—a sort of land-mark for fugitive lovers. As I had a great desire to see the high priest, by stratagem I succeeded. He appeared in the form of a *fisherman* ; a stout fellow in a blue coat, rolling round his solemn chops a quid of tobacco of no common size. One of our party was supposed to come to explore the coast : we questioned him about the price, which, after eyeing us attentively, he left to our honour. The Church of Scotland does what it can to prevent these clandestine matches, but in vain ; for these infamous couplers despise the fulminations of the Kirk, as excommunication is the only penalty it can inflict.”

From this passage it is clear that the principal marrier, or “ high priest,” as Pennant calls him, was a fisherman ; to whom he gives greater consideration than to the fortuitously mentioned joiner and blacksmith : and hence, also from this passage, by his

collectively speaking of them all, it is manifest that the trade was not subject to so strict a monopoly as now.

It is a curious thing that the popular idea of a blacksmith-priest should prevail, not only in distant places where the real truth might not be known, but actually in the very parish itself, where that idea is unanimously declared to be utterly false and without foundation.

True it is, however, that popular errors do often exist in the minds of the inhabitants of a district—errors touching themselves, or their usages, which they know to be unworthy of credence: and yet, since they are popular fancies, they are clung to and perpetuated with as much respect and diligence, as if they were based on the rock of well-established truth. That such an idea does exist at Gretna as well as at other places is certain, although no one appears to know whence, where, how, or when it arose.

We hope that the most companionable reader, who has sociably journeyed along with us all through these pages, is satisfied, as we certainly are, of the unreasonableness of adhering to it: and yet, at the same time, we admit that it is so strong, so deeply imprinted upon the imaginations of many, and has taken root so firmly in the affections of the world at large, that we have oftentimes wholly failed in conversation, when the topic bore upon this matter, to convince our hearers, whether by argument or assertion, that this long-cherished belief was an entire fallacy.

If the authority of Pennant, of its single self, were

not enough to assure us that it was erroneous to fancy that a blacksmith was the chief marrier during the earlier stages of Gretna's celebrity, we may also call in the name of the learned Dr. Dibdin, a passage in whose Northern Tour, fully corroborates the idea, that a fisherman was then the principal.

"Surely," says he, when speaking in strong terms against the practices there,—“Surely, the only available and effectual remedy would be, a statutable declaration against the legality or validity of such matches ; and then the *fisherman's* occupation is gone.”

There is no mention here about any other tradesman, saving the fisher ; and by the way in which he is named, it should seem that he was sole monarch of the parish.

In Chambers' Picture of Scotland, we have also a very plain assertion, that error has gone abroad into the world touching these matters ; an assertion which tallies well with the other meritable authorities to which we have had recourse.

“The trade,” it says, “was founded by a tobacco-nist, (*not a blacksmith* as is generally believed) named Joseph Paisley, who, after leading a long life of profanity and drunkenness, died so lately as 1814.”

This is but an indifferent epitaph for old Joe, whose mundane celebrity, and the riches of his last visitors from England, brought him three hundred pounds as he lay on his death-bed.

The passage continues in these words:—“The common phrase ‘Gretna Green’ arose from his first

residence at Meggs Hill, on the common or *Green*, between Graitney (as it is sometimes spelt), and Springfield; to the last of which villages, of modern erection, he removed in 1791."

These authors we had not consulted until after we had quitted the place under consideration, and had begun to write this work; but we do confidently aver, that they all corroborate the result of our inquiries, and also corroborate each other.

We were never knocked down, or told we decidedly lied, when we have assured folks by word of mouth what we here say by word of pen; but if angered looks, and looks incredulous, could have done so, verily we should have been knocked down and told as much long ago.

People never like to hear a popular belief questioned or impeached, even though they know it to be erroneous. There is a something within us so enamoured of romance and tradition, that we would almost always rather continue in the cloud of romantic error, than clear it off, or exchange it for dry and matter-of-fact reality.

That the notion of the blacksmith is popular even in Springfield, is evident from the emblazonment on the sign of the "Gretna Wedding" before mentioned, where everybody *knows* it to be false. We have already set forth this achievement at full; and we will here refer to it in amplification of this topic, by reminding the reader that the scene is laid in a veritable smithy, where an anvil forms the altar, where the priest has laid down his sledge-hammer to

take up the book ; and where the background, instead of being a painted window, through which shines a dim religious light, is decorated with certain horse-shoes fixed up against the wall with large nails.

When debating this anomaly and contradiction in Springfield, here falsely displayed at the very head quarters, we particularly demanded an explanation to a fact so unaccountable ; how it was, that a native artist should lay the wedding scene in a blacksmith's shop, when every Scotchman averred that marriages in Gretna parish never were celebrated in such places ? To this the answer was, "Oh, why, we know it's wrong, strictly speaking ; but then we know that our best customers the English, whom we wish to attract and please, have taken such a notion into their heads ; and the fact of its popularity is quite recommendation enough for us to adopt it as a sign. Never mind strict truth in this matter ; when a party of run-aways from the south comes over the Moss into the village, they immediately see a sign that coincides with the favourite idea, and the pleasure derived from this concordance, from seeing their cherished fancy revealed to them here in bright colours, is a thing not to be passed by or withstood. The truth, therefore, is nothing ; you perceive the policy of the sign."

It should seem that even Sir Walter Scott himself has blindly adopted this delusion, without looking further into it than the giving of credence to a flying report ; and from his incorrect notice of localities, it further appears manifest, that he could never have been either at Springfield or Gretna Green.

The passage alluded to is this :—

“ The village of Gretna,” he says, “ towards the termination of Solway Firth, has been famous in the annals of matrimonial adventure, for the clandestine marriages of fugitive lovers from England, which have been solemnized at this celebrated temple of Hymen. The priest, who died lately, *a blacksmith by trade*, (being no other apparently than old David Laing, the pedlar,) has been known to draw one hundred guineas from one couple for performing the ceremony. Springfield, another flourishing village, is only a short distance from Gretna. At the port of Sarkfoot, there is a considerable importation of wood, tar, slates, and other merchandise.”

There is also, over and above, a notion gone abroad that the said blacksmith makes his visitors jump over a broomstick, as one part of the ceremony ; and right graphic delineations of such feats of agility do sometimes adorn the books of the curious ; but when we gravely inquired as to the veracity of this part of the statement—oh ! good gracious how they did laugh !

CHAPTER XV.

Runaway Match of a Bishop's Daughter.

Two lovers came one morning in
The amorous month of May ;
They wedded were at Gretna Green,
And then they went away.

WHEN we were at the King's Head one certain morning, mistress Beattie related unto us how, in the merry and amorous month of May, she, and her husband Alexander, were roused up out of their quiet slumbers by an infinite alarum at the hostelrie door, committed by the impatience of two eager children who dearly loved each other. These two desired to be tied in holy bands, and had come there hastily for the purpose. We all know that "the course of true love never did run smooth," not with anybody who ever knew what "the course of true love" was: there was nothing strange then in the idea that they should have experienced difficulties and prevention. There was a something that stood in their way, some let, some impediment, which "forbid the banns." Now, for this very reason they loved the more, and so much the more burnt with a fiercer affection. A

contemplative mind will take pleasure in turning over the varied traits and peculiarities of this most perverse passion, and of holding up its phases and features to the view of different lights; and to a contemplative mind, that arrives at conclusions from the sober consideration of many examples, this really is the most perverse passion that ever found place within the compass of our nature. Like the darnel discoursed of by poets, which flourisheth more, the more it is crushed under foot; so love, the more it is opposed and thwarted, and denied, so much the more doth it rage to attain its object, and so much the more doth it grow and increase in strength. It thrives upon denial, and flourishes upon vexation; it buds with opposition; blooms with hinderance, and it ripens under prevention.

“It was at the remarkable hour of four o’clock in the morning,” said mistress Beattie, “in the amorous month of May, as I told you, and if my memory serve truly, in the memorable year 1837, that a carriage sped from England, right over the Border, and into the midst of the village; nor pulled bridle, bit, nor curb, until it attained unto the door of this hostelrie. But the fact of a carriage bouncing impatiently into the village, was a matter of every day occurrence—and it might be of every night occurrence, too, or day or night indifferently, just as it might happen—sometimes one, sometimes the other, for we never know when, or which before hand, nor much care; so that the noise which the wheels made needed no explanation for us who understand our

business, as most people do who live by it, and thrive therein."

"Exactly, and well said."

"Why, look you, good sir: it is to these visits that Springfield owes everything. How, think you, we could exist, hold together, keep life in our bodies, buy bread, if a little money was not now and then brought into the place by these means? What else have we to depend upon? Our neighbours up and down the street are poor, labour is slack, and wages, of course, are scarce; and since the making of the new road, the greater part of the travellers who used to pass our door now go through the Green, and never come near us. Before this alteration, or improvement, as they were pleased to phrase it, the chief way from Carlisle lay through Longtown, and so on right up the village here, onward into Scotland; but alas and well-away for Springfield, the improvement has gone far to ruin us all."

"National improvements, you see, cannot look to the private interests of individuals; and it is incumbent on the few to make certain personal sacrifices for the benefit of the many: when they do this, it is called philanthropy."

"Then phi— something is ruination, and ought to be called fie-for-shame."

"It is doing unto others that which you would wish them to do unto you."

"Goodness gracious! no sir, not at all in this instance, for they have nearly ruined me, and I am sure I would not wish to ruin them."

"I mean that, by submitting to these losses for the benefit of giving all your countrymen and countrywomen, and all the whole world if it comes here, a better road to travel by, you do to them just what you would wish them to do to you, supposing any one else had kept the "King's Head," and you yourself had wanted a better road to travel over through this parish."

"I like good roads when I go a journeying, and I do na care if people will be so good as to pay for them ; but really I canna say that I like to have the profits of my trade run away with."

"Very hard, very hard, doubtless ; but it is a christian principle to deprive ourselves for the sake of advantaging our neighbours. If we forget this principle we become selfish."

"I hate selfish folks, I own."

"There is no merit in assisting others if it costs you nothing yourself."

"Peradventure you are right there."

"Come, then, let us hear the sequel of this story. Although your business may have suffered a little by the change, still it is not yet bankrupt : I venture to say you did not lose by these visitors : let us have the rest."

"Well, they beat the door with the pommels of their whips, and they called at the window : sleep was scared from our eyes, and we looked out of the lattice down upon them : they cried ' Haste, come you and let us in, for our need is great ; time is precious, life is short, and love is impatient.' So

we harkened to their call, and quickly let them in, thinking that it was as pleasant to grow rich in the night (for 'twas scarce anything else) as in the day—for riches acquired at night will profit a person when day cometh. The carriage door was opened, the steps were let down, and a gentleman and lady issued therefrom, and entered here, even into this actual room. You know all about my Lord Erskine, for it was detailed to you before. My husband, careful man, went off to Simon Laing incontinently and without tarry; him he got from his drowsy bed with eyes scarce open, yet nothing loth after all (to do him justice) for he is always ready to do a kindly action unto those who be in distress. The postilion raised his finger to the front of his cap, and he said, 'Shall I put the horses into the stable?' I, however, turned to the lady and gentleman, and inquired, whether they would abide under my roof till breakfast or so? But they said, nay; that they purposed wending back into their own country whence they came, as soon as the matter in hand was over; that they never eat breakfast or anything so gross, but feasted upon love, and revelled in the perpetual banquet of affection. Wherefore, good sir, I said nothing more about my poor bread and butter."

We nodded approvingly.

"As, therefore," continued the hostess, "they showed themselves as eager to leave us when we should have served them, as they had been to seek us, wanting of that service, I told the postboy that

there was no need or call whatsoever to unbrace his beasts, that we would not keep him five minutes, and that he might consequently let his horses and his carriage stand at the door where they were. My husband now returned with the weaver, and by his help the affair was carried through as speedily and as effectually as such matters always are here. When it was over, the bridegroom paid the priest like a gentleman; and then the lady turned round to me and said, 'Why, don't you get anything for all this trouble?' I answered the lady,—she was a nice, kind, pleasant, lady too, sir,—I answered that I was satisfied to see her well married, that I gave her joy, and hoped she would be happy. That the priest was the person that was usually remembered, and that he had by no means been forgotten by her husband. 'Well,' she said, 'but we have come to your house and called you up out of your bed and out of your sleep; we have made you come down to attend on us, and open your doors to receive us, and it would hardly be justice to let you go unguerdoned.' Now this, sir, was uttered with a great deal of consideration,—what think you?"

"Of course it was: and you will often find, Mistress Beattie, that ladies have their wits about them in critical positions with a remarkable promptitude, when men would by no means be so acute."

"Well now, it was beautiful the way she turned about to me, that it was, because it came all so unlooked-for like and so unexpected: that she should have thought about me just at that moment, when I

fancied she would not have been able to know whether she was standing on her head or her heels—as most people don't when they are married."

"But that reveals this very admirable trait of feminine promptitude of which I was speaking—a quality which they have in perfection, when the more heavy natures and greater gravity of men make them less alive to momentary acts of acuteness."

"Aweel, aweel; I ken that women are more hasty, more quick, more ready than men be, for the most part.

"Men are more plodding and more deliberative; and they will rather set about calculating the chances of the step they may have in contemplation, than make a hazard to achieve it: women, on the contrary, go at it in a moment, and whilst a man is considering, a woman will have done it by one dash.

"She must have had a lively wit to think of her hostess at such an anxious time. A gentleman in such a case, though he would have meant as well, and felt as liberal, and been just as desirous to do justice to every body, would have forgotten it at the very nick of time as it were, and only have remembered it when he was in his carriage, and more at ease, or more in a state to reflect on all the points of the case. Then he would have cried out that he had quite forgotten the hostess in his hurry, and how sorry he was to have done so; how provoking that he should have omitted her at the time of coming away; and how he would sooner turn back and give her her deserts, than let her suppose that he had wronged her on purpose."

“A very possible thing to have happened, Mistress Beattie.”

“I do na mean to say that this gentleman would have done so, for he was all desire to think of every one that was present: but you know, sir, he had many things to think about, and the responsibility of the business lay especially upon his own shoulders, as he had taken so active a part in coming from home, and in taking the lady from her father's house. So that the anxieties of how he should make the matter up at his return, might well distract his mind from sober reflection whilst he was here.”

“Oh! most true! But what did the lady go on to say?”

“Why, as I was telling you, sir; when the priest had been handsomely rewarded, she turned to me, and asked what I was to have? But I said I was content to see her happy and that would do; but she declared that they had called me up and given me a world of trouble, that they had, and then, said she, these were her very words, ‘We have made you open your doors to receive us, the priest has been remunerated well, and you, whose toil has been just as great, are content to serve us for the reward of seeing us well married!’ She said no more, sir, not another word, but took a purse from her pocket, and quietly dropped it into my hand. She was in rare good spirits the whole time, and skipped back again into the carriage as light as a fairy—and off they drove.”

Out of consideration and deference toward this lady, we are disposed not to mention her name here; suf-

fice it, she was the daughter of a Right Reverend Father in God, a Bishop of the United Kingdom of Great Britian, whose cathedral doth adorn an ancient city lying toward the south-western part of that portion of the aforesaid Great Britain, ycleped England: and if it be that a man may spare a child, having many more, verily his Lordship can endure to spare this one daughter.

Now this was taking a hasty step—as the race-horse said when he was going full split round the course: and if perpetrated in defiance of the will and pleasure of those to whose counsel we should give heed, it were a hasting towards evil a deal too fast. Such evil journeys are for the most part carried through with infinite celerity; and ill luck betide the cattle that pace the last stage to the bourn of iniquity, or, in other words, the bourn 'twixt England and Scotland. Hence it is, as herein above set forth, that this stage over Solway Moss, is never ambled at an easy pace, but with the rapidity of thought passing from one place to another, “which ten times faster moves than the sun’s beams;” and the ancient proverb telleth wherefore and for what reason they always do speed so amazingly on this wicked journey, to wit:—One must needs go fast, when the devil driveth.

There is a talk of carrying the northern rail-road, which passes by the western side of the country, even on from Lancaster to Penrith, through Gretna Green, and so to Kilmarnock into Albyn. Now this dire project could have been designed by none other than Satan (who is the very devil for mischief), in

order to smooth and facilitate the course toward wrong. The face of the country in these parts is level and fitting for such a purpose; and if the said railroad ever is impiously directed into the western Highlands, of a truth it assuredly must go right through this particular place, as the ground lies so favourable for it in an engineering point of view.

CHAPTER XVI.

Visit to the Gretna Priest.

A visit to the weaver-priest,
A register of names,
A true certificate of marriage,
This chapter now proclaims.

SIMON LAING, "weaver and priest," son and heir, and so forth, to the most notable David the pedlar, is a personage of much, and most especial respect, a personage whose interest is great, whose power is confessed, whose influence is extensive, whose friendship is worth obtaining, whose reputation is unbounded, &c.

In his custody are the most important volumes of marriage register, come down to him through a long succession, and by him hereafter to be transmitted to the latest posterity. This Register descended to its present possessor from his father, who received it from Paisley, who received it we know not whence. It probably originated in him, when the plan of monopolizing the trade began to be systematically established.

It has been the policy at Gretna Green, for the

principal marrier to associate unto himself some partner in the business : thus, old Paisley took into his confidence David Laing, and when Paisley died, David connected his son Simon with him as his partner ; furthermore, when the Angel of Death breathed upon David, and Simon was left alone, he, the said Simon, became associated in partnership with one Robert Elliott, of honourable mention.

Now, this apostolic succession is not thus scrupulously maintained without good reason, that is, in so far as they themselves are concerned ; and, indeed, it was the discovery of certain advantages to be derived therefrom, that at first established this consecutive dove-tailing,—this concatenation—of priests.

In the first place, it enables them, by the extreme exclusiveness of their body, to secure to themselves the whole of the traffic, and, above all, the emoluments arising therefrom ; in the second place, it gives vast importance, consideration, and notability to him that thus holds “ the keys ;” and, in the third, this concatenation tends to prevent the loss, dispersion, or injury of the sacred books, so reverently looked upon and so carefully guarded.

In these volumes are entered the names of all those whom the guardian priest has united in holy bands ; and the custody of them gives to their possessor his chief ability to continue the prevailing system of monopoly. Their importance, therefore, is manifest. Hence, that they may not pass into the hands of strangers, the necessity of partnership is acknowledged, so that, when the principal dies, the other

being heir by devise, succeeds to the inheritance. By looking well to these things, they engross much commerce and much lucre to themselves, of course not a little to the envy and prejudice of their neighbours in the parish, whom the destinies have made less fortunate.

Albeit we had more than once fortuitously seen Simon Laing, still, we never had, as yet, paid him a decided visit, by repairing to his own particular abode in the village of Springfield; wherefore, with the ostensible object of saying amiable things, such as inquiring after his health and happiness, but inwardly, with the dire and dark intent of getting a sly peep at the Register, we directed our steps one evening thitherward.

We knocked at the door as one having business; incontinently it was answered, but not by the dignitary himself, but by his wife.

We inquired whether her other half—better we know not—or her “master,” as my Lady Morgan writes it, were at home, as we wished to see him? But to this Mrs. Laing shook her head, a sign which, in every part of the known world, whether savage or civilized, is universally understood to signify a negative.

This question, however, drew from her a keen and scrutinizing glance—a glance evidently commingled with a strong suspicion as to the possible object of the visit; for, like Simon Beatie at the toll-gate, she appeared to think that no stranger could come into the village, and more particularly right up to the

priest's house, without having some most interested motive for so doing.

She searchingly scanned over the new comer, as if to discover whether he might not wear the feature and semblance of bachelorship; and if so, whether he had not come there touching the possibility of ridding himself of a state so irksome and lonely as bachelorship is unanimously allowed to be. Yet, we do believe, that no persons in the world are more ready than the priests, and their confederates of Gretna, to agree that "it is not meet for man to be alone."

She declared that in good sooth her husband was not within at that identical moment, but that the hour of his coming at eve, when the toil of the day was over, had arrived, and he would not be absent long; at all events she did not like to let her visitor depart, lest he should fall into other hands; so she courteously, but urgently bid him enter in and abide her husband's coming. And as he never could resist the alluring accents and persuasive voice of a woman, he hesitated not in the least to comply with her bidding, especially as he saw no reason why he should not.

If one may form a judgment by the appearance and furniture of the chamber into which he was shown—a chamber which embraced at once all the varied attributes of parlour, kitchen, bed-room, nursery, and larder, it would seem that the occupier thereof had not solemnized many profitable marriages of late—none such as Joe Paisley performed whilst

he lay on his death-bed ; for indigence became revealed to his eyes, wherever he directed them.

The floor was neither boards, nor flag-stone, nor brick, nor tiles, nor lime-ash ; it was nothing but plain unsophisticated mother earth, beaten flat—or rather, not flat, for it was like human life in this world, all ups and downs. The tables and chairs were like angels' visits, so that it was not until after much searching that one of the latter could be found to sit down upon ; they were made of native-grown ash, pine, or oak ; and the possessor had evidently conferred the favours of his patronage on several different upholsterers, since no two resembled each other in pattern, but they were all of divers and dissimilar fashion in their make. Some pieces of peat that had been cut on Solway Moss were piled on the dusty hearth, out of which issued the melancholy pretence of a fire ; and the flickering flame, that darted about like an adder's tongue, inconstantly licked the bottom of a smoky iron pot, that the reverend dweller might have his evening meal when he should arrive. The lime-washed walls, once white, were now brown by age and neglect ; a few prints of miserable execution, and one or two popular ballads, taken for all we know from the Border Minstrelsy, were stuck upon them by means of wafers at the corners, for the sake of adornment rich and rare.

Other decorations, ornaments, and articles of furniture consorted passable well both in style and semblance with such as we have enumerated ; and the

woman herself, in appearance and vesture, suited, not unmeetly, the poverty around.

These important observations, so imperative to the perfect compilation of a complete History of Gretna Green, had scarcely been achieved, when the latch of the door was lifted, and no less a personage than Simon Laing, "weaver and priest," walked into the apartment.

To say the truth, and nothing but the truth, he certainly looked much more like the weaver than like the priest. But Simon bears a good reputation, and a fair name for integrity; never demanding a higher fee from his employers, than his predecessors have been wont to demand before him; much consideration is due to so great a dignitary from "his high place" alone; and if it be that the Evil One may sometimes prompt him to a little exorbitance of charge, still, we know that Shakspeare says, "Let the devil be honoured for his burning throne."

He is a kind of happy medium in stature, neither tall nor short; in face he is somewhat spare, and not much otherwise in limb; and for that particular, very different from his rival at the toll-gate, the stout and stalwart Simon Beatie.

His greeting was evidently that of an encouraging welcome; for, like the woman whom he had taken for better for worse, he manifestly boded that some good would arise out of this meeting.

Like a perfect diplomatist who has a secret victory to gain, he begged his visitor to be seated and at ease; he then entered into a pleasant strain of con-

versation, not bluntly assailing the topic which was nearest his interest, and as he conjectured, nearest the interest—or at all events nearest the heart—of this said visitor, but discoursed of subjects foreign to the matter, only now and then, by way of judiciously feeling his ground, casually alluding to the loving politics of his parish.

But his visitor had also a secret victory to gain; he had an unrevealed object in view, which was, to elicit from Simon the knowledge of certain facts touching his reverend calling; and to compass this, he had recourse to a little diplomatic hypocrisy, by putting the priest on a wrong scent, even as Pennant and his friends did, when they sought out and gossiped with the fisherman.

He gave him to understand that he had not come to Gretna “for nothing;” which assertion, broached with an air of significance and mystery, led the comprehensive mind of the weaver to infer that he had really come there for a great deal,—a great deal more than his modesty permitted him to express all at once.

This was just the thing; Simon shrewdly intimated that a word to the wise was enough; whilst his visitor chuckled within himself, and thought that a wink was as good as a nod to a blind horse.

Both parties, therefore, having come to a clear understanding, they now began to talk with less reserve; but the applicant discovered, in prosecution of his diplomatic negotiations, that the surest way of coming by the knowledge that he sought, was to start

innumerable objections and many fears, as to the plans so readily proposed by the priest: for, by starting difficulties on one side, it was necessary that they should be explained away on the other; and this course served to impart the very knowledge that was desired.

The stranger then honestly confessed—certainly he would not conceal it—he would not deny it—he confessed that he ran great risk in the course he was pursuing; that marrying at Gretna Green was not the form he should prefer; that he should always counsel everybody to take so important a step advisedly; that he would rather have been married in England in the usual way; he avowed openly he preferred it, and approved of it; but that desperate ailments demanded desperate cures; and in fact, to conceal nothing, but to unburden his bosom frankly to the weaver, he had now, in a state of the maddest delirium, fled from his home, his country, his friends (all but the sole sharer of his affections) and had hastened to the Gilead of Gretna to collect balm.

The sympathising mechanic, howbeit, saw no necessity for any anxiety whatsoever; that the stranger, in coming to him from home and friends, had done no more than hundreds had done before; that his troubles were altogether imaginary, unreal, and without foundation; and that, if he would only send to the King's Head Inn for his ladye love, where he concluded she was doubtless secreted, he would cure him of all his afflictions in the space of about two minutes.

Certainly this was a plain and friendly offer ; but his visitor had not as yet learnt all he desired, and therefore it should seem that his perplexed mind could not immediately come to a cool and definite resolution. He much wished to know whether the affair could really be achieved with so much ease, and expedition, and secrecy, as his reverence declared ; whether it could be assuredly accomplished in despite of all denial or opposition from hostile parties ; whether, if done in opposition to parents and guardians, the tie would be equally secure ; whether, if so done, it would hold good against English law, and defy all the Alexander the Greats of the Inner Temple who might try to undo it—and whether, in defiance of half a dozen other *whethers* and *ifs*, it would be all right, legal, tight, proper, and so forth ?

To all these difficult questions and honest doubts, put forth, as the knight of the hand-loom thought, by one who had been driven by adversity and persecution to a just desperation ; yet, by one who had not quite lost his powers of reflection, or of calculating the consequences of a rash act, he returned answers that were most encouraging and consolatory.

So eloquent at last did Simon get, when he now resolutely set about persuading away all obstacles,—so thoroughly indeed did he succeed in removing them,—so enticing a course of argument did he take up in favour of the advantages attendant on marrying at once, without waiting to deliberate, which, he declared, always brought doubt and mistrust,—so completely did he make it appear that those who deli-

berate on matrimony are like those who deliberate going into a cold bath, who, instead of plunging in at once, stand on the brink waiting and considering, until they at last begin to shiver and turn away in disgust,—and so entirely did he succeed in drawing a bright picture of wedded love and happiness, and so on, that his visitor almost began to regret that he had not brought any lady to the King's Head or the Hall, for whom, as the priest suggested, he might send.

This only shows how weak and irresolute human nature is; how we may be won over to do a thing which, but five minutes before, we had no idea of; and how easily we may be persuaded to go astray when the devil becomes our counsellor. Simon's new friend, however, nobly triumphed over temptation, for the possibility of yielding thereunto was beyond his reach. Of a truth, he never was married at Gretna, and he hopes he never may.

But all this time he had totally failed in obtaining a glimpse at the important books of Register, for the priest was wary, cautious, and jealous. Hints would not do; direct questions were unavailing; and therefore, dissembler that he was, he now “veered his mayne sheete,” as Edmund Spenser made one of his crafty heroes do in a difficult case, and baited his treacherous hooks with an irresistible morsel of sweet flattery.

Who be they that declare it is only women that nibble at this gentle? Peradventure, it is not women who say so, but rather those who would

seek to disown such a weakness in their own sex, by essaying to naturalize it as pertaining inseparably to the other.

No matter ; he enlarged upon Simon's widely extended fame—upon the sanctity of his calling—his honourable position—his exclusiveness and note, as being the much sought after by all the noble and the simple who might be in duress—and the undeniable fact of his being the *custos rotulorum* or *librorum Registrorum*.

Hard, indeed, must the weaver have been if he could have resisted all this: the bait was taken, and the float disappeared under the water.

He was palpably touched when he was assured that his fame had found its way far south of the border ; and being now awakened to his own importance as custodian of the sacred volumes, he evidently betrayed traces of being pleased with himself ; and when a person is pleased with himself, it is a sure argument that he is also pleased with those who may be around him. Like the toad in the fable, he began to swell up at the idea of his own pride of place ; so that (in his own eyes) he soon became twice as big a man as he had been only a few minutes before. At length, going to a closet, he produced the very books.

For one half hour did these two amuse themselves in turning over the variously written pages, the priest satisfying his visitor's curiosity touching many of the personages whose names there appeared. Truly, he was not a little amused at what he saw

laid open to his wondering eyes ; for almost every page turned up something to speculate upon ; the noble, the gentle, the illustrious, the notorious, the wealthy, the wicked, the wild, the gay,—there they were, manifestly, undeniably.

Before we bade this worthy dignitary farewell, we had yet one other small matter of business to transact with him : and that was, to obtain a marriage certificate, such as is employed in the true, legitimate, and usual mode of performing the ceremony at Gretna. At first he hesitated, thinking, that when we should be in possession of this paper, we might go and get united to the lady who was concealed, as he believed, at the King's Head, without his assistance or co-operation, by somebody else, and of course to his prejudice. These scruples were natural enough ; and it was not until after we had solemnly declared that our main object in coming to Springfield was partly owing to a fatal curiosity, which we would gladly cast off upon the other sex if we could, and partly for the purpose of collecting authentic materials for a standard work ; that, indeed, we were only an innocent tourist returning from the Highlands ; that we had not any intention whatever of being wedded within the bounds of his parish ; and that, to satisfy him in every point, we would pledge him our word, our honour, and all we held sacred, that if peradventure we really should be married there, though totally against our present purpose, of a truth, nobody else besides himself should perform the office for us.

These protestations, so seriously pronounced, served to overrule every objection; and when the weaver heard a broad silver piece ring upon the table, he produced the certificate with most admired readiness.

At such time of the arrival of the disobedient children at the Hall, or other hostel, who have conspired betwixt themselves to run away from home, and have, by means of certain subtle contrivances and stratagems, succeeded in eluding parents or other keepers, and have actually declared their intention and most foul design of thus perpetrating matrimony, then will such a certificate be duly called into immediate requisition.

We believe we have elsewhere declared that mine host requires no elaborate explanation as to the motives for the visit; for those who live upon sin in others readily anticipate iniquity, even before it is pointed out to them.

The spaces left blank in the paper are filled up with the names and places of abode of the parties, (here shown in italics); and then they subscribe their names at the right hand lower corner, whilst two witnesses (who may be the innkeeper and the postilion) do the same on the other side of the document.

This is all that is necessary to constitute a legal and binding marriage, and the certificate is always a sufficient voucher that it has taken place. It often happens, let it be recorded, that the fugitives from England, in spite of their iniquity in pursuing this course, are not without some good still lingering

in their minds. They are not married beneath the roof of Mother Church, because, peradventure, they could not get the knot tied there; but, owing to impeding circumstances, they were enforced to fly to Scotland, although they would have preferred the church if possible. Thus, they really look upon the ceremony in a religious view, and would rather have availed themselves of a clergyman; but, sooner than not get married at all, supposing them bent upon so doing, they have had recourse to such simply legal forms, by way of *pis aller*, as the enactments of the land recognise to be valid.

For such piously disposed elopers, even the priests of Gretna have provided. For those, indeed, who wish to throw a greater air of sanctity over the transaction, than the usual hasty and profane mode of procedure seems to carry with it, these dignitaries will pronounce the following words, namely:—"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." In many instances, howbeit, methinks that to say these words were but to utter sheer blasphemy. This is not all; in some cases, if the parties require it, they will repeat the Lord's Prayer, and the native artist who painted the sign of the "Gretna Wedding" appears to have had this idea in his head when engaged about that work; for the blacksmith is there represented kneeling down, with an open book on the anvil before him, (no book is required, generally speaking,) and with his clasped hands raised, as in the attitude of prayer.

Should "the happy couple" choose to abide at

the Hall for a space, they will there find passable good accommodation; David Laing has assured us that the cellar contains "the best of shumpine;" and ourself can aver that there are divers knotty-limbed trees around the lawn, whereon those who have "married in haste," and have afterwards weepingly discovered their mistake, can hang themselves up by the neck in the wind; and there dry their tears whilst they "repent at leisure."

CHAPTER XVII.

Expenses of Marriage at Gretna.

How much it costs at Gretna Green,
 To buy a wife is told:
 And also how, in days of yore,
 Ladies were bought and sold.

HE who goes out to purchase unto himself some rare and beauteous jewel, will, at such a time, very naturally put forth this sequent question, to wit:—
 How much will it cost?

In the same way, also, he who buys the rare jewel of his lady-love at the marriage mart of Gretna Green, that he may enrich his bosom by the adornment thereof, will discover, perhaps, how much it has cost, after the purchase has been achieved, if it should happen that he had omitted to inquire touching that matter before.

Owing to the enlightenment of the times, and owing to the privileges which that enlightenment has given to the delicious torments of our lives—the last and most perfect moiety of creation—we do not now seek to purchase these adornments until we have first wrung from them, with much per-

severance and importunity, a sweet and condescending consent.

But in laying siege to these fair fortresses, wherefore should they persist in deafening their ears to a petition which, after all, is not disagreeable to them? And why should they withhold the immediate bestowal of that heart within them, when they know that they are really desiring nothing so much as to surrender it at once—free, whole, perfect, and entire?

Let them answer these queries (which they will not do); for what man ever explored the labyrinth of a lady's bosom?

In purchasing wives, the sums expended in the form of anxiety, vexation, and trouble, are enormous: but with this bullion we have not so much to do in the present chapter, as we have with more palpable mint-metal commonly used in barter. As regards the former species of coin, a man hopes, (no matter with what certain or uncertain grounds of reason,) that the moment his purchase is concluded, all further calls upon his purse will immediately cease; but, as regards the latter, we assure him that the case is different;—that his expenses will not cease, even when the purchase is completed.

In some instances his expenditure in vexation, and so on, continues to be a matter of ruin during the whole course of his existence: he had perchance disbursed sums incalculable during the expensive period of courtship, when every thought by day was perplexing, and every dream by night was anxious;

but had consoled himself throughout this period, by the reflection, that as soon as his jewel should be his own, all this would immediately be over, and that his years would then flow on in peace and economy. If it ever happens otherwise, and if gentle swains are ever out in their sweet calculations, the cases are rare indeed ; and as we do not love to anticipate evil, seeing that it always comes in this world quite soon enough without anticipation, we will not speculate in this vein any further.

The business we have in hand is—how much base and most despicable dross, commonly called gold, will be wheedled out of a bridegroom for being executed at Gretna Green ?

This question cannot be answered bluntly in few words, as—sixpence,—a shilling,—a pound,—twenty pounds,—but requires an *if*, a *perhaps*, or one or two suppositions connected with yourself, your lady, the mode in which you travel, the appearance you make, and one or two other contingencies.

Sometimes men have bought wives very cheaply, and—have paid dearly for it afterwards. It is, however, better to pay a good price at first, and there's an end of all further trouble.

We recollect, that not many years ago, a man took his wife into the market-place, in one of the midland towns of England, and made it known to all whom it might concern, that he had repaired thither for the sincere purpose of vending his merchandise. And certain it is, as the tradition runs, a customer

came and negotiated, and actually bought this dainty morsel of wares, for the solace and adornment of his bosom; and the outlay that he entered into was the veritable sum of three shillings sterling money of this realm.

Now, this man had a decided bargain; some said they both had — but never mind; the buyer had so, beyond all question. In the first place, he had experienced no impoverishing dissipation in the troubles of a long courtship; no expenditure of anxiety — of desire — of yearning — of hope deferred; with a light heart, and a clear eye, such as bespoke a good night's rest, he had come into the market, where, for three shillings, he had done as great a deed as costs most other men perhaps twice as much — or nearly. It was cheap certainly — very cheap; but the tradition does not say whether his little expenses ended here, or whether he “paid dearly for it” afterwards.

In the annals of the town of Dunstable, there is an entry, which sets forth how a man and all his family were sold for the particular sum of one mark—an ancient coin worth thirteen shillings and four pence; but this fact, albeit some antiquaries have held it remarkable, as going to prove that slavery existed in England so late as the year 1283, (the date of the entry,) is not worthy the reader's attention, as it is only history, and not tradition.

The passage itself runs thus:—“This yeare wee soulded our slaue by byrth, William Pike, and alle his familie, and received one marke ffrom the buyere.”

The Javans do not always purchase their help-mates like the swain in the market, but sometimes have recourse to a very pleasant species of lottery. This lottery, in one sense, is highly to be commended ; because, owing to its nature and principle, a player who throws a hazard therein, cannot cast the die rather for the portion than the lady, as gamblers in other climes will now and then do. And, let it be observed, that to many of these prizes that may be thus drawn out, vast portions of metallic dross are attached ;—a fact however, after all, not to be wondered at, when looked into ; for we know that to every thing of refined purity a certain portion of dross is attached ; but which, in comparison with the more estimable part, is but dross indeed.

At Samarang, a large town in the island of Java, there is an establishment devoted to this purpose, wherein all the orphan children, as well rich as poor, are nurtured and brought up. The governors and superintendents of this building are enjoined, under engagements the most obligatory and binding, to maintain a sacred silence as to the fortunes of the fair inmates ; so that those gentle juvenals who come to woo, cannot deceive themselves with regard to the object of their adoration ; or, by a mistake, woo a store of gold where they ostensibly went to woo a lady.

These fortunes are placed in the safe custody of certain trustworthy persons, usually residing at Batavia, the metropolis of the country, on whom similar injunctions of secrecy are imposed ; and it is under-

stood that these young damsels consider this asylum their home until they are married.

No regulations with regard to the rank of the bachelor, who may come and select wheresoever his flickering fancy may direct, have been enacted ; no matter who he is, or what he is, supposing him of creditable reputation, he may, in this flower garden, cull at pleasure, so long as he possesses one requisite, and that is, he must be well and truly seized of an income of 730 florins a year, or two florins a day—say, a hundred a year English. This presupposes him of fair and honest repute ; this gives him the *entré*, and sets the whole market before him “where to choose.”

He then falls in love, and, if no just impediment exists, he marries the lady of his selection, of course, utterly ignorant of the amount of dross that pertains to this seven times refined ingot of purity.

Some days after the catastrophe, it is made known to him the portion that his wife has brought ; and thus it is plain that his choice could not have been biassed by any sordid motives of gain.

We are assured that a servant of the Military Hospital—albeit a servant possessed of the qualifications,—lately selected a damsel in this chance way, who was discovered to be worth 65,000 florins ; and since his good fortune, the applications have been very urgent, the more so, as it is reported that there is a young lady in the establishment who has no less than 200,000 florins at her disposal.

At Gretna Green the universally established maxim

amongst the priests is, in their dealings towards those who fly thither over Solway Moss without seeing it, *to get as much as they can.*

We think we have already somewhere hinted that there exists no regular and fixed demand, either by law or custom; but that when the bridegroom and the official meet, they are at liberty to struggle with each other much in the same way that two rivals in worldly fame are won't to do;—one, very likely, is striving all he can to mount as high as possible, whilst the other is using every exertion to keep him down.

This practice, where the bridegroom has been informed of its existence before his arrival, is often the parent of much chaffering and ingenuity on both sides; at times producing a species of diamond-cut-diamond inter-negotiation. And the worst of this kind of combat is, that it is in many cases left to the *honour* of the party as to how long he shall contend, and when he shall give in—a position that defeats a delicate or sensitive person at once.

Pennant tells us, that when he and his friends were pretending a matrimonial negotiation with the fisherman, and that, when they expressed a wish to know, amongst other preliminaries, what the expenses would be, the fisherman eyed them attentively, and then said he would leave it to their “honour.” He eyed them thus scrutinizingly, to discover by their air, mien, and appearance, how much, in all probability, they might be able to afford; and then he cautiously

declined naming any sum, but left it to their honour, or their discretion, or their generosity, or, more properly, to their ignorance of the usages of Gretna; hoping that this ignorance, combined with the jingling of the word "honour" in their ears, might be the means of instigating them to give more than even his impudence, or lack of that honour, could demand.

It is a want of knowledge of the usual customs in that parish that has too often made a bridegroom give a sum ten times greater than he might or *ought* to have given. His generosity at such a moment is taken advantage of by the set of extortioners by whom he is surrounded—a fact that is neither fair, just, nor honourable; but what care they, so that they carry on a thriving business? He goes there in a hurry, ignorant of their practices, and perhaps under the idea that there exist certain legal fees to be paid, and that beyond these they cannot and dare not go: but, to his dismay (if he is of a generous or confiding disposition), he discovers that everything is left to his "honour"—a qualification which he secretly wishes he was devoid of on that most especial occasion.

In order to feel his way, and to sound these swindlers, he asks what is usual amongst the generality of visitors who repair there? Alack! this is asking good counsel of his enemies; it is seeking that which it is neither their interest or their purpose to give: it is seeking figs among thistles, and bread among stones.

They say that it is customary not to be mean or

ungenerous when a gentleman comes to Gretna Green ; that his *friends* there have done more for him, in uniting him to the lady that best he loved, than any body in England was able to do for him ; that now he was so happy, he surely could not grudge handsomely paying those that had made him so ; that it was a joyful thing that didn't happen often in a man's life (and fortunately, too, thinks he) ; that different gentlemen gave differently, according to their generosity and kindness (not means or ability) ; and that, indeed, some good gentlemen had given 50*l.*, and some excellent ones had not minded 100*l.*!

This is the strain they pursue ; and in such a case, after such a tirade, what is to be done ?

Such is the position of those who repair thither ignorant of the modes of proceeding amongst these gentlemen in black, (not black cloth ;) but those who go, previously having been made acquainted with their swindling tricks, are better prepared to resist them with advantage to themselves.

Custom, howbeit, is oftentimes stronger than law, and will achieve that which law may be too impotent to do. Custom here (as established by their reverences) is all powerful, and is able to enforce practices which no law sanctions, and which no justice could approve.

The only thing to be said in defence of the extortion is, that none need go there and submit to it if they did not choose ; if they object to it, let them keep away. Such a course of reasoning, even if

allowed to be irrefragable, were but a slender consolation to the lover, or lovers, who were dying with impatience and anxiety to have that knot tied at Gretna which they could not get tied elsewhere. "As good to die and go as die and stay," are the words which a swain would repeat when placed in a dilemma so perplexing.

We are assuredly of opinion that this cupidity ought not to be encouraged; for, although lovers may be under obligations to the officials for their services, still they are not under obligations to the Gretna priests individually, as any other persons whatsoever would answer the purpose equally well; and therefore, a rational amount of remuneration ought to satisfy these land sharks; and if it did not, owing to the corruptions that prevail, it is high time they were taught better.

Shakspeare says, that "he is well paid who is well satisfied;" but he does not say, that he who is not satisfied with a fair recompense, ought to be paid more and more until he is. If such were the case with traffic in general between man and man, a rare field indeed for discontent and extortion would be opened to the world; but the custom and practices north of the Sark, in some instances, appear almost to have come up to this.

We repeat, that it is not our object in this most veritable history, to pave a road to Gretna Green for all whom it may concern, or to invite persons to repair thither to be wedded, who might otherwise

not have thought of it ; but simply, like a good historiographer as we are, to record facts as we culled them on the spot, sincerely hoping that none will make an evil use of that, wherein no evil was intended. We feel, however, that these our pages would never of themselves be able to instigate to such a step ; but that the sole and great instigator would ever be love, accompanied by prevention and difficulties. We all along deprecate a course so unwise ; if there ever be any in time to come, who may be afflicted with this “madness most discreet,” and who, yielding to its influence, are weak enough to go there, in that case, we think that these volumes will put them up to a trick or two, which will enable them to cope with these worthy priests, and thereby to save themselves the unnecessary expenditure of many a stamped piece of glittering mint metal ; which glittering pieces were much better handed over to their newly made brides to purchase a guard ring or other trinket—an act which is nothing more in a husband than putting his purse out of one hand into the other.

Tacitus informs us, that the ancient Germans played at games of hazard with a most insatiable fondness ; and that when they had staked and lost all they possessed, they would hazard their wives, and lose them. Matters are now diametrically opposite. In the present day we play at games of equal hazard for the ladies ; only that instead of playing to lose them, we hazard everything in order to win and obtain them. Thus it will be seen that the times are

amazingly changed, but changed, most assuredly, for the better.

Formerly men purchased their wives because they looked upon them as creatures inferior to themselves, even as we now purchase a cow or a sheep; now, however, we purchase them because we are more aware of their value than ever the ancients were—because we look upon them as creatures too glorious to live without—and because we are not complete or perfect in ourselves unless coupled with that moiety which at once raises us to dignity, respect, and honour before all the world. But, in making these sweet purchases now-a-days, we willingly give as much more for the fair merchandise, in so far as we estimate it above what our long-forgotten ancestors did;—we give up our earthly possessions for their use—we give our heart—in fine, we give up our whole selves. After that, what else have we to give? It would be difficult to say.

A bachelor is a nobody—he is nothing—he is of no consideration—of no dignity; he has no home—no local tie; he is a vagabond on the face of the earth. But when he gets rid of the stigma of bachelorship, and becomes mated with beauty and virtue, he is at once a person of honour; he establishes a home—he has a local habitation—ay, and a name too; he rises in importance,—mankind, as by common consent, pay him deference; he is a householder—a trustworthy person; lastly, he has now rank—before, he had none.

In obtaining his rank, however, we would again counsel him to get it in a respectable way. Don Quixote would have received a more dignified knight-hood, had the sword been laid on his lank shoulder by a sovereign rather than by an innkeeper; and a bachelor will be advanced with greater dignity and credit by a churchman under an arched roof, than by a weaver under the smoky ceiling of a country tavern.

“ Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper *place* to marry.”

These words of Mr. Cowper are good advice, and we readily lay hold of them in support of our argument; modestly thinking, that our own effusions alone would not meet with any thing like the deference that a name so well known as his must command. If the reader were to run away with the idea that we were a bachelor, (an idea which, peradventure, might be preposterously erroneous,) we know that we should gain no respect at all after what we have above said: and if we do not quote Cowper on the authority of a married, or promoted man, we can at all events quote him with the assurance that his fame alone is of creditable weight.

That funny wag whom we accidentally encountered at Carlisle, as before noticed, merrily narrated how he posted over the Mess of Solway without seeing one bit of it, and how he was married to the maiden of his selection, on whom he had spent vast sums (of anxiety) by the so called “blacksmith,” David Laing.

To our inquiries as to the "damage," he returned that he gave the veteran priest half a sovereign, though he declared that he doubted not but he could have done it for less, as many others had. "But then," continued he, "I passed for a gentleman, and therefore I was obliged to pay for it."

He who goes there bent on economy, had better go in sackcloth, and mounted in a vehicle whose appearance shall not indicate splendour or ostentation: he who does not this, will most certainly have "to pay for it."

When ourself was at Springfield, the good people told us that the stalwart keeper of the toll-gate was sometimes very reasonable in his demands—where he found it impracticable to charge high. He was wary enough to his customers, not to return a direct answer even to a direct question; but to scan their appearance in order to make an estimate; and then, if at last urged to lay aside mystery or innuendo, and name any particular sum, he took good care not to let his conscience stand in the way of mentioning a pretty high one.

If, notwithstanding, he has not as yet performed the ceremony, so as to bring his visitors somewhat into his power,—and if, they are only arranging preliminaries, it is quite allowable in such negotiations to traffic like strict men of business—to beat him down, to curb his rapacity, and, indeed, to bring him to reason.

Of a truth we were told, that rather than let a

couple slip from his hands, whom he had succeeded in arresting as they passed the bridge, and whom he feared might repair to some one of his rivals in the village, he would unite them in the bands of holy matrimony for the most especial sum of one shilling.

It is a very natural feeling implanted in human nature, to achieve for ourselves the best fortune we can ; and this propensity in the priests of Gretna, is of remarkably strong development.

Furthermore ; if, in the first instance, having flown at high and noble game, we afterwards discover that such game is beyond the compass of our attainment, we easily find means to lower our lofty pinions—to cut the wings of our pride—to abate our demands—and to be content with what we had previously looked upon as unworthy and not worth having.

On this fact, as connected with our nature, the dignitaries in this parish act ; they aim at a high mark at first ; but in default of attaining to it, they will come down to that which is more on a level with reason.

All these things will let the reader know a truth of which many persons in distant parts have doubted, and which some few have argued, to wit,—that there is no fixed charge acknowledged either by law or usage, that the priests always try to get as much as they can, and, let us add, that the bridegroom ought always to try and pay as little as he can.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Expenses of Marriage at Gretna, *continued.*

As chapter last could not contain
All that we had to say,
The self-same subject goes amain
Much in the self-same way.

A MERITORIOUS writer who inhabits in the town of Dumfries, or at least, who did so a short space ago, nigh to the region whose history is contained in these pages,—a writer whose habitation being so little removed away, has necessarily been an eye-witness and a local gossip of many of the executions that have befallen ; and again, a writer whose information may be accepted as authentic, owing to his proximity ; this writer has penned a few pleasant facts touching the usages of the Gretna Green ecclesiastics, especially that particular one of the loving churchman from the south, which facts, under permission, we will display in the commencement of this chapter.

We like to see an author quote : we are sometimes glad to do it in these pages. It shows that an author does not advance things on his own impertinent authority ; it shows that he pays deference to others who practise the same art as himself.

“ There are,” says this fellow-labourer, “ two rival practitioners at Springfield, one of whom married Paisley’s grand-daughter, and fell heir to his office, in much the same way that some persons acquire the right of vending quack medicines.

“ Still,” he continues, very rightly, “ the other gets a good deal of custom ; and here, as in everything else, competition has been favourable to the interests of the public. Though a bargain is generally made before hand, a marriagemonger who has no rival to fear, might fix his fee at any sum he pleased ; and instances have occurred, in which the parties complained they had been too heavily taxed.

“ Not long before my visit to Springfield, a young English clergyman, who had failed to procure his father’s consent, arrived for the purpose of being married without it. The fee demanded was thirty guineas, a demand at which his reverence demurred ; at the same time stating, that though he had married many a couple, his highest fee never exceeded half-a-guinea. The clergyman, in fact, had not so much money about him ; but it was agreed that he should pay ten pounds in hand, and grant a promissory note for the balance ; and the bill, certainly a curiosity of its kind, was regularly negotiated through a Carlisle banking-house, and as regularly retired at the time appointed. And here I must mention a circumstance which has not been provided for in the late bill anent combinations ; though it manifestly tends to augment the tax on irregular marriages. At Springfield

there are two inns, as well as two priests, one of which inns each of the latter patronizes exclusively. More than this, the house at which the lover arrives at Springfield depends entirely at what inn he starts from at Carlisle. Though he may wish to give a preference, and issue positive orders on the subject, these orders are uniformly disobeyed. The postboys will only stop at one house; and that for the best of all reasons, namely, that the priest, knowing the value of their patronage, goes snacks with them in the proceeds. Except in cases of sickness, or absence, the priests never desert their colours. All the guests of the one house are married by Mr. —, and of the other, by Mr. Elliott; so that those who are most deeply concerned, have very little to say in the matter. The latter of these personages, who has lately retired from his calling, or rather been deprived of his ancient office by the usurpation of an inn-keeper, published about a year ago a little volume of memoirs containing many amusing instances of his experience as a Gretna priest. His book is well worth reading. The following is one of his numerous and interesting anecdotes, and was told him by his predecessor, Joseph Paisley.

“ A young English lady, daughter of a wealthy old baronet, of one of the Midland counties, had fixed her affections on the son of a neighbouring gentleman, of considerable landed property, who had paid his addresses to her for some time, they having been, as it were, brought up together, and both their families appeared to approve of their courtship. But, ‘ the course of true love never did run smooth,’ and they were doomed to experience

the truth of this old saying ; for about the time they began to think of finishing their courtship by marriage, it became suddenly public that the old Squire, the young gentleman's father, was in very embarrassed circumstances, owing to his fondness for betting on horse-races, then much in fashion, and gambling, vices which he had long indulged in, almost in secret, and to a ruinous extent, little dreamed of by the world, more especially his own neighbourhood. His son, I believe, consented to the sale of the largest portion of the family estate, to rescue his father from his difficulties, and both became poor gentlemen, characters which the world did not fail quickly to discover, and appreciate accordingly. The youth was the first victim, being immediately forbid visiting the house of his fair lady, by the old Baronet, who, in the good old fashion of fathers in those days, soon gave her to understand that she must think no more of her first lover, but prepare to receive one of his choosing, and whom he had already invited to commence his courtship. This was, in due course conveyed to her lover, with whom she still managed to keep up a correspondence, and even to meet occasionally, and the result was, he succeeded in persuading her to elope with him to Gretna, and that on the very night of the arrival of the new suitor for her hand. The young couple set off for the north. The old Baronet was, it appears, almost frantic with rage on being informed of his daughter's elopement, and, having armed himself with pistols, immediately pursued, attended by his friend, both threatening the young man with death should they overtake him. The young pair having taken their measures well, speedily arrived at Gretna, and lost no time in summoning the assistance of Mr. Paisley, who always declared them to have been the handsomest, and best matched couple, he had ever performed this office for, and they were, by him, in due form, married before proper witnesses, and a regular certificate signed and given them. Upon the completion of the ceremony, the young gentleman, taking Mr. Paisley aside, briefly told him the circumstances of the case, and that he expected pursuit, and asked what he would recommend them to do. I believe Mr. Paisley's prudential considerations had more influence with the timid, blushing girl, than the soft pleadings of her young husband, and she at length suffered herself to be conducted to the nuptial chamber, as it was always called, it being the custom for parties dreading immediate pursuit, to retire there soon after the perform-

ance of the ceremony, in order that the consummation of the marriage might be added as an additional bar to their separation, or any endeavour to set it aside. In the middle of the night the inmates of the little inn were alarmed by the sudden arrival of a chaise and four horses, driven at the top of their speed, and presently the old Baronet and his friends alighted, and began to thunder at the door and window shutters, with the butt ends of their pistols, till the former was opened by the frightened landlord, only just in time to prevent its being broken in. The terror of the poor girl in the meanwhile, can be better imagined than described, while the young man began hurrying on some clothes, intending to hasten to her father, and endeavour to appease him. The excited father having gained admittance, fiercely interrogated the trembling landlord, whom he threatened with instant death if he did not show him where the fugitives were hid. The landlord, while ascending the stairs, which he did as slow as his impatient and unwelcome guest would permit, endeavoured to smooth the old man with the usual common-place consolations for his too late arrival, and unfortunately, as a last resource happened to mention the fact of their having consummated the marriage as a reason for the old marplot, 'to grin and bear it,' and the unfortunate catastrophe which ensued was always attributed by Mr. Paisley to this imprudent conduct on the part of the landlord.

"The old gentleman had reached the landing of the staircase, and was close to the door of the room in which were his daughter and her husband, as the landlord made this last remark, which increased his irritation in such a degree, that he instantly rushed against the door, which yielding to his force, he at once stood before his terrified daughter and her lover, at the latter of whom he instantly presented one of the pistols he held in his hand. On seeing this, the poor girl jumped from the bed in her night dress, to interpose between them, but, alas! only in time to fall upon her lover's lifeless body, for, before she could prevent it, her father had fired with fatal effect. At the report of the pistol, the alarmed household hastened to the room, where they were shocked at the scene which met their view. Weltering in his blood which flowed from the wound in his breast, lay the unfortunate youth, upon whom his bride, now a widow, had fallen, and whose night-dress was stained with the sanguine stream, while the grim father stood

looking on in a sort of stupefaction, the fatal weapon still in his hand. One domestic, bolder than the rest, would have seized him, but was deterred by the weapon he still held, and with which he threatened to shoot the first person who should impede his actions. With the assistance of his friend, who had now joined him, he raised his daughter from the floor, and hastily wrapping her in some cloaks, carried her to his chaise, into which, having put her clothes, he and his friend jumped, and immediately drove off, she still continuing insensible. On the arrival of Mr. Paisley, who had been sent for, he found the murderer had gone, and was exceedingly angry with the landlord, first, for having permitted him to enter the house, seeing his excited state, and knowing him to be armed, and then for letting him escape, which, had he been there would not have happened, as he declared, that in the excitement of the moment, he should not have hesitated to have taken his life, rather than have let him escape; and being a very determined man, there is little doubt he would have kept his word.

“On his trial for this crime, the counsel for the old man made it appear that he had done it only in self-defence, and I believe he got off free, but found reason to repent his cruelty, as his daughter never recovered the shock, but died soon after broken hearted; after which, finding himself hated, and shunned by all his former friends and neighbours, he retired to the Continent, where he spent the remainder of his existence.”

“But to return to financial matters. From first to last, it may be said, that the fond pair are, as it were, passively transported from their own homes of single blessedness, at once into a foreign country and a state of matrimony, without any pains on their part, but simply what consists in ‘paying as they go along.’

“In this way something like a monopoly still exists; and what is more strange still, not only the postboy who drives a couple, but his companions, and

the whole litter of the inn-yard, are permitted to share in the profits of the day.

“ The thing is viewed in the light of a windfall, and the proceeds are placed in a sort of fee-fund, to be afterwards shared in such proportions as the parties see fit. Altogether, the marrying business must bring a large sum annually into Springfield: indeed, an inhabitant confessed that it is, ‘ the principal benefit and support of the place ;’ although he might have added, that smuggling has lately become a rising and rival means of subsistence. Upon an average three hundred couples are married in the year: and half-a-guinea is the lowest fee that is ever charged.

“ But a trifle like that is only levied from poor and pedestrian couples; and persons even in the middle ranks of life are compelled to pay much more handsomely. Not long before I visited Springfield, a gentleman had given forty pounds; and independently of the money that is spent in the inns, many hundreds must find their way into the pockets of the priests, and their concurrents the postboys. In its legal effect, the ceremony performed at Gretna merely amounts to a confession before witnesses that certain persons are man and wife; and the reader is aware that little more is necessary to constitute a marriage in Scotland:—a marriage which may be censured by church courts, but which is perfectly binding in regard to property, and the legitimacy of the children. Still, a formula has a considerable value in the eyes of the fair, and the priests, I believe, read

a considerable part of the English marriage service, offer up a prayer or two, require the parties to join hands, [their hearts being joined before,] sign a record, and so forth.

“At my request Mr. Elliott produced his marriage record, which, as a public document, is regularly kept, and which, to say the truth, would require to be so, seeing that it is sometimes tendered as evidence in court.”

Now, look you:—The above writer says that “half a guinea is the lowest fee ever charged;” but we are certain, that, when we were there, the worthy keeper of the toll-gate would have gladly accommodated us, had we been so determined, for a much less sum.

Pennant even goes much further than this, for he talks “of a dram of whisky.” Perchance the charges have risen since his time; for extortion, like other practices in iniquity, does not attain to its full extreme of superlativeness at first; but commences by little and little, and increases by time and opportunity.

“Here the young couple,” he observes, “may be instantly united by a fisherman, a joiner, or a blacksmith, *who marry from two guineas a job to a dram of whisky*; but the price is generally adjusted by the information of the postilions from Carlisle, who are in pay of one or other of the above worthies; but even the drivers, in case of necessity, have been known to undertake the sacerdotal office.”

Prices and iniquity have evidently increased since the days of greater simplicity in which Pennant travelled.

In "Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopædia" there is a calculation, which shows that in the year 1815 the number of marriages performed in this parish was sixty-five. The number for other years is not so directly given; but the sixty-five for 1815 is estimated as being a fair average for a pretty long series of years, one taken with the other.

This is further pursued. Fifteen guineas is taken as the medium product of each marriage—a proof that by the year 1815 the prices had far advanced over what they had previously been; and this sum will bring into the hands of the Gretna priests and their associates an annual income of above 1000%.

It is rather a strange thing that these dignitaries are not more fat and sleek in their appearance than they most assuredly are, seeing that, if these calculations be just,—and they have been made by those whose credit is unimpeachable,—they ought to be able to dress in lawn sleeves, and to dwell in stately palaces. The fact is, they are an ignorant and improvident race; and the money that comes unlooked-for, easily and abundantly, is not held at its true value, but is wantonly and as easily dissipated away. He who has ten pounds in his pocket to-day, is ready to squander it, when he reflects that perhaps to-morrow will replenish the void, and add more to the sum.

In the year 1826, owing to the ill favour which

such a disgraceful system found in the eyes of the Kirk, the General Assembly made an attempt to put a stop to it, by taking preliminary steps against the Gretna priests, and by commencing a regular ecclesiastical campaign. The object, howbeit, was not effected ; and so they have pursued their course.

Another Scotchman, who wrote before the passing of the recent Marriage Act of 6 and 7 Will. IV., wherein facilities are offered, such as previously did not obtain, considered it as "a sort of safety-valve to the rigid system of the English Church, in regard to matrimony. But it is impossible," he continues, "to use terms of sufficient reprobation and abhorrence in alluding to the base panders, from the inn-keepers of Carlisle to the kennel-boys of Springfield, who make it the means of supporting their villanous and contemptible existence."

Thus it will be seen, that the respectable Scotch themselves do not look with much approbation on the proceedings of these conspirators.

"Surely," says Dr. Dibdin, in his Tour, "Surely, the only available and effectual remedy would be a statutable declaration against the legality or validity of such matches ; and then the fisherman's occupation is gone."

Such a statute, however, is not very likely to be enacted ; and the liberalization of the English law, as it now stands, is calculated to render such an enactment much less necessary than it was before.

If the rigid act of Lord Hardwicke, in 1754, did

much towards driving people to Gretna Green, and thereby raising the fame and fashion of that place, owing to the strictures he put upon those who otherwise would have been married in England ; it is certain, that the new act of 1837, having taken those strictures away, has aimed a most prejudicial shaft northwards at that parish. This indirect mode of effecting the object at which Dr. Dibdin hints, is a much more politic, fair, and tolerant course than the one suggested by him. To equalise facilities all over the kingdom, is better than that such facilities should exist in one half of it, and that harsh impediments should obtain over the other. On this principle the law will eventually work, when it may more generally come into usage ; and hence Gretna will in time discover, that this statute has done it a serious injury.

So little difficulties are opposed by the marriage laws to the young bachelor, north of the Cheviots, who would unite himself in permanent bands to the lady of his love, that he has no need to repair to Gretna, or any other particular parish, otherwise than the one in which he lives. If a man, dwelling in Glasgow, or Aberdeen, or Forres, or other town in Scotland, can be wedded as easily on the spot where he lives as elsewhere, of course he would have no motive for removing to Gretna Hall for the purpose ; and, in exemplification of this facility, Dr. Dibdin relates a laconic anecdote.

“ I remember,” says he, “ when partaking of the

hospitalities of Mr. David Laing, at Edinburgh, [surely this cannot be the old pedlar of Springfield?] that Dr. Lee, towards eight o'clock, seemed to leave the room abruptly, after looking at his watch.

"He returned within twenty minutes.

" 'What have you been about?' observed the host. 'Only marrying a couple on the third flat in High Street,' was the Doctor's reply.

"This, with us, would have been a special licence matter, at the cost of at least thirty pounds."

Aristotle contends that the ancient Greeks were indubitably an uncivilized people, because they bought their wives. The ceremony of marriage, where this obtained, was little else than the process of transferring a piece of merchandise from one person to another—from the father to the son-in-law. Here the lady herself appears to have been but very slenderly consulted as to her disposition; but Aristotle further says, that as these Greeks left off their barbarism and advanced onwards towards civilization, they also left off this practice.

But we have said somewhere before, that even we ourselves, now in the polished nineteenth century, make purchases in these affairs; but then, if this be admitted, the very great difference in our mode of proceeding will alter the whole nature of the transaction, and at once exonerate us from every charge of barbarism.

Unlike the rude Greeks, we begin by a vast outlay of anxiety and solicitude on the lady's account,—so

vast, that many folks marvel that all bachelors are not bankrupt long before the bridal day is fixed. The Greeks knew nothing of this; and the reason of the difference is plain. At that time she was not permitted to have a will of her own;—now-a-days she is fully possessed of that privilege; at that time she could not say *No*; but now-a-days she is at liberty to inflict that word at discretion.

It is to these privileges, which the enlightenment of the age has given her, that we ascribe the alteration in the manner of negotiation.

Where she could have no power to say *No*, of course very little anxiety could be engendered in the bosom of her suitor; and hence, the progress of civilization, the exalted position of the supreme sex; and the uncertainty of a lady's surrender, have, altogether, served to increase amongst men the number of hopeless cases of love, far over those which could have been felt and experienced by the ancients.

But even men, when they look into the matter, will not regret the change, however much vexation it may be the means of bringing upon them at times.

The thing that we obtain with little difficulty, we rarely value at its true and intrinsic worth; but that which has been purchased through the expenditure of much disquiet and perplexity, will, when obtained, at once assume a high position in our minds.

Let the ladies, therefore, enjoy their privileges, which have been by degrees given to them by their oppressors, more and more every succeeding century,

as their capabilities and their virtues have become more and more manifest. They will not abuse these privileges; they will not exercise them with caprice or tyranny; they will not use them for the bare purpose of exhibiting their power;—they know better than all this; there is no fear; for, in the first place, they have too much tenderness; and, in the second, they have too much judgment.

Nicholas Nicholay Daulphinois, the noble Lord of Arfeuille, who journeyed in the East about the year 1580, tells us, that amongst the Thracians in his day, every marriageable damsel had a price or value set upon her, even like an article in a shop window at present; that any customer might buy who could go to “the price they were rated at;” that when any bachelors had been able thus to purchase their wives, they looked upon them with much devotion, “by reason they bought them at a great price off their fathers and mothers, specially the fairest;” but that the ugly girls were so unfortunate as not to be able to get lovers who would purchase them; and, consequently, on the contrary, they were “constrained to give great presents unto those that would marry them.”

The framing of this system manifests the extreme barbarism of the age and the country;—an age and country wherein the beauties of the mind were of no value—wherein a fair exterior only was considered desirable, or worth obtaining—and wherein, peradventure, an amiable and sweet disposition, un-

accompanied by this fragile, skin-deep, transitory, and uncertain gift, could get no one to take it, unless richly endowed with a costly portion.

As men have ever been the masters and tyrants of the world, the present generations of the enduring sex in Europe, and one or two other regions, may bless heaven for the change that has come o'er the spirit of the times, and for having been born at a period when their mental qualifications have had opportunities for developing and displaying themselves—and of displaying themselves in a host of so many excellent ways, as to have taught their former masters, not only to consider them as equals now in every sense, but to love, honour, and respect them so much the more, from a conviction of this very fact.

Time was, when men did not love women at all; that is, according to the modern refined signification of the word. Indeed, it was held to be a preposterous degradation amongst the ancients of rude nations, and even amongst the savage of more recent days, for any man to be so weak as to betray affection for a woman. They were only looked upon as animated articles of furniture belonging to a man's establishment, as his other chattels did. He bought his wife as he bought his horse; and her will, pleasure, or consent to the transfer, were never inquired into, or so much as thought of.

Abraham bought Rebecca for Isaac; Jacob, having no money to give, served Laban fourteen years for his

wives instead ; Agamemnon offered his daughter as a present to Achilles, saying that, if he liked, he might have her without any payment ; and, by the laws of Ethelbert, King of England, it was enacted, that if any man injured another man's wife, *he should buy him another.*

It has been said, that there exists more true and disinterested cases of pure love amidst the middle classes of society, than there does either in the higher or the lower ; that the mind in the medium ranks is not so much swayed by the desire of making powerful connexions, as it often is among the extreme higher, owing to the policy with them of keeping coronets and estates in the direct line, nor so compelled by necessity in the choice of partners, as is often the fact with the extreme lower.

Thus it is, that those of the middle ranks, who enjoy a competency, are more free to select as a generous and well-directed passion shall suggest, and to allow their hearts to flutter, like a butterfly, over that flower which to them shall appear the most lovely.

It is remarkable that the pathetic bard of Scotland, who sung in the halls of Selma by the rushing tide of Cona, should have uniformly drawn the female character as replete with gentleness, virtue, and exaltation.

A talented writer on this subject has made some powerful remarks relating to Ossian, and the spirit

of purity that he has infused into the heroines of his various poems.

“ That bard,” says he, “ describes the female character as commanding respect and esteem, and the Caledonian heroes as cherishing for their mistresses a flame so pure and elevated as never was surpassed, and has seldom been equalled, in those ages which we commonly call most enlightened.

“ This is indeed, true ; and it is one of the many reasons which have induced Johnson and others to pronounce the whole a modern fiction.

“ Into that debate we do not enter.

“ We may admit the authenticity of the poems, without acknowledging that they furnish any exception to our general theory. They furnish, indeed, in the manners which they describe, a wonderful anomaly in the general history of man. All other nations of which we read, were, in the hunter state, savage and cruel. The Caledonians, as exhibited by Ossian, are gentle and magnanimous.

“ The heroes of Homer fought for plunder, and felt no clemency for a vanquished foe. The heroes of Ossian fought for fame ; and when their enemies were subdued, they took them to their bosoms.

“ The first of Greeks (Achilles) committed a mean insult on the dead body of the first of Trojans (Hector).

“ Among the Caledonians, insults offered to the dead were condemned as infamous. The heroes of Ossian appear in no instances as savages. How they came to be polished and refined, before they were acquainted with agriculture and the most useful arts of life, it is not our business to inquire ; but since they unquestionably were so, their treatment of the female sex, instead of opposing, confirms our theory ; for we never conceived rich clothes, superb houses, highly dressed food, or even the knowledge of foreign tongues, to be necessary to the acquisition of a generous sentiment.

“ Luxury, indeed, appears to be as inimical to love as barbarism ; and we believe, that in modern nations, the tender and exalted affection which deserves that name, is as little known amongst the higher orders, as amongst the lowest.

“ Perhaps the Caledonian ladies of Ossian resembled, in their

manners, the German ladies of Tacitus, who accompanied their husbands to the chase, fought by their sides in battle, and partook with them of every danger. If so, they could not fail to be respected by a race of heroes, among whom courage took place of all other virtues ; and this single circumstance, from whatever cause it might proceed, will sufficiently account for the estimation of the female character among the ancient Germans and Caledonians, so different from that in which it has been held in almost every other barbarous nation.

“ But if, among savages and the vulgar, love be unknown, it cannot possibly be an instinctive affection ; and, therefore, it may be asked, how it gets possession of the human heart ? and by what means we can judge whether it be real or imaginary ?

“ These questions are of importance, and deserve to be fully answered ; though many circumstances conspire to render it no easy task to give to them such answers as shall be perfectly satisfactory.

“ Love can, subsist only between *individuals* of the different sexes.

“ A man can hardly *love two women* at the same time ; and we believe that a woman is still *less* capable of *loving at once more than one man*.

“ Love, therefore, has a natural tendency to make men and women pair ;—or, in other words, it is the source of marriage. But, in polished society, where alone this affection has any place, so many things besides mutual attachment are necessary to make the married life comfortable, that we rarely see young persons uniting from the impulse of love.”

Certain it is, as this writer very justly observes, we do not often see persons marry solely because they have fallen in love with each other ; although it is to be lamented that impediments should prevent the junction of their hands, when their hearts had been previously joined by affection.

We think, however, that if no such things as impediments to success existed, we should not hear of so many cases of thorough love as we now do. In-

deed, this is but natural enough ; and will equally apply to projects of love, or to projects of any other nature. If we could always immediately obtain that which we desire, so soon as the wish to possess it had been conceived, we, of course, never could experience anxiety about the matter ; we never could be tortured with fears of losing that object ; we never could be taught by delay, uncertainty, or doubt, to comprehend its true value ; and, in fact, we never could be made to understand what glory, honour, or satisfaction it was for us to gain a victory—because no victory can be gained where no impediments are offered for surmounting.

It has been observed, that love is the most perverse passion with which we are endowed ; that it grows, increases, and thrives most where it is most opposed.

This is true ; but there are good reasons for it. It is only an exemplification of a part of our whole nature ; but which may be exemplified in fifty other cases of a different kind.

If a man sets his mind upon any other object in the world besides a lady, he will find, that the greater the number of obstacles that may arise to prevent the attainment of his wishes, so much the greater will be his desire to overcome them. If it is a house that he has set his heart upon possessing, he will bid higher and higher, even as the owner expresses his unwillingness to sell. The great truth is, that the desire for the possession of some one particular lady is a passion infinitely stronger than the

other can be, which craves only some inanimate object ; as, for instance, if a man shall be disappointed in the attainment of a certain house, he is content to put up with another, and feels no painful shock done to his feelings, that another man should possess it, enter into it, and do with it as his pleasure shall direct ; but if a man is disappointed of the lady that he has set his heart upon, can he be content to put up with another ?—and who shall tell the painful shock that his feelings must experience, when he sees another become possessed of her ? But we forget ourselves ; we are not purchasing houses in this chapter.

When a young Birman buys his lady-love to wife, he begins by a vast outlay of anxiety and trouble, as the Europeans do ; and then, when that has been expended with success in the purchase of her consent, and the bridal morning has actually arrived, he still further lays out the following, namely :—“ Three longees, or lower garments ; three tubbecks, or sashes ; and three pieces of white muslin : also such jewels, ear-rings, and bracelets, as his circumstances admit of.”

A Tungoose juvenal of Siberia, buys his bride of her father for, from twenty to one hundred head of deer ; and if it so befall that he is not wealthy enough to do this, he follows the precedent of Jacob, and works a certain time at some useful labour instead ;—thus giving the parent an equivalent in some other shape.

We have several times mentioned instances wherein sons-in-law give so much to their wife's father on becoming possessed of their treasure, his daughter—instances occurring in divers other countries besides England; but it has not, perhaps, struck the reader, (nor did it strike us until this moment) that all these instances of purchase, differ *in toto* from what obtains in regard of marriages at Gretna Green.

Now, when a bachelor buys a young lady in Britain, (to say nothing of his expenses in anxiety for *her*;) he generally gives his father, or mother-in-law something—perhaps, a great deal of trouble; but this is not what we were going to say;—never mind what he gives: but when a youthful bachelor runs away to Gretna Green, he does not give his father-in-law anything whatever, not so much as a—forewarning.

All his disbursement goes to the rapacious priests and their confederates,—persons whom, most likely, he never saw before, and hopes he never will see again,—and none to him from whom he got his prize.

We have seen how David Laing, according to his own evidence, got £30. or £40. out of Wakefield for his share of the little matter that took place amongst them at the Hall; and how old Joe Paisley received £300. on his death bed, for executing three couple who suddenly made application to him.

Surely it would have been a much more equitable arrangement, if at least one half of these sums had been made over to the former possessor of that jewel, her father, which now had become the property of an-

other ;—an arrangement which the latter possessor would readily have acceded to, as it is but natural for us all, rather to wish to pay the person from whom we actually get a treasure, than to pay a set of swindling strangers, who, at best, were only self-interested agents in the procurement of it.

Certainly and of a truth, he who has been beguiled by love to rush within the meshes of these wolves in sheep's clothing (broad cloth), and has afterwards, with much difficulty, been able to fee his way out of their clutches, hastens back over the border from the confines of the parish with as much celerity as he would out of a golden hell in St. James's, at the same time blessing his stars that it is not a man's fortune to be married every day in the week.

CHAPTER XIX.

Story of an Elopement from Bath to Gretna.

Children who marry heedlessly
Against their parents' will,
Bring trouble on them needlessly,
And do a grievous ill.

“WHAT was that noise?” cried a lady, suddenly starting out of her sleep, and addressing her husband;

“What was that noise?”

“What noise,” said he peevishly, quite provoked at being awoke: “*I* heard no noise.”

“I declare there are footsteps on the stairs at this time o’ night; and I heard something fall like a pair of snuffers.”

“Poo, stuff!—What nonsense you talk:—do go to sleep and hold your tongue.”

“But I ’m sure there was:—there must be thieves in the house.”

“Thieves! How ridiculous you are! Women are always crying out about thieves. A mouse can’t creep out of his hole after dark to find a crumb of bread for supper, but there must be thieves in the house directly!”

“ It ’s no good your talking,—do get up and see, and not lie there when there ’s danger.”

“ Danger ! Snuffers too ! I wish you wouldn’t be so foolish, but just let me go to sleep.”

And so he turned round and did go to sleep.—But the lady was right.

Who ever took a night-candlestick in his hand, but the chances were, that either the snuffers or the extinguisher fell down with a terrible clatter ? We know not how it is, but there seems to be a kind of natural antipathy between night-candlesticks and the snuffers or extinguishers which belong to them : whether it is that these appendages are never properly fixed into the little square holes made for them—the little square hole for the little square spike of the snuffers, being against the socket that supports the candle ; and the like little square hole for the like little square spike of the extinguisher, being on the inside extremity of the handle : or whether there is a negative and positive electric stream, acting powerfully, yet invisibly, between the one and the other, serving to create a mutual disgust : or whether it is, that people generally take up night-candlesticks with more carelessness than any others : or whether there is any further reason tending to produce this phenomenon, we cannot take upon us to declare, being totally unable to resolve it ;—but the fact assuredly remains unquestionable, that both snuffers and extinguishers pertaining to night-candlesticks, are much

given to fall over, and to make a great noise when they light upon the floor.

In the case in question, it was the snuffers and not the extinguisher; and it should seem that they rattled somewhat loudly, for the lady was aroused instantaneously from her slumbers;—or else peradventure, it might be that the noise appeared to be very loud, because it was in the dead of night, when most sounds that disturb the universal hush, are much more audible than during the bustle of the day;—or else again it struck very loud, (particularly on the terrified ears of those who let them fall,) because it was a clatter most alarming to the delinquents who made it, thinking that discovery, and detection, and failure to all their well-concerted plots must inevitably ensue upon this mishap, which would certainly call up the whole house, or at least papa with a brace of pistols in his hands, to see what foul play was abroad under his roof.

Snuffers make least noise when they fall point downwards—so do pairs of scissors, or penknives—because then they stick right into the floor making only a dead sound: but in this case it is necessary to be very careful of the toes, lest they get pinned incontinently to the said floor, before there is any time to jump out of the way. But if snuffers fall so as not to light on the point, they generally rattle with great vehemence; and if the spring at the hinge has been broken (which is the case in nine pairs out of

ten) they generally open wide, and throw the snuff over the carpet or elsewhere.

In the instance of which we speak, we fear that the spring really had been broken, and that the snuffers did not fall upon the point ; for if they had, it is quite impossible, in a philosophical view of the catastrophe, to reconcile the obstreperousness that they made. But, as we hereinbefore observed, this obstreperousness seemed so much the more loud, as it was peculiarly unwelcome to the perpetrators thereof ; for if papa had only happened to open his door at that moment, a pretty discovery he would have made of a truth, and his fair daughters and their amorous juvenals would have been disappointed of a pleasant trip to the matrimonial soil of Scotland.

Every sound that we do not wish to have heard, appears much louder than it would if the contrary were the case ; and if these two young ladies and their maid had been engaged in any journey, about the discovery of which they might not have cared, the din that the snuffers made, would scarcely have arrested their attention, and certainly not have put them into a state of extreme apprehension.

But papa scolded mamma about the thieves, and then sulkily went to sleep ; and mamma silenced, albeit not convinced, was enforced to go to sleep also.

Alas ! how many dark deeds are done after the sun goes down !

The young ladies and their maid (who was in the

secret, and an abettor in the crime) had allowed all the household to retire to rest ; and then, at about an hour or so after the tolling of that dismal meridian of the night, when ghosts troop home to churchyards, they stealthily arose from their couches and donned their habiliments, so quietly that no sound was heard in the room but the drawing of stay-laces through eyelet-holes.

Some chroniclers affirm that they had never reclined at all, but had wished pa and ma good-night at the accustomed time, and had gone up stairs with very sleepy eyes, very much wondering how it was they were so drowsy.

They had at all events found time to pack up such needments, whether of vesture or other paraphernalia, as the necessities of the journey might require ; for when they were all stealing their way breathlessly down stairs, and when the abominable snuffers made such a terrific noise upon the landing just outside papa's door—it should seem that they were laden with sundry huge bundles ;—a circumstance that was quite sufficient to so cumber their hands and arms, as to cause them to hold the candlestick a little on one side and tip them over, particularly as we say, that the little spike of the one is rarely ever properly fixed into the little square hole of the other.

Besides the annoyance of the snuffers, the stairs creaked dreadfully as they crept down towards the front door ; but even this did not bring papa out with pistols to see who had broke into the house at such a

time,—and so they reached the hall unimpeded. Most people who come home from parties late,—who let themselves into the house with a night-key,—and who wish to steal quietly up to their room without disturbing the inmates, generally know that the stairs creak ten times louder then, than they ever do at any other period whatsoever. It may be, that the person coming home, may wish to go up silently, out of a kind and considerate feeling towards the sleepers, not liking to disturb them, knowing that it is a very unpleasant thing to be awoke uselessly ; for it often is the means of making us lie awake for half the night afterwards, and thereby wantonly robbing us of our due share of rest, without any reason ; or again, it may be, that the person coming home—especially if he be a bachelor son in his father's house, who has been spending a jolly evening at a later hour than he is proud to own—will be desirous to let the dwellers dream on, as much out of consideration to himself as to them, not exactly wanting to let them know what a rake he has been. And then at breakfast next morning he will pretend that he has been long up and waiting for his coffee before the others were down, having had quite sleep enough, (however heavy he might really feel about the eyes,) that the party met early in order to break up early, and that forsooth, being very slow and stupid, “ he was the first to come away.”

The opening of the front-door was excruciating.

What with drawing back of bolts and bars and

chains, the latter with round knobs at their ends running in sliders, there was the most torturing din it is possible to conceive; and then the paint of the door stuck to the paint of the door-frame, so that when they were pulled apart, they made a noise like that of screwing up a fiddle key, or that of a heavy person getting into bed. The hinges of the said door were just as bad; so that when they had at last removed all obstacles between themselves and the breezes of night, they might well have stepped forth with the momentary dread, lest divers smoky bullets should pour down stairs after them just as they were crossing the mat.

When they had descended three steps, they found themselves in one of the streets of King Bladud's beautiful freestone city of Bath. Here they were met by two personages, apparently a coachman and a footman, doubtless sent there by the expectant bridegrooms, who were not far off, that the ladies might be conducted to some pre-concerted place of meeting. One of these personages was a middle-aged man, somewhat stout, and might have been mistaken for a widower by his external; his coachman's livery did not fit to an admirable nicety somehow, but this circumstance did not seem to annoy him much, or his young mistress either. The other was taller and less stout in figure, and evidently younger in years: his footman's livery set passable well, but it is difficult to say whether he was proud of it or not.

When they met the ladies, they appear entirely to

have forgotten all the deference which is due from servants to their superiors ; instead of keeping at a proper distance and respectfully shewing them the way, they approached with all the glee and intimacy imaginable, just as if they were on a most perfect equality ! If they did not know their places better than that, they were not fit to be servants. The wonder is, that the ladies endured it—that they did not repel them with indignation—and that they suffered them to be their escort at all. The most confiding reader will scarcely credit us when we say that this coachman and footman each took a lady under his arm, and in that reprehensible way, walked off down the street, whilst the maid with the bundles brought up the rear.

Thus they traversed the pavement of this fairest of England's cities—a city whose inhabitants are always in hot water, and yet who do not quarrel any more than the inhabitants of any other city of the kingdom.

They had not gone far ere they came to a carriage all ready horsed and harnessed as if for a journey ; and having stopped beside this, the footman threw down the steps, and assisted the fair peregrinators to enter. The bundles were stowed away,—the coachman was on the box, reins and whip in hand,—the footman having turned up the steps and shut the door, mounted on his dickey, and away they went on the first stage of their eventful enterprize.

But where are the gentlemen all this time ! The two bridegrooms, neat, trimly dressed, with chins new-reaped, shewing like a stubble-land at harvest-home, perfumed like milliners with pouncet-boxes in hand, and using holiday and lady terms. Where, forsooth, are they ? We have seen nothing of this sort :— we have seen nought but a coachman and footman vested in uniforms, who did not know how to demean themselves with such becoming deference as is generally looked for from servitors of their degree.

But the wheels of the vehicle are spinning round at a dizzy rate, and they are contending with the whirlwinds of Heaven as to which shall fly with the greatest rapidity. Somewhere in the commencement of this veritable history, we did say why it is that persons drive quickly when they are bound for the amorous soil of Caledonia ; and if it would not be to the disparagement of the coachman now on the box, with whip in one hand and reins in the other, we would not hesitate to repeat the words again. Certainly we might be forgiven if we did repeat them, because, as we do declare that, when we then wrote these words, we were in nowise thinking of the subject of this present chapter, and therefore could not have been trying to cast their applicability upon the worthy coachman, and so he could not charge us with any personal affront. Without taking the trouble to turn back to find the passage, we think we were repre-

hending the practice of thus going to Scotland at all, seeing that it is always done without the advice, consentment, and sanction of parents, guardians, or other wise and fitting counsellors ; that the spirit which instigates persons to do so, is a bad spirit ; that it is the spirit of disobedience, rebellion, turbulence, and sin ; and that those disgraceful children who are evil enough to do so on their own responsibilities, have no right to grieve, whatever troubles, vexations, remorse, or stings of conscience may embitter their days afterwards.

The words to which we allude, constitute the essence and body of an old English proverb, and therefore could in no way have been coined for those who have just rushed out of the fair city and steaming waters, since it had become a chimney-corner apothegm in the mouths of our grannies, long before they were born or thought of.

All sinful enterprises are hurried over with extreme speed ; and the reason for this is manifest ; videlicet — the fear of detection. Sinful enterprises are, furthermore, usually carried forward at night, when even the bat and the owl can scarcely guard their heads from butting against a post ; and this, too, for the same reason, and because evil doers are ever afraid of looking at the noon-day sun. It is not wondrous, therefore, that he who drives toward Scotland, bent upon a journey so foul, should hasten himself and his party over the roads with all the

expedience whereof he is master, for the most ancient proverb, above alluded to, says:—"One must needs go fast when the devil driveth."

The two ladies who sat in the carriage, and who were enforced to go as fast as their coachman chose to drive, were of very different dispositions. The eldest being high-spirited, endowed with a will of her own, and therewithal a whit indomitable now and then if thwarted in her desires. The other, her sister, was of a nature wholly dissimilar;—she was quieter of manner, not so voluble in speech, not so determined, and rather disposed to timidity than to rash and headlong daring. It is said that this bold project was not so readily embraced by the younger sister as by the elder; that the elder entered into it with goodly glee, as a matter of infinite disport; but that the other was talked into it, and persuaded to listen to it, and yield to such enormity, much against her better judgment. Her natural timidity, notwithstanding that it would have kept her out of mischief had she been let alone, was still the very weakness that brought about her fall when she was urged to do that which was wrong. It is a mistaken notion which some good people of this world have entertained that, the most retiring, modest, shy, and timid, are the least likely to commit error. They would be the least likely most assuredly, if they were suffered to adopt that retirement which their placid natures might direct, and above all, if they could be kept from tempters and evil counsellors; but they are the

least safe when wicked advisers come in their way with persuasive words, snares, and allurements ; and for this reason, that they have not strength, resolution, or presence of mind sufficient to make them resist temptation, A high-spirited girl, whose morals have been well grounded, whose perception and estimation of that which is right, are just and correct, and whose religious principles have been properly implanted, is she who will brave the greatest temptations with the greatest safety. She is the woman to go through the world unscathed.

It is not for us to record here how papa and mamma thought, and felt, and looked in each other's faces, when they came down stairs in the morning, and found no girls to make breakfast for them — an operation which young ladies usually do, and very rightly too, when they are approaching towards woman's estate, and are being initiated into the domestic cares of housekeeping. Suffice it to say, that papa was so regularly done — any colour the reader likes — that his preaching was completely stopped the next Sunday ; and not only the next Sunday forsooth, but for several Sundays after, when he had removed to that pleasant watering-place ycleped Sidmouth in Devon.

The two sisters had not proceeded very far on their journey, when the timid one began to look into herself, and to reflect on what she had been doing ; and the more she reflected, and the more she turned the matter over in her mind, the less was she satisfied with her position, her conduct, and her prospects.

She had suffered herself to be beguiled away from her parents' roof by the arguments of others, because, being mild of nature, she had not had enough of firmness at the moment of temptation, to resist the persuasions of those around her; urged by the same means, she had also consented to take a step which she now knew would give no small trouble to her father and mother, through anxiety and vexation of spirit; and she had, lastly, assented to tie a stronger than Gordian knot betwixt herself and another, lacking the approbance of those, and of others, to whom she might owe allegiance and submission and dutious observance.

The excitement of preparation, the preconcerting of plans for escape, the tying up of bundles, the engrossment of thought attendant on getting to the carriage undiscovered, and the noise of voices mingled with the noise of wheels, had, up to this period, so drawn her away from herself, that she had had no time to look into the complexion of her deeds, or to hold her actions up to deliberate scrutiny. But the first bewilderment over, a re-action came on; and her thoughts, from having been hitherto wholly external, and busied about the movements of others, as much as busied about her own, now rushed home to the centre of her heart, and recalled her to reason. So sorely perplexed did she at last become, that she could refrain no longer, but began to repent vehemently at the wicked step she had taken, and begged she might be allowed to return ere too late. Her sister, who,

as we said, had a good deal of determination about her, and, as we may add, not so much discretion as she ought to have had, laughed heartily at her fears,—thought it was one of the best jokes in the world,—harped on the fact that they were actually going to be married—a consummation they had both long looked forward to,—and declared that it would be mighty funny, so it would, when they discovered at home, that the cage door was open, and the birds had flown !

Doubtless all this was passing comic and amusing—but it did not do ; she laughed again, and pinched her sister's knees as she sat opposite her, to arouse her from her sinking fit, and brighten her up into the sunshine of mirth,—quizzed her apprehensions, ridiculed her terrors, and turned her evil bodings into derision.

Ridicule and derision are the strongest arguments in the world to the weak or hesitating, or to those who are halting between two opinions ; people very often can be *shamed* into doing a foolish action—an action which, in fact, they ought rather to be ashamed of committing,—when sober rhetoric wholly fails to move them.

In the present instance, it may be said, that sober rhetoric would have been the least effective artillery that could have been brought to bear, because the most skilled artillerist could scarcely have adduced any sound reason in justification of their elopement ; and, therefore, nothing remained but to deracinate whatever amount of fear had rooted itself in the mind of

this young damsel, and seek to destroy it altogether, by turning the entire affair into merriment and burlesque.

Ridiculed, therefore, out of her fears, she sighed, hemmed, looked out of the carriage window, sighed again, reseated herself in her seat, looked in her sister's face, again out of window, and without giving a very decisive acquiescence, allowed herself to be whirled on towards the land of blacksmiths, and such like marriers-general.

It was now broad daylight ; the birds were singing upon the waving sprays, even as if they themselves had been on the wing for Gretna ; of course, supposing that they may not be flying thitherward lacking the approval of their papas and mammas, or else supposing that they were so callous of conscience as to receive no stings therefrom, like one of the fair journeyers in the vehicle. The people were all abroad at their various avocations, some bent on honest work, and others on cheating their neighbours ; and the garish disc of the morning, which shines alike upon the just and upon the unjust, was climbing onwards toward the meridian, and daring sinners to look him in the face.

If this coachman and footman could so culpably forget their respect to the ladies when it was dark, as to offer them their arms to escort them through the city, just as we have previously and above related, they now, when the eyes of the world were upon them in the various towns through which they passed,

held it discreet to demean themselves in a more deferential fashion. Wherefore, when they arrived at the termination of any stage, the footman, with great ardour in the performance of his duties, as if fearful of losing a good place, descended from his dickey, came to the carriage door whilst the horses were changing, touched his hat with much reverence, asked the ladies whether they would like to get out and take any refreshment, and when all was right for the next start, touched his hat again, and then, with infinite legerity, mounted once more to his seat. On these occasions, also, the more portly coachman would come to the open window, and hope that the ladies were not fatigued; he would peradventure make some observation on the roads whilst the ostlers of the inn were hooking on the traces, or buckling up the reins: and on one of these occasions, whilst he was standing by the window, and pretending to tie another knot at the end of the lash of his whip, it is averred, that he looked in the face of the elder of the ladies, and absolutely smiled! But it is impossible that such an atrocity as this could be perpetrated by a coachman, without his being indignantly turned away at a moment's notice. It is not credible that the admired daughter of a wealthy clergyman, moving in the élite circles of Bath, and also of Sidmouth, when the Grand Duchess of Russia, Helene Paulowna, sister-in-law to the Emperor Nicholas, was not occupying their house in the latter place, should so forget the duties and the respect which she owed

to herself, as to suffer her coachman to bear himself in this reprehensible way, especially as there were no gentlemen in the carriage to take their parts, their only male attendants being these two persons in livery.

The reader is doubtless much stricken in wonderment, that no fresh, spruce, and trim bridegrooms have yet appeared, who could claim to themselves, by their equality of rank and privileges as accepted lovers, the happiness of exchanging smiles, and significant glances, and sweet looks with the lovely fugitives, instead of abandoning them to be insulted by these base menials. But however strange this may appear, such, according to the veracious historian, was the fact,—no escort, besides what we have mentioned, being of the party.

We hasten, notwithstanding, to assure the reader, that in a very few moments, it will be our pleasant task to unravel this obscure mystery ; and to satisfy his or her mind of every circumstance, accessory, and corollary, touching so knotty a transaction.

It must be unhesitatingly conceded, that bridegrooms who could, by their indifference and neglect, suffer their lady-loves to undertake a journey so long, only accompanied by such servitors, were not worthy their hands and hearts : and it must still farther be conceded, that if the intended brides could endure such remissness from their gentle juvenals, they were much more considerate and condescending than the said juvenals deserved. But idle speculation is vain :

—they will all be in Scotland shortly, and then we will exert every literary power of which we are possessed, to lay the whole matter bare to the world.

On they journeyed, encountering such haps and hazards both by land and water, as most way-farers are liable to experience when they issue forth of their quiet homes, and roam through distant territories. It may be, that they encountered other haps and hazards besides those attendant on ordinary travelling; for as their passage and progress was not of an ordinary kind, it were not strange should they meet with scapes and ventures not being ordinary.

We have elsewhere remarked, that lovers hastening this way to the border, never see one bit of the ground out of the carriage over which they are hurrying; because, instead of looking out of the windows to enjoy the country, they are intently and passionately gazing into each other's eyes as they are both sitting on the same seat: but in the present case this could not be, and for this reason, which is already obvious, namely, that there were no doting swains in the vehicle along with the ladies, and consequently no long-drawn, untiring gazements could take place. Wherefore, be it noted, that this party most probably saw more of the country through which they passed, than any other party that ever embarked on a similar journey.

A strange occurrence befel some space after they quitted Bath, and that was, that the coachman and footman threw aside their liveries, and dared to ex-

change them for plain clothes. This would appear as much as to infer, that they intended no longer to continue in the service of these ladies ; and yet it is a fact, that they did positively remain in their service most entirely, and have actually continued to do so ever since, up to the writing of this narrative. It is remarkable, again, that their mistresses should allow them to be so rebellious : — but poor unprotected creatures, we have above said that they had no male protectors but these menials. Supposing any officer in the army or navy, were to throw away his livery and come on duty in plain clothes ! What would be the consequence ? Why, he would receive his warning to quit very soon : and yet we here have an instance of the very same thing, without their being turned away, or even so much as receiving a reprimand.

In short, dear reader, this is the most puzzling, mysterious, contradictory, and unaccountable affair that it ever fell to our lot to describe : we are totally bewildered with speculations, surmises, and doubts, and so are you—of that we feel certain.

But they are now landed in Scotland ; and here the most wondrous part of this wondrous business occurred. The disclosure must be made—there is no escaping it—the historian, you know, cannot eschew truth. Prepare to faint—or rather, prepare yourself with preventatives from fainting : we cannot prescribe them, for as we ourselves never fainted in all our life, we know nothing about its symptoms or its best restoratives. Howbeit, throw open the win-

dows for fresh air ; ring for cold water ; have eau-de-Cologne at hand, as well as salts ; and do not forget the sal volatile.

These two beauteous young ladies married no other than the aforesaid coachman and footman ! But the real truth is, when these servitors threw off their liveries, they turned out to be two gentlemen of goodly families, who were, indeed, the proper and pre-ordained bridegrooms ! !

Was there ever such disguise in the “ ’varsal ’orld ” assumed by mortal man since the fashion of wearing habiliments first came into vogue ? Of a truth, we should scarcely think so.

It is not the stole or the vestal veil,
That will make the monk or the frigid nun :
As much would an o’ercast sky avail,
To prove that at noon there were no sun.

And if the stole does not make the monk, or the veil the nun, since any person whatsoever can assume these habits for the nonce ; neither, by a parity of reasoning, will laced and tagged liveries make the intrinsic coachman and footman ;—and neither, again, can we aver that at noon-day there is no sun shining in the heavens, because he is hidden and covered by a thick vesture of clouds.

Papa and Mamma were not so obdurate but that they could forgive these crimes in due time after the fair rebels had returned home with their bridegrooms—dressed now, not in glaring coats and plush smalls, but rather in sober-hued Saxony.

Alas for runaway matches, and for our admirable motto on the title-page—"Marry in haste, and repent at leisure." We have said that one of the ladies had a good spirit, and also a will of her own. Some scandal-mongers do say that her husband has since made this discovery—but we abhor giving any credence to scandal. We know what Byron says of high-spirited ladies:—

"I've seen your stormy seas and stormy women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen."

CHAPTER XX.

Recapitulation of the subject.

If you have seen one half of what
 This chapter doth contain,
 You must have seen much more, I wot,
 Than e'er you 'll see again.

WE have heretofore seen that the Britons of old, the first possessors of the soil, dwelt peaceably upon the then *un-debateable* land ; we have seen how the Romans came and drove them back into the Highlands, and then drew ditches and walls across the country, from sea to sea, as a warning against their further progress into the South country ; we have seen these warriors retire from the island, after a four hundred years' tenantry, and hie away to their own homes to look after affairs there ; we have seen the mighty Pendragon Arthur arise in kingly glory, and keep court with Gwenhyvar within Carlisle city ; we have seen the Pink of Courtesy, Sir Gawain, wed the first bride that e'er, so far as we know, was espoused nigh to the since most renowned altar of Gretna ; we have seen how these heroes passed away from the scene, and how the savage hordes of the north, the

Dansker Sea Kings from the vast waters, and the golden-headed Saxons from the east, usurped their places in despite ; we have seen how the sons of Reged and Cumbria bared brazen blades to the glitter of day, in a vain but honourable essay to retain the lands of their fathers ; but how, after the misfare of Cattraeth, they eschewed the victorious foe, and retired to Gwenedd and Mona ; we have seen William, the Norman, scare the Saxons and Danes from the land, from which they, the said Danes and Normans, had before scared the Britons, thus suffering the persecution which they had put upon others ; we have seen him parcel out the kingdom to his haughty vassals in recompense for their labours ; we have seen some of these settle upon the Borders, nigh to Hadrian's Work, and there increase in strength, wealth, and power, until they became the terror of the crown that had planted them there ; we have seen fierce battles ycleped civil, debated in these parts, but more especially by the margin of the western waters where our scene lies ; we have seen moss-troopers overrun the plains and the uplands, and commit herriment on their neighbours, and we have seen wardens and other kings' servants pursue, and hang, and slay ; we have seen the spirit of love at last triumph over, and banish away, the Demon of War from the banks of the Sark ; we have seen the Fanes of Hymen arise on those spots where once stood the gloomy Bastle-house of the mail-encased chief ; we have seen eloping lovers course over the Moss of Solway with their eyes

open, yet without seeing one bit of it, and get hastily wedded by weavers, and pedlars ; we have seen—we have seen—we have seen—

Gentle reader:—if you have seen all these things, methinks you have seen a great deal.

CHAPTER XXI.

Advice to Young Ladies.

Adieu, good reader, now adieu ;
Adieu to ink and paper ;
Adieu to pens, and penknives, too,
Adieu our midnight taper.

WE have now passed through the history of Gretna Green “from the most remote times to the present day.” We have not only liberally set forth every broad fact with unreserve—not only freely revealed all the valuable information which the most arduous scrutiny could discover in the most rare, ancient, and authentic chronicles—not only transcribed with infinite care, all the important passages that served for illustration, as existing in the archives of this interesting place itself, (and especially everything which was founded on the unerring testimony of tradition, which, as we have always said, is ever the truest part of history)—but we have also, we trust, omitted no opportunity, as a moral philosopher, of giving what wholesome, sage, fitting, or goodly advice to our amorous young readers, which it might have been in our power to give for their benefit.

It may have been seen that we are not one of the pupils of that modern 'Ακαδημία, the chief tenet of which is, to advocate universal celibacy; because we know that such a tenet would be based in absurdity, and would be contrary to reason and contrary to nature. Man is a gregarious animal—he cannot be alone—and it is not well that he should. His own frailties and his inherent infirmities, make him dependent on his fellow-creatures for his food, his raiment, and for succour in sickness. He cannot exist in a stern solitude, like the condor of the mountain, or the wild beast of the measureless desert. The faculty of speech, alone, is enough to argue that he was always predestined for a social and communicative state of society. If there are evils in matrimony, pray are there not also evils attendant on single life, such as sometimes make bachelors and maidens call it single cursedness? The fact is, there is no unalloyed happiness to be found in the world, in any condition whatsoever; and therefore it is futile to lay the charges against the married state, which, in nine cases out of ten, ought rather to be laid to our own unaccommodating dispositions, our own bad tempers, and our own vile passions.

Neither are we one of those who uphold, without exception, the unapproachable superiority of the male sex over the female; but readily allow to the latter, all the freedom—all the liberty—all the equality—and even all the superiority wherever it is manifest, to which this much-enduring sex is entitled. Several

lady-champions have of late years started up, and fought hard for the rights of their own sex ; and if they have achieved any good to themselves by so doing, of a truth we give them hearty congratulations there anent. We only regret that they should ever have had to fight at all ; for this fact, if allowed to be, and to have been, the case, strongly implies that something has been withheld from them by their "masters," as Lady Morgan calls them, for which they longed, and which they could not obtain without the ungentle process of thus fighting. This is a grievous hit at the lords of the creation. The times, however, are now changed ; and henceforth and for evermore, the ladies in all things, and on all occasions, are unquestionably to do just as they please.

Leap-year brings them their plenitude of power, and their enjoyment of every possible privilege whatsoever ; and the intermediate years constitute the only exception to their now fully established, uncontrolled, and universal sway. If ladies are intent on marrying, (which, pardon us, we think they are,) let them do so by all means, for it is natural : let them only do it deliberately and advisedly.

We were one day in company with a matron of fifty or so, and two or three young damsels just emerging from their teens, all beauty, blushes, and love. And the said well-meaning matron commenced a very long and very impressive lecture, setting forth in most terrific language, the weakness of ever giving way to that childish passion which boys and girls some-

times betray for each other, and the foolishness of women ever giving up their hearts and liberties to the keeping of such tyrannical animals as men are. She advised her fair listeners never to think of matrimony if they valued their happiness;—that it was a most perilous step for any body to take, so it was;—that it was attended with infinite anxieties of which the single had no idea, positively;—and that it brought a great many troubles for certain, from which there was no manner of escape, not any how at all.

During the continuance of this harangue, which was carried to a considerable length, and poured forth in most appalling eloquence, every person kept a profound silence. When it had come to a pause—an awful pause too—one of the dear ducks raised her eyes from a large rose in the pattern of the carpet, on which they had been fixed, and looking archly in the matron's face, put a simple question to her.

“Mrs. Singleton,” said she, “it is very easy to preach, but it is amusing to see how entirely we often run contrary to our own advice. You counsel us to remain single; and yet *you yourself* are married—pray how did *that* happen?”

“Oh,” returned the dowager, “because I was a fool I suppose.”

“Then,” answered the damsel with great gravity, “I believe we are all fools: and even as we have been since the beginning of the world, so shall we be to the end of it.”

“Hey-day, hey-day! Much use *my* talking.”

“ On this subject, no one will ever live by the experience of others: therefore, we good Mrs. S., will not live on *your* experience.” And then all the little loves laughed like fun.

“ If,” resumed the young lady, “ we are not happy as we are—and we confess that we are not—why, surely, we cannot be worse off than unhappy by a change:—and who knows but we may be better?”

To this last idea all the girls assented immediately.

“ The chances are against you,” observed the matron.

“ The world is full of chances,” said the maiden.

We also know of a person, friend reader, who hazarded a sum of money to procure a ticket in the lottery.

“ Well, what of him?” is the question.

Why, to tell the truth, we are obliged to answer that he lost it.

“ Ha ! Then that person was a fool for his pains.”

Be it so, we say.—But we know another person who ventured the same hazard for a ticket.

“ And what of him, pray: I suppose he lost too?”

No: — he got a prize of 10,000*l*. Now was he a fool or not?

Mum:—not a word in reply. So it is with matrimony:—all a chance and a lottery.

Thus terminate all arguments and discussions on this topic. They do nothing in the way of conviction, and they win over no proselytes, because they go against nature; and whatever ills we may be

bringing upon ourselves by the step, these ills must be considered as a part of the catalogue of vexations which belong inseparably to our very existence, as pre-ordained, that we should endure along with a host of other trials. They certainly come sometimes so much the more acutely, because we had set our hearts upon being happy; and hence, when we discover our mistake, the disappointment is so much the more severe. All this, however, is nothing: we must run the risk. We must proceed as wisely as we can—hope for the best—and leave the remainder to good luck and providence.

We are decidedly of opinion that ladies run greater hazards than gentlemen do; in so far that they have not so likely a chance of discovering the tempers, or past times, or turn of mind, amongst their lovers, as gentlemen have amongst theirs: and also, that if they make an unhappy match, they have not after marriage, the same opportunities of killing their troubles that men have. In the first place a man has the best opportunity of finding out the disposition of his lady-love, because, as it is his province to go and seek her, and not her to seek him, he can do so at such time when he is in his most amiable humour, and consequently set himself off to the best advantage; whereas, he may call on her unexpectedly, when something, perchance, may have occurred to ruffle her placidity, or try her equanimity, or put her out of sorts for a moment,—a circumstance which may lead him to fear that she is habitually ill-tempered. If

she had expected him, she would have put on her best looks; but as it happened, he either takes her at a disadvantage and fancies her worse than she is, or else, by this chance, he really discovers that she is not the angel he had believed her to be. Did she only possess the same privilege of calling on him now and then, she also, might soon alter her resolution of making this "charming man" her husband.

After marriage too, if he has no delight in the society of his partner, he can kill his misfortunes in many ways to which she can have no recourse. If his home is unhappy, he can leave all day, and amuse himself with hunting, fishing, shooting, or any other sportsmanlike pastime: he can go to the billiard-table, gossip with other discontented husbands at his club, go to men's parties, or be entirely independent of his home in a thousand ways. The natural and acknowledged independence of his sex, entitles him to do this, alone and unattended: but she—how is it with her if her household gives no pleasure? Who is she to look to but her husband if she is unhappy?—If he is a tyrant; and her home is miserable, she cannot go out and dispel all this by running about from house to house amongst her neighbours, or forget her troubles by seeking out-door recreations. Nothing is left her but to brood over them at home. Hence her risks are infinitely greater than his; and hence the reason why she should summon all her wisdom to assist her in the venture.

We do not wish to frighten you ladies:—we only wish to make you careful of a blind precipitation.

All of us are doomed to carry our burden, whether it be in single life or whether it be in the married state : and peradventure, after all, except in extreme cases, there is not much difference in the weight of it, either in the one condition, or the other. The truth is, the burden is charged with troubles of a different nature, according to the change of circumstances. The unmarried person's lamentation centres in this,—that he or she desires to obtain that which he or she has *not got* : whereas, the lamentation of the unhappily wedded person is this ;—that he or she desires *to get rid of* that which he or she *has got*.

The lady champions to whom we have above alluded, argue as if single folks were all perfectly happy and contented, quite forgetting that they themselves took husbands to their bosoms, because they were neither the one nor the other. They should think of this. What is more, we verily believe, that if all wives were all widows to-morrow, they would all be setting their weeds to the getting of other husbands the day after!

So, young ladies, you perceive that there is nothing left but to pursue the course chalked out for you ; you are discontented and miserable as you are—you cannot surely be much worse off than that by a change. Remember our excellent motto on the title-page. and let it be a warning. Study your sweethearts as much as you have opportunities for so doing, albeit we fear that those opportunities will be but few, since men are sad hypocrites in these affairs. Do not always depend on your own vision, “for love is blind

and cannot see aright ;” but have respect to the counsels of relations and of approved friends. Go wisely to work, and if things do not turn out so thoroughly well as you had hoped, still, there is always a comforting satisfaction in reflecting, that you acted to the best of your judgment.

Lastly, do not be decoyed to rush madly to Gretna Green ; for, as we have heretofore remarked, it is more desirable, more decent, more comely, more respectable, and more sacred, to be married before the altar in Mother Church with friends and neighbours around you, than to submit to a mockery in a country tavern performed by an innkeeper, or else by a weaver or toll-gate keeper, behind the hedge or under a haystack.

THE END.

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