

concerning the Robertsons, but he was led to view every woman in the same unfavourable light; he contrived to misinterpret every word and every action of poor females.— If a young girl smiled in the innocence of her heart, he henceforth set her down as an incipient flirt, already trying to draw the attention of the men. If, on the contrary, he perceived a young lady with a serious aspect and demure deportment, he immediately concluded that she was an arrant hypocrite. In fact, in his presence, women could neither smile nor frown—laugh, talk, walk, or dance, sit still, or keep silent, without incurring some ungracious appellation. He saw plots in all their words and all their movements. The few, very few times he had been forced to dance, it was amusing to see the singular pains which he took to defend himself against what he considered an attack. He favoured his partner with most discouraging monosyllables, and no sooner was the quadrille ended, than he hastened with undisguised alacrity, to rid himself of his female companion.

Poor Sam! the sight of a pretty girl actually threw a cloud over his countenance. He was certainly more at ease in the company of those frightful creatures whom nature, by some extraordinary caprice, has added to the feminine gender. Some thought that Mr. Snodgrass had a peculiar taste in beauty, for he was invariably seen courting, in preference, the company of the most repelling ugly girls of the party. But even this portion of the sex he thought it highly expedient to cut, when, upon his having talked four times consecutively to Miss Catherine Crisp, two matrons began to whisper in his ear, that Miss Crisp was an amiable girl—“Sweet angel!” “Kitty will make an excellent wife!” “Such a kind heart—such placidity of temper—and then so excellently brought up,” &c. &c. This was enough for Sam—from the unlucky moment that the officious dowager began to acquaint him with the merits of Miss Catherine Crisp, Sam made it a particular study not to come within perilous distance of the said young lady. Not because she had red hair—a yellow complexion—a pug nose—an exuberance on her back, and an *absence* in front—not because she had been pronounced one of the plainest women on earth; but simply because of her being amiable, possessing a good heart, good temper, and being likely to make an excellent wife. Such a capability was enough to counteract all the cardinal virtues in the estimation of Sam, and he accordingly shunned, with all possible care, this very ugly and accomplished creature.

Sam's next resource was old women, and he was generally observed doing the amiable by some antiquated dame, whom the rest of the men studiously avoided. By this means Sam soon enjoyed an undisturbed monopoly of all the prosy, drowsy, foolish dowagers in London. They pronounced him a “very sensible man;” but, even among such venerable company, the peace of mind of our friend was doomed to be disturbed. Sam to his utter horror and consternation, found out that some of these apparently inoffensive old ladies were deep and dangerous foes, who were fighting under false colours in the cause of a portionless

neice, or young *protégée*. From the moment of this awful discovery, Sam resolved also to cut old women, and thus we see that, by his successive cuttings he had sent the whole feminine gender to Coventry.

Being debarred from intercourse with one half of the human species, Bachelor Sam found it exceedingly difficult to get comfortably through the four-and-twenty hours of the day. His anxiety now was how to kill time. He became as a matter of course, a most desperate club-man. He enrolled himself a member of about half a dozen of those selfish establishments, and his whole day was spent in loitering, dangling, and lolling from one club to another. But a club is not unfortunately the only requisite for human happiness, and Sam was soon a prey to the most fatal of all mortal maladies, *ennui*. Every thing tired him, and, unless, when an unsatisfactory dinner gave him an opportunity to grumble and scold the waiter, the poor man was at a sad loss to know how to rouse his spirits from that state of morbid apathy into which they were gradually sinking.

Years crept on, and Bachelor Sam was certainly neither improved in temper nor in his way of living; the former had become morose and discontented, the latter was well calculated to bring an additional stock of *ennui*, with the unpleasant addition of years. Sam dropt into one club, then another—took up a paper, which paper he threw by in disgust, and then sallied out for ways and means of killing the tedious time. At length he voted clubs great nuisances, and resolved to combine the advantages of the married man with the independence of the single. He procured a comfortable establishment, and devoted the energies of his mind and soul to that sublime science which, as we have observed already, found so much merit in his eyes, or rather in his mouth. He considered cooking as the most splendid work of human genius and industry. Strange to say, that in proportion as Sam disliked women, the more he became attached to good eating and drinking. His fond affections were concentrated in that one darling object, and, sooth to say, never was young girl so devotedly loved by an enthusiastic admirer as an excellent dinner was adored by Sam.

Fate, or destiny, or fortune, or the stars, had decreed, that Mrs. Muggins should continue an inmate of the bachelor's residence a much longer period of time than it was usual for any female to remain. But Mrs. Muggins was a woman of no ordinary merit: 'tis true she chanced to be on the wrong side of forty, and possessed the visage of a gorgon—'tis true, also, that she was exceedingly expert in scolding, and that she had a most invincible will of her own. But then she had qualities which more than counterbalanced those faults—if faults they could be called—considering the prejudice of Bachelor Sam against youth and beauty. Mrs. Muggins could talk copiously and eloquently on the deceits and utter worthlessness of the female sex: she never missed an opportunity of applauding her master for having escaped the arts of scheming women. Sam hemmed, and coughed, and avowed that Mrs. Muggins was a “very sensible woman;”

and moreover, although she had been ostensibly engaged as housekeeper, she possessed such peculiar and decided abilities for cookery that she took special care to superintend this important branch in her master's domestic happiness. Her grateful master swore that he had found a treasure in Mrs. Muggins; and thus he continued for a long time to grumble, and doze, and eat; and then to eat, and doze, and grumble.

But fate had dreadful calamities in store for poor Sam. An awful danger threatened extermination to his domestic comforts.—The reader must know that, among the dainty dishes which the profound Mrs. Muggins was constantly inventing to tickle her master's palate, there was one that had won immense approbation—it was a peculiar sort of pudding, which the amiable Mrs. Muggins had christened “Bachelor's Pudding,” in compliment to her master. The mastication of this palatable pudding may justly be accounted the blessing that Bachelor Sam experienced in this vale of years. It was, indeed, a pudding, the invention of which might confer additional lustre on the names already sufficiently illustrious, of Ude, Beauvillers, Furet, and other great men. This pudding, in fine, was sufficient of itself to endear the accomplished Mrs. Muggins to her master, even if she could prefer no other claim to his regard and esteem, which was far from being the case—the dame presenting additional claims to those feelings by her philippics against the fair sex, and her warm encomiums on “single blessedness,” which, notwithstanding the Mrs. affixed to her name, she had now professed for the last five and forty years.

One morning Mrs. Muggins announced to Bachelor Sam, that she must quit his service. Sam was thunderstruck—dismayed—nay, almost annihilated at such fearful intelligence.

“Quit my service, Mrs. Muggins! Surely I've given you no cause of complaint.”

“No, sir—but a powerful reason.”

“Powerful reason! Now pray good Mrs. Muggins, don't be precipitate—I'll do anything to render things comfortable to you.”

“But you can't, sir.”

“No; only mention your wishes—anything to keep you in my house.”

“But—but, sir,—indeed—really—hem—the fact is, I'm going to get married.”

“Get married! Bless me! I'm ready to fall! Get married!”

Bachelor Sam could scarcely believe his senses. Mrs. Muggins, however, reiterated her assertion, and there could be no doubt that she intended to commit the rash act.—Here was a fearful prospect; Sam's heart throbbed with agony—“Bachelor's pudding” was lost for ever—he could not recover the loss of Mrs. Muggins—she was indispensable to his existence.

“And whom are you going to marry? Do you love the man?”

“Why as to loving—I've seen *another* whom I should prefer.”

“But would you really abandon me, good Mrs. Muggins?”

A very interesting dialogue now took place, and sundry equally interesting explanations came to light. Bachelor Sam foresaw that, in his dreadful predicament, nothing but a