

GREEN COAT AND BROWN COAT. [Concluded.]

A curtain prevented the gentle mourn- ing them, which the gentleman in brown g... immediately opened. But the youth in green... thought he had had uite enough of dying faces for one morning, had turned from the bed, and endeavoured to find more agreea- ble ones in the street, into which the solita- ry window looked.

The young woman found herself address- ed in the softest accents, and every sentence of consolation administered to her.—“Ah!” said she, “It is all, all too late; the only comfort I can now receive, is the certainty that I cannot live to profit by your good- ness. But charge your memory with my woes: that if, in your progress through life, you should meet with the author of them, he may know—her heart was broken who yielded it to him!”

“I am by birth an American; the only child of parents far advanced in life, and consequently the blessing of their existence. My father was a planter, respected for his riches, and beloved for his goodness. Ah, he was all virtue!—and how unworthy have I been of such a parent! My youth was passed beneath his eye, in which period I was instructed in all the accomplish- ments which are supposed to heighten the force of beauty.

“At the age of eighteen my father gave me in marriage to a young gentleman of amiable manners, who loved me to excess. I felt not a passion equal to his; but I loved no other, and my innocence made me be- lieve that I felt for him all the tenderness a heart was capable of feeling—Oh! why was I ever awakened from the happy error!

“My father and my husband were both of the loyalist party, and consequently the British officers were in their houses treated with particular attention and favour. A few months after our marriage, towards the close of the war, a young soldier, who was said to be of fashion and of great fortune in England, found admittance to our table. His manners were so engaging, that, after a few visits, my husband requested him to reside with us entirely. The invitation was gratefully accepted, and he became one of our family.

“Oh, how did the hours glide in his so- ciety! Without, all was anarchy, distress, and war; but, within our walls, all was elegance, and taste, and pleasure. My husband was never wearied of praising his guest; and my heart fluttered, unconscious of its error, with delight at hearing those praises.—Alas! sir, how I shall add the rest! By degrees that heart became sensible of its situation and knew it loved—knew that it madly loved!

“My husband was often absent—at those periods our guests never. It cannot be that I should relate scenes of seduction and guilt—for seduction and guilt did in- deed I fellow! and I became abandoned to my lover!”

Here tears and moans stopped the dying penitent; who at length, with many an in- terruption, continued—“Think not that I became at once dead to honour and every consideration of duty! Though sure, slow was my progress in the road of iniquity. Many were my self upbraidings, numberless my resolutions; but at last the voice of duty did in my heart, and love reigned there a ruining spoiler!

“I had retired one afternoon to a sum- mer-house in the farthest part of the garden. My lover unexpectedly appeared there—I say unexpectedly. The suddenness of his approach, and the joy which accompanied my surprise made me forgetful of every thing but him; and whilst my arm familiar-

ly reclined on his shoulder, my injured hus- band entered the apartment.

“His cry of distraction was the first intimation we received of his presence. He viewed us without speaking, whilst we re- mained fixed like statues where he first be- held us. His first action was towards his sword, but pausing and viewing us awhile with mingled rage and grief, he uttered a prayer for fortitude to heaven, and fled through the garden with the most desperate velocity. This was the last moment in which I ever saw him!

“We remained long in the fatal summer- house, not knowing what conduct to pur- sue. The sense of my guilt over-powered me—I felt that happiness had fled from me for ever! At length I ventured to return to the house. With my eyes I sought what was become of the master, but I dared not suffer my lips to articulate his name! The servants did not seem to be conscious that any extraordinary event had happened, and all things appeared in their usual state of composure. Thus the night passed, and three succeeding days and nights; in all which time I heard neither of my husband, nor of him who had caused my guilt. This frightful calm was at length broken!

“On the fourth morning, my father, my dear father! entered my apartment, with a countenance that expressed the most dejected sorrow. He took my hand, however, with the utmost tenderness, and by the softness of his tones removed the terror that had seized me. He told me he had a deep affliction to prepare me for; and endeavoured to forti- fy my mind with every argument of reli- gion and submission before he revealed it. In this dreadful suspense I uttered not a word—my mind in fearful torturous expec- tation!

“At length the impending ruin crushed me! He informed me that, three days be- fore my husband had joined the loyalist ar- my, that an engagement had taken place, and that he was amongst the first victims of the battle! The effect this intelligence had on me was scarcely less than frenzy. Instead of weeping, I grew furious; called myself my husband’s murderer, demanded justice on myself, and talked of circumstances which, though true, passed on those about me as the effect of delirium. These vio- lent perturbations ended in a fever, from which—it was my punishment to recover.

“With deepest shame I acknowledge that, as I recovered, my passion revived. I now considered myself a liberty, and had no doubt that my tender lover panted for the hour in which he could throw himself at my feet, and recompense all my suffer- ings by uniting himself to me for ever!

“The days and weeks wore on, and he appeared not. At first I considered him as sacrificing to decorum; but, at the end of two months, I could no longer resist inquir- ing of a lady when she had seen the object of my thoughts. She answered, with great unconcern, that he had hardly been seen at all for the last month; for that he was so devoted to ***** that he seldom spent an hour out of her presence; that he spoke every where of his passion, and had told his friends that he doted on her to such dis- traction, that for her sake he had almost re- solved to give up his profession and his country, and settle in America.

“How long my friend continued this fatal detail, I knew not; my falling, at length, senseless at her feet, shocked her into silence. She in some degree suspected the cause of so strong an emotion. Urged, therefore, either by prudence or curiosity, she called no assistance, but endeavoured to bring me to a recollection of my miseries by the common methods. On reviving from the fainting, I found my head reposed upon her bosom, and her tears bedewing my face.

This tenderness unlocked my whole soul— my woes were too poignant to admit of concealment, and they were all unbosomed to her.

“My failing spirits,” said the agitated narrator, “will not permit me to continue in full detail. I must pass over many events, to tell you that this friend prevailed on me to accompany her to England. Her husband was a loyalist, and had secured himself; mine had been so, and the rebels made this a pretext to rob me of all my pos- sessions—too light a punishment for crimes so deep!

“I left America without daring to men- tion such a design to my father. I could not bear to rive his heart with such intelli- gence from my lips; and I could not exist on a spot where every object kept my sense of dishonour and wretchedness alive. I wrote to him from the port at which I land- ed, and confessed all my criminality with a view to make his mind yield to the propri- ety of my absence, and to lessen his regret in losing a child whom he could no longer think worthy of his love?—Alas! I have since learned that, for having been obser- vant of his oath of allegiance to his king, he too has been doomed to be deprived of his all.

On our arrival in England, my friends carried me to a northern county, where I re- sided with them almost two years in tolerable tranquility. My tears frequently flowed before Heaven for my past offences—tears that always left me more peaceful and serene. This quiet state was at length interrupted, by the passion of the man in whose family I resided. My friend had unwisely inform- ed her husband of my former guilt—intelli- gence which he received with malicious pleasure.

“He considered that I had no right to defend myself against his addresses on prin- ciples of honour, having once outraged them—and daringly told me so. On my continuing to express horror at his taking upon himself the dreadful office of tempting me back again to sin, he had the brutality to add, that my affected niceness was an un- grateful return to his benevolence, in hav- ing so long supported me, and that, if I re- mained in so ungrateful a mood, it must be under some other roof.

“His roof I instantly quitted, though a stranger in the kingdom, and known to no human being in it, out of the little village in which he resided. But to remain there would have caused a hope that I did not wish to avoid him; and I owed it to his wife to leave a situation in which I should be every hour exposed to his injurious vi- sions.

“A stage that passed at the instant of these reflections suggested my relief. It was in winter, and there was no fellow- traveller; which gloomy circumstance was to me a desirable one, for it gave me leisure to ponder over my sorrows, and to consider of my future fate. The produce of the few valuables I had been able to collect from the wreck of my husband’s property, were now nearly expended. The torture of my reflections so overpowered me, that, when the coach arrived in London, I was so ill as to seem to the people of the inn in a dying state—I am thankful they were right!

“The coachman recommended me to this house, kept by his relations, as he in- formed me. I delivered my purse to the mistress of it, who for a few weeks gave me some attendance; but since that period she has left me, no unwilling prey to the disorder which will presently—

“Unfeeling wretch!” exclaimed the youth, who had till now seemed attentive to little but what passed in the street; though the restlessness of his motions, and now and then a heavy sigh, gave his friend

room to suspect him of more tenderness and compassion than was thought to belong to his character.

The sudden force of this explanation had a visible effect on the dying lady; but neither she nor the gentleman who had been listening to her melancholy tale, had time to notice it, for the door instantaneously open- ed, and the venerable patient whom they had first visited was seen approaching. The nurse tottered beneath his weight as with ghastly eyes he surveyed the lovely creature already on the threshold of death. He stretched his arms towards her, uttered a deep cry, and, reaching the bed, fell on it and expired!

“My father—my father!” exclaimed the lady, with a wild look, and bending over the corse; “but I’ll join thee—my woes end!”

“Yes, thy woes are over!” said the youth, who now turned from the window, “thy woes are over!—But, oh! Caroline, when will end the anguish which now seizes my soul? Behold the author of all thy afflictions! thy husband’s murderer, thy murderer, and the murderer of thy father!”

The lady started from her father’s corse, and fixing her eyes on him for a moment with the most dreadful expression, essay- ed to speak; but death had already rendered rigid the organs of utterance—his chill hand was on her heart, she struggled a moment, and then, without having uttered a sound, sunk dead on her pillow.

Pause here, and behold the two friends— both young, both equally blessed with health and with fortune. They had arisen in the morning for the occupations of the day; it was before them—their actions were to be chosen. One of them passed its opening hours in his usual routine of indolence, of folly, of vapidity, and of expense—the hour of noon beholds him a destroyer of lives, an accumulator of crimes, a wretch crushed by a sense of his iniquities!

The other began the day like a favourite son of Heaven! his heart was filled with benevolence; wherever he trod, his progress, like that of the sun with which he rose, gave life and joy. Having cheered his mind with acts of beneficence, he retired from the woes he had contributed to lessen, to refine the pleasures that lay before him, and to taste them with a zest—of which the palid libertine can form no idea! He is indeed an epicure—a voluptuary of the first order! Ye sons of pleasure, be he hence- forth your model!

SPINSTERS.—Amongst our industrious and frugal forefathers, it was a maxim, that a young woman should never be married un- til she had spun herself a set of body, table, and bed linen.—From this custom, all un- married women were termed spinsters—an appellation they still retain in all law pro- ceedings.

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