

THE MISCHIEF OF MONICA.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

MISCHIEF IS THE VERY SPICE OF LIFE.

How brew the brave drink, Life?
Take of the herb hight morning joy,
Take of the herb hight evening rest,
Pour in pain lest bliss should cloy,
Shake in sin to give it zest . . .
Then down with the brave drink, Life.—BURTON.

“WELL !”

There is no word in the English language which has more intonations than the ejaculation “Well !” It has as many meanings as there are notes of the gamut. There is the “Well” of pure preface, the “Well !” of utter indifference, the “Well !” of good humor, the “Well !” of chagrin, the “Well !” of amazement, and the “Well !” of despair — together with all the hybrid “Wells” formed by the fusion of one or more of the above with others, *ad infinitum*. It is therefore something to say for the “Well” which stands at the head of this chapter, that it was as fully charged with significance and import as though it contained the very marrow and pith of a dozen good round “Wells !” rolled into one. It was the “Well !” of youthful ferocity and self-will armed to the teeth ; and yet it had a kind of lurking gleam about it too, which, like a grain of some sweet spice thrown into a pint of bitter mixture, just