

me whatever letters came during my illness." From the pile of spoiled paper from fashionable friends, country cousins, county magistrates, and tradesmen who take the liberty to remind you of the trifle which has escaped your recollection,—from this olio of precious receipts Rupert drew a letter from the Irish officer's lady, who, it will be remembered, first allured Rupert to Mary's village, acquainting him that she had been reported by some very good-natured friend to her husband, immediately upon his return from Ireland. Unhappily, the man loved his wife, valued his honour, and was of that unfashionable temperament that never forgives an injury. He had sent his Achates twice during Rupert's illness to De Lindsay Castle, and was so enraged at the idea of his injurer's departing this life by any other means than his bullet, that he was supposed in consequence to be a little touched in the head. He was observed to walk by himself, sometimes bursting into tears, sometimes muttering deep oaths of vengeance; he shunned all society, and sat for hours gazing vacantly on a pistol placed before him. All these agreeable circumstances did the unhappy fair one (who picked up her information second hand, for she was an alien from the conjugal bed and board) detail to Rupert with very considerable pathos.

"Now then for Mary's letters," said the invalid; "no red-hot Irishman there, I trust;" and Rupert took up a large heap, which he had selected from the rest as a child picks the plums of his pudding by way of a regale at the last. At the perusal of the first three or four letters he smiled with pleasure; presently his lips grew more compressed, and a dark cloud settled on his brow. He took up another and—he read a few lines—started from his sofa. "What, ho, there!—my carriage and four directly!—lose not a moment!—Do you hear me?—Too ill, do you say!—never so well in my life!—Not another word or—My carriage, I say, instantly!—Put in my swiftest horses! I must be at T—tonight before five o'clock!" and the order was obeyed.

To return to Mary. The letters which had blessed her through the live-long days suddenly ceased. What could be the reason?—was he faithless—forgetful—ill?—Alas! whatever might be the cause, it was almost equally ominous to her. "Are you sure there are none?" said she, every morning, when she inquired at the office, from which she once used to depart so gayly; and the tone of that voice was so mournful, that the gruff post-man paused to look again, before he shut the lattice and extinguished the last hope. Her appetite and colour daily decreased; shut up in her humble and fireless chamber, she passed whole hours in tears, in reading and repeating, again and again, every syllable of the letter, she already possessed, or in pouring forth in letters to him, all the love and bitterness of her soul. "He must be ill," she said at last; "he never else could

have been so cruel!" and she could bear the idea no longer. "I will go to him—I will soothe and attend him—who can love him, who can watch over him like me!" and the kindness of her nature overcame its modesty, and she made her small bundle, and stole early one morning from the house. "If he should despise me," she thought; and she was almost about to return, when the stern voice of her brother came upon her ear. He had for several days watched the alteration in her habits and manners, and endeavoured to guess at the cause. He went into her room, discovered a letter in her desk which she had just written to Rupert, and which spoke of her design. He watched, discovered, and saved her. There was no mercy nor gentleness in the bosom of Mr. James Warner. He carried her home; reviled her in the coarsest and most taunting language; acquainted her father; and after seeing her debarred from all access to correspondence or escape, after exulting over her unupbraiding and heart-broken shame and despair, and swearing that it was vastly theatrical, Mr. James Warner mounted his yellow stanhope, and went his way to the Fives Court. But these were trifling misfortunes, compared with those which awaited this unfortunate girl.

There lived in the village of T— one Zacharias Johnson, a godly man and a rich, moreover a saint of the same chapter as Ebenezer Ephraim Warner; his voice was the most nasal, his holding forth the most unctuous, his aspect the most sinister, and his vestments the most threadbare of the whole of that sacred tribe. To the eyes of this man there was something comely in the person of Mary Warner: he liked her beauty, for he was a sensualist; her gentleness, for he was a coward; and her money, for he was a merchant. He proposed both to the father and to the son; the daughter he looked upon as a conciliating blessing sure to follow the precious assent of the two relations. To the father he spoke of godliness and scrip,—of the delightfulness of living in unity, and the receipts of his flourishing country house; to the son he spoke the language of kindness and the world—he knew that young men had expenses—he should feel happy to furnish Mr. James with something for his innocent amusements, if he might hope for his (Mr. James') influence over his worthy father: the sum was specified, and the consent was sold. Among those domestic phenomena, which the inquirer seldom takes the trouble to solve, is the magical power possessed by a junior branch of the family over the main tree, in spite of the contrary and perverse direction taken by the aforesaid branch. James had acquired and exercised a most undue authority over the paternal patriarch, although in the habits and sentiments of each there was not a single trait in common between them. But James possessed a vigorous and unshackled, his father a weak and priest-ridden mind. In domestic life, it is the mind which is master. Mr. Zacharias Johnson had once or