

shall wish to make a short retreat from the bustle of the world, our holy house will afford you a peaceable asylum.

It was not but with great difficulty, nor even till much time after, that, by the repeated solicitations of Frances, and her uncle, Isabella was prevailed on to relinquish entirely, her intentions of entering on a monastic life. She resided for some time, in her father's venerable old mansion on the Medway, accompanied by a widowed aunt, her father's sister; who, at intervals, attended her on visits to Frances, and also at particular seasons, to the abbot, at his house, which was a noble building, adjoining to the monastery of St. Augustin.

It was in one of these visits to her uncle, that she became acquainted with Henry de Belville, between whose father and the abbot there had long subsisted a most firm friendship. He was of good birth, though much inferior to Isabella in fortune; his father's estate having greatly suffered in the confusion of those turbulent times.

Belville was now in his twenty-ninth year; his figure was graceful, and manly, and, to a disposition as amiable as his person, was joined an understanding both quick and strong, and which had been improved by the most extensive education, that the fashion of the age allowed. He had been sent to travel over Europe, had resided in several of its principal courts; and was now on his return from a short expedition into France, and had stopped at Canterbury, to pay his respects to the abbot, and to deliver him certain letters with which he had been charged.

Belville, on his first return to England, a few years previous to the present period, had been honoured by the patronage of Richard duke of Gloucester; near whose person he held an employment, which could not long dispense with his absence: for that prince, being now mounted on the throne of England, the whole nation was thrown into an hostile state.

It will not be wondered at, if after Belville and Isabella had been a few days together, their mutual accomplishments, and their mutual desire to please, should have made them much charmed with one another. Belville felt himself enamoured of his fair companion, and had the satisfaction to perceive, that his attention to her was not thrown away. Though he took leave, after a short time, to go to London, yet he found an excuse for returning very soon; and having reason to think he had made a favourable impression on Isabella, did not long hesitate to propose himself to her, as one who would be happy to pass his life in the society of so

engaging a woman. His offer was not less pleasing to Isabella, than it was to her uncle and Frances; the latter of whom agreed to give up to her sister, her right in the Castle of St. Clair, where it was proposed they should reside.

Every thing was preparing for their nuptials; and nothing could wear a fairer face of prosperity, than did this purposed union of true and disinterested affection. But the successful progress that the arms of Henry of Richmond, now made in the kingdom, had obliged Richard to oppose them with his utmost force, and to summon all his servants to attend his camp; among whom, as I before mentioned, was the intended bridegroom; who, at this time, would most willingly have waved the service, had not his own nice sense of honour, and his zeal for his royal master, overcome every private motive.

Were I to follow closely the manuscript from whence the substance of this story is drawn, it would lead me into some of the historical transactions of those times, which are already sufficiently known; only it is worthy of being remembered, that there are encomiums bestowed on the character and person of Richard; upon both of which, historians have thrown so much deformity. I shall therefore pass over those circumstances, which are foreign to my subject; and only observe, that the unfortunate Bellville was among those of the king's followers, who share the fate of their royal master in Bosworth Field. He was near Richard in great part of the battle, and was also a witness of his death, and his own horse being killed under him, either by the fall, or by being trampled on in the confusion, his thigh was broken; and, after Richmond's party had obtained the victory, this gallant youth was carried, with several others, wounded, into Leicester, where, his rank being known, he was lodged in a monastery of Black Friars, in that city.

His page Bertram, who had served him from his infancy, took care that every assistance should be procured him; but the fever, which was occasioned by the accident, together with the many bruises he had received, neither gave himself, or those about him, any other prospect, but that of approaching death.

Those who contemplate Belville a few weeks before, in the full vigour of youth, flattering himself with every expectation of happiness, that virtue, fortune, and an union with one of the loveliest of women, could present to his imagination; and now picture him stretched on a poor pallet, surrounded by a parcel of mendicant friars, his countenance shrunk and wan, and his