

CHAPTER LXVI.

LEWIS OUT-GENERALS THE GENERAL AND THE TRAIN STOPS.

LEWIS's recovery was not retarded by his imprudent visit to the Palazzo Grassini; and Frere had the satisfaction, ere many weeks elapsed, of perceiving that he was strong enough to render their return to England practicable. Accordingly, the Giaour pictures and the sketch of Annie and Faust were carefully packed (Lewis having determined to retain them as mementos of the eventful portion of his career which led to their execution), old Antonelli received a present of money sufficient to enable him to carry out the darling wish of his heart, viz. to bestow upon his son the education of a painter; and Lewis and Frere, having wound up their affairs in Venice, quitted that city, which, filled with a rabble of revolutionary demagogues and their dupes, had become no longer a desirable place of residence. The friends reached England without any adventures worthy of record; and Rose was compensated for many a weary hour of anxiety and suspense by her joy in welcoming her brother and learning from his lips the unmitigated satisfaction with which he had heard of her engagement to Richard Frere; and how that "glorious fellow" had redoubled all his former obligations to him, by his sound advice and tender and judicious nursing. If for a moment Frere could have regretted the part he had played, the loving smile of warm approval with which Rose received him would have compensated him for any far greater expenditure of time and trouble. But Lewis had much to tell, which gave rise to very different emotions in his auditor; and Rose, as she grieved for the untimely fate of poor Jane Hardy, and shuddered at the awful retribution which had overtaken her betrayer, breathed a silent thanksgiving that her brother had been restrained from any deed of violence to which his impetuous disposition, keen sensibilities, and quick sense of injury, might have impelled him. Lewis had also something to hear as well as to communicate.

Mrs. Arundel, in her spirit of opposition to the artless and bereaved relict of the late Colonel Brahmin, had carried a flirtation with that victim of literary ambition, Dackerel Dace, Esq., to such a pitch, that when the blighted barrister determined to resign his destiny altogether in favour of matrimony, and made her an offer of his limp hand, flabby heart, and five thousand a year to give piquancy and flavour to the tasteless and insipid "trifle" he tendered for her acceptance, that volatile matron felt that she had committed herself too deeply to retract, and that, setting off the money against the man, the bargain, after all, might not be such a bad one, and so said "Yes."