CHAPTER V

A new and great acquaintance introduced. What we place most hopes upon, generally proves most fatal.

At a small distance from the house my predecessor had made a seat, overshaded by an hedge of hawthorn and honeysuckle. Here, when the weather was fine, and our labour soon finished, we usually sat together, to enjoy an extensive landscape, in the calm of the evening. Here too we drank tea, which now was become an occasional banquet; and as we had it but seldom, it diffused a new joy, the preparations for it being made with no small share of bustle and ceremony. On these occasions, our two little ones always read for us, and they were regularly served after we had done. Sometimes, to give a variety to our amusements, the girls sung to the guitar; and while they thus formed a little concert, my wife and I would stroll down the sloping field, that was embellished with bluebells and centaury, talk of our children with rapture, and enjoy the breeze that wafted both health and harmony.

In this manner we began to find that every situation in life might bring its own peculiar pleasures: every morning waked us to a repetition of toil; but the evening repaid it with vacant hilarity.

It was about the beginning of autumn, on a holiday, for I kept such as intervals of relaxation from labour, that I had drawn out my family to our usual place of amusement, and our young musicians began their usual concert. As we were thus engaged, we saw a stag bound nimbly by, within about twenty paces of where we were sitting, and by its panting, it seemed pressed by the hunters. We had not much time to reflect upon the poor animal's distress, when we perceived the dogs and horsemen come sweeping along at some distance behind, and making the very path it had taken. I was instantly for returning in with my family; but either curiosity or surprise, or some more hidden motive, held my wife and daughters to their seats. The huntsman, who rode foremost, past us with great swiftness, followed by four or five persons more, who seemed in equal haste. At last, a young gentleman of a more genteel appearance than the rest, came forward, and for a while regarding us, instead of pursuing the chase, stopped short, and giving his horse to a servant who attended, approached us with a careless superior air. He seemed to want no introduction, but was going to salute my daughters as one certain of a kind reception; but they had early learnt the lesson of looking presumption out of countenance. Upon which he let us know that his name was Thornhill, and that he was owner of the estate that lay for some extent round us. He again, therefore, offered to salute the female part of the family, and such was the power of fortune and fine clothes, that he found no second repulse. As his address, though confident, was easy, we soon became more familiar; and perceiving musical instruments lying near, he begged to be favoured with a song. As I did not approve of such disproportioned acquaintances, I winked upon my daughters in order to prevent their compliance; but my hint was counteracted by one from their mother; so

that with a chearful air they gave us, a favourite song of Dryden's. Mr. Thornhill seemed highly delighted with their performance and choice, and then took up the guitar himself. He played but very indifferently; however, my eldest daughter repaid his former applause with interest, and assured him that his tones were louder than even those of her master. At this compliment he bowed, which she returned with a curtsey. He praised her taste, and she commended his understanding: an age could not have made them better acquainted. While the fond mother too, equally happy, insisted upon her landlord's stepping in, and tasting a glass of her gooseberry. The whole family seemed earnest to please him: my girls attempted to entertain him with topics they thought most modern, while Moses, on the contrary, gave him a question or two from the ancients, for which he had the satisfaction of being laughed at: my little ones were no less busy, and fondly stuck close to the stranger. All my endeavours could scarce keep their dirty fingers from handling and tarnishing the lace on his clothes, and lifting up the flaps of his pocket holes, to see what was there. At the approach of evening he took leave; but not till he had requested permission to renew his visit, which, as he was our landlord, we most readily agreed to.

As soon as he was gone, my wife called a council on the conduct of the day. She was of opinion, that it was a most fortunate hit; for that she had known even stranger things at last brought to bear. She hoped again to see the day in which we might hold up our heads with the best of them; and concluded, she protested she could see no reason why the two Miss Wrinklers should marry great fortunes, and her children get none. As this last argument was directed to me, I protested I could see no reason for it neither, nor why Mr. Simpkins got the ten thousand pound prize in the lottery, and we sat down with a blank. "I protest, Charles" cried my wife "this is the way you always damp my girls and me when we are in Spirits. Tell me, Sophy, my dear, what do you think of our new visitor? Don't you think he seemed to be good-natured?"

"Immensely so, indeed, Mamma" replied she. "I think he has a great deal to say upon every thing, and is never at a loss; and the more trifling the subject, the more he has to say."

"Yes" cried Olivia "he is well enough for a man; but for my part, I don't much like him, he is so extremely impudent and familiar; but on the guitar he is shocking".

These two last speeches I interpreted by contraries. I found by this, that Sophia internally despised, as much as Olivia secretly admired him "Whatever may be your opinions of him, my children" cried I "to confess a truth, he has not prepossessed me in his favour. Disproportioned friendships ever terminate in disgust; and I thought, notwithstanding all his ease, that he seemed perfectly sensible of the distance between us. Let us keep to companions of our own rank. There is no character more contemptible than a man that is a fortune hunter, and I can see no reason why fortune hunting women should not be contemptible too. Thus, at best, we shall be contemptible if his views be honourable; but if they be otherwise! I should shudder but to think of that! It

is true I have no apprehensions from the conduct of my children, but I think there are some from his character. —”

I would have proceeded, but for the interruption of a servant from the Squire, who, with his compliments, sent us a side of venison, and a promise to dine with us some days after. This well-timed present pleaded more powerfully in his favour, than any thing I had to say could obviate. I therefore continued silent, satisfied with just having pointed out danger, and leaving it to their own discretion to avoid it. That virtue which requires to be ever guarded, is scarce worth the sentinel.

CHAPTER VI

The happiness of a country fireside.

As we carried on the former dispute with some degree of warmth, in order to accommodate matters, it was universally agreed, that we should have a part of the venison for supper, and the girls undertook the task with alacrity. “I am sorry” cried I “that we have no neighbour or stranger to take a part in this good cheer: feasts of this kind acquire a double relish from hospitality.”

“Bless me” cried my wife “here comes our good friend Mr. Burchell, that saved our Sophia, and that run you down fairly in the argument”

“Confute me in argument, child!” cried I. “You mistake there, my dear. I believe there are but few that can do that: I never dispute your abilities at making a goose pie, and I beg you’ll leave argument to me.” — As I spoke, poor Mr. Burchell entered the house, and was welcomed by the family, who shook him heartily by the hand, while little Dick officiously reached him a chair.

I was pleased with the poor man’s friendship for two reasons; because I knew that he wanted mine, and I knew him to be friendly as far as he was able. He was known in our neighbourhood by the character of the poor Gentleman that would do no good when he was young, though he was not yet thirty. He would at intervals talk with great good sense; but in general he was fondest of the company of children, whom he used to call harmless little men. He was famous, I found, for singing them ballads, and telling them stories; and seldom went out without something in his pockets for them, a piece of gingerbread, or a halfpenny whistle. He generally came for a few days into our neighbourhood once a year, and lived upon the neighbours hospitality. He sat down to supper among us, and my wife was not sparing of her gooseberry wine. The tale went round; he sung us old songs, and gave the children the story of the *Buck of Beverland*, with the *History of Patient Grissel*, *the Adventures of Catskin*, and then *Fair Rosamond’s Bower*. Our cock, which always crew at eleven, now told us it was time for repose; but an unforeseen difficulty started about lodging the stranger: all our beds were already taken up, and it was too late to send him to the next alehouse. In this dilemma, little Dick offered him his part of the bed, if his brother Moses would let him lie with him. “And I” cried Bill “will give Mr. Burchell my part, if my sisters will take me to theirs.”

“Well done, my good children” cried I “hospitality is one of the first Christian duties. The beast retires to its shelter, and the bird flies to its nest; but helpless man can only find refuge from his fellow creature. The greatest stranger in this world, was he that came to save it. He never had an house, as if willing to see what hospitality was left remaining amongst us. Deborah, my dear” cried I, to my wife, “give those boys a lump of sugar each, and let Dick’s be the largest, because he spoke first.”

In the morning early I called out my whole family to help at saving an aftergrowth of hay, and, our guest offering his assistance, he was accepted among the number. Our labours went on lightly, we turned the swath to the wind, I went foremost, and the rest followed in due succession. I could not avoid, however, observing the assiduity of Mr. Burchell in assisting my daughter Sophia in her part of the task. When he had finished his own, he would join in her's, and enter into a close conversation: but I had too good an opinion of Sophia's understanding, and was too well convinced of her ambition, to be under any uneasiness from a man of broken fortune. When we were finished for the day, Mr. Burchell was invited as on the night before; but he refused, as he was to lie that night at a neighbour's, to whose child he was carrying a whistle. When gone, our conversation at supper turned upon our late unfortunate guest. "What a strong instance" said I "is that poor man of the miseries attending a youth of levity and extravagance. He by no means wants sense, which only serves to aggravate his former folly. Poor forlorn creature, where are now the revellers, the flatterers, that he could once inspire and command! Gone, perhaps, to attend the bagnio pander, grown rich by his extravagance. They once praised him, and now they applaud the pander: their former raptures at his wit, are now converted into sarcasms at his folly: he is poor, and perhaps deserves poverty; for he has neither the ambition to be independent, nor the skill to be useful."

Prompted, perhaps, by some secret reasons, I delivered this observation with too much acrimony, which my Sophia gently reproved. "Whatsoever his former conduct may be, pappa, his circumstances should exempt him from censure now. His present indigence is a sufficient punishment for former folly; and I have heard my pappa himself say, that we should never strike our unnecessary blow at a victim over whom providence holds the scourge of its resentment."

"You are right, Sophy" cried my son Moses "and one of the ancients finely represents so malicious a conduct, by the attempts of a rustic to flay Marsyas, whose skin, the fable tells us, had been wholly stripped off by another. Besides, I don't know if this poor man's situation be so bad as my father would represent it. We are not to judge of the feelings of others by what we might feel if in their place. However dark the habitation of the mole to our eyes, yet the animal itself finds the apartment sufficiently lightsome. And to confess a truth, this man's mind seems fitted to his station; for I never heard any one more sprightly than he was to-day, when he conversed with you." — This was said without the least design, however it excited a blush, which she strove to cover by an affected laugh, assuring him, that she scarce took any notice of what he said to her; but that she believed he might once have been a very fine gentleman. The readiness with which she undertook to vindicate herself, and her blushing, were symptoms I did not internally approve; but I repressed my suspicions.

As we expected our landlord the next day, my wife went to make the venison pasty; Moses sat reading, while I taught the little ones: my daughters seemed equally busy with the rest; and I observed them for a good while cooking something over the fire. I at first supposed they were assisting their mother; but little Dick informed me in a whisper, that they were making a wash for the face.

Washes of all kinds I had a natural antipathy to; for I knew that instead of mending the complexion they spoiled it. I therefore approached my chair by sly degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if it wanted mending, seemingly by accident, overturned the whole composition, and it was too late to begin another.

CHAPTER VII

A town wit described. The dullest fellows may learn to be comical for a night or two.

When the morning arrived on which we were to entertain our young landlord, it may be easily supposed what provisions were exhausted to make an appearance. It may also be conjectured that my wife and daughters expanded their gayest plumage upon this occasion. Mr. Thornhill came with a couple of friends, his chaplain, and feeder. The servants, who were numerous, he politely ordered to the next alehouse: but my wife, in the triumph of her heart, insisted on entertaining them all; for which, by the bye, our family was pinched for three weeks after. As Mr. Burchell had hinted to us the day before, that he was making some proposals of marriage, to Miss Wilmot, my son George's former mistress, this a good deal damped the heartiness of his reception: but accident, in some measure, relieved our embarrasment; for one of the company happening to mention her name, Mr. Thornhill observed with an oath, that he never knew any thing more absurd than calling such a fright a beauty: "For strike me ugly" continued he "if I should not find as much pleasure in choosing my mistress by the information of a lamp under the clock at St Dunstan's." At this he laughed, and so did we: — the jests of the rich are ever successful. Olivia too could not avoid whispering, loud enough to be heard, that he had an infinite fund of humour. After dinner, I began with my usual toast, the Church; for this I was thanked by the chaplain, as he said the church was the only mistress of his affections.

"Come tell us honestly, Frank," said the Squire, with his usual archness, "suppose the church, your present mistress, dressed in lawnsleeves, on one hand, and Miss Sophia, with no lawn about her, on the other, which would you be for?"

"For both, to be sure" cried the chaplain.

"Right Frank" cried the Squire; "for may this glass suffocate me but a fine girl is worth all the priestcraft in the creation. For what are tythes and tricks but an imposition, all a confounded imposture, and I can prove it."

"I wish you would" cried my son Moses. "And I think" continued he "that I should be able to answer you."

"Very well, Sir" cried the Squire, who immediately smoked him" and winking on the rest of the company, to prepare us for the sport, if you are for a cool argument upon that subject, I am ready to accept the challenge. And first, whether are you for managing it analogically, or dialogically?"

"I am for managing it rationally" cried Moses, quite happy at being permitted to dispute.

"Good again" cried the Squire "and firstly, of the first. I hope you'll not deny that whatever is is. If you don't grant me that, I can go no further."

"Why" returned Moses "I think I may grant that, and make the best of it."

"I hope too" returned the other "you'll grant that a part is less than the whole."

"I grant that too" cried Moses "it is but just and reasonable."

"I hope" cried the Squire "you will not deny, that the two angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones"

"Nothing can be plainer" returned t'other, and looked round with his usual importance.

"Very well" cried the 'Squire, speaking very quick "the premises being thus settled, I proceed to observe, that the concatenation of self existences, proceeding in a reciprocal duplicate ratio, naturally produce a problematical dialogism, which in some measure proves that the essence of spirituality may be referred to the second predicable"

"Hold, hold" cried the other "I deny that: Do you think I can thus tamely submit to such heterodox doctrines?"

"What" replied the 'Squire, as if in a passion, "not submit! Answer me one plain question: Do you think Aristotle right when he says, that relatives are related?"

"Undoubtedly" replied the other.

"If so then" cried the 'Squire, 'answer me directly to what I propose: Whether do you judge the analytical investigation of the first part of my enthymem deficient secundum quoad, or quoad minus, and give me your reasons: give me your reasons, I say, directly."

"I protest" cried Moses "I don't rightly comprehend the force of your reasoning; but if it be reduced to one simple proposition, I fancy it may then have an answer."

"O sir" cried the Squire, "I am your most humble servant, I find you want me to furnish you with argument and intellects too. No, sir, there I protest you are too hard for me." This effectually raised the laugh against poor Moses, who sat the only dismal figure in a group of merry faces: nor, did he offer a single syllable more during the whole entertainment.

But though all this gave me no pleasure, it had a very different effect upon Olivia, who mistook it for humour, though but a mere act of the memory. She thought him therefore a very fine gentleman; and such as consider what powerful ingredients a good figure, fine clothes, and fortune, are in that

character, will easily forgive her. Mr. Thornhill, notwithstanding his real ignorance, talked with ease, and could expatiate upon the common topics of conversation with fluency. It is not surprising then that such talents should win the affections of a girl, who by education was taught to value an appearance in herself, and consequently to set a value upon it in another.

Upon his departure, we again entered into a debate upon the merits of our young landlord. As he directed his looks and conversation to Olivia, it was no longer doubted but that she was the object that induced him to be our visitor. Nor did she seem to be much displeased at the innocent raillery of her brother and sister upon this occasion. Even Deborah herself seemed to share the glory of the day, and exulted in her daughter's victory as if it were her own. "And now, my dear" cried she to me "I'll fairly own, that it was I that instructed my girls to encourage our landlord's addresses. I had always some ambition, and you now see that I was right; for who knows how this may end?"

"Ay, who knows that indeed" answered I, with a groan: "for my part I don't much like it; and I could have been better pleased with one that was poor and honest, than this fine gentleman with his fortune and infidelity; for depend on't, if he be what I suspect him, no freethinker shall ever have a child of mine."

"Sure, father" cried Moses "you are too severe in this; for heaven will never arraign him for what he thinks, but for what he does. Every man has a thousand vicious thoughts, which arise without his power to suppress. Thinking freely of religion, may be involuntary with this gentleman: so that allowing his sentiments to be wrong, yet as he is purely passive in his assent, he is no more to be blamed for his errors than the governor of a city without walls for the shelter he is obliged to afford an invading enemy."

"True, my son" cried I; "but if the governor invites the enemy, there he is justly culpable. And such is always the case with those who embrace error. The vice does not lie in assenting to the proofs they see; but in being blind to many of the proofs that offer. So that, though our erroneous opinions be involuntary when formed, yet as we have been wilfully corrupt, or very negligent in forming them, we deserve punishment for our vice, or contempt for our folly."

My wife now kept up the conversation, though not the argument: she observed, that several very prudent men of our acquaintance were freethinkers, and made very good husbands; and she knew some sensible girls that had skill enough to make converts of their spouses: "And who knows, my dear" continued she "what Olivia may be able to do. The girl has a great deal to say upon every subject, and to my knowledge is very well skilled in controversy."

"Why, my dear, what controversy can she have read?" cried I. "It does not occur to me that I ever put such books into her hands: you certainly overrate her merit."

"Indeed, pappa" replied Olivia "she does not: I have read a great deal of controversy. I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square; the

controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday the savage, and I am now employed in reading the controversy in Religious courtship"

"Very well" cried I "that's a good girl, I find you are perfectly qualified for making converts, and so go help your mother to make the gooseberry pie."

CHAPTER VIII

An amour, which promises little good fortune, yet may be productive of much.

The next morning we were again visited by Mr. Burchell, though I began, for certain reasons, to be displeased with the frequency of his return; but I could not refuse him my company and fireside. It is true his labour more than requited his entertainment; for he wrought among us with vigour, and either in the meadow or at the hayrick put himself foremost. Besides, he had always something amusing to say that lessened our toil, and was at once so out of the way, and yet so sensible, that I loved, laughed at, and pitied him. My only dislike arose from an attachment he discovered to my daughter: he would, in a jesting manner, call her his little mistress, and when he bought each of the girls a set of ribands, hers was the finest. I knew not how, but he every day seemed to become more amiable, his wit to improve, and his simplicity to assume the superior airs of wisdom.

Our family dined in the field, and we sat, or rather reclined, round a temperate repast, our cloth spread upon the hay, while Mr. Burchell gave cheerfulness to the feast. To heighten our satisfaction two blackbirds answered each other from opposite hedges, the familiar redbreast came and pecked the crumbs from our hands, and every sound seemed but the echo of tranquillity. "I never sit thus" says Sophia "but I think of the two lovers, so sweetly described by Mr. Gay, who were struck dead in each other's arms. There is something so pathetic in the description, that I have read it an hundred times with new rapture."

"In my opinion' cried my son "the finest strokes in that description are much below those in the Acis and Galatea of Ovid. The Roman poet understands the use of *contrast* better, and upon that figure artfully managed all strength in the pathetic depends."

"It is remarkable" cried Mr. Burchell "that both the poets you mention have equally contributed to introduce a false taste into their respective countries, by loading all their lines with epithet. Men of little genius found them most easily imitated in their defects, and English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection; a string of epithets that improve the sound, without carrying on the sense. But perhaps, madam, while I thus reprehend others, you'll think it just that I should give them an opportunity to retaliate, and indeed I have made this remark only to have an opportunity of introducing to the company a ballad, which, whatever be its other defects, is I think at least free from those I have mentioned."

A BALLAD

‘Turn, gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale,
With hospitable ray.

‘For here forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow;
Where wilds immeasurably spread,
Seem lengthening as I go.’

‘Forbear, my son,’ the hermit cries,
‘To tempt the dangerous gloom;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

‘Here to the houseless child of want,
My door is open still;
And tho’ my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

‘Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate’er my cell bestows;
My rushy couch, and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

‘No flocks that range the valley free,
To slaughter I condemn:
Taught by that power that pities me,
I learn to pity them.

‘But from the mountain’s grassy side,
A guiltless feast I bring;
A scrip with herbs and fruits supply’d,
And water from the spring.

‘Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego;
All earth-born cares are wrong:
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.’

Soft as the dew from heav’n descends,
His gentle accents fell:
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure

The lonely mansion lay;
A refuge to the neighbouring poor,
And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Requir'd a master's care;
The wicket opening with a latch,
Receiv'd the harmless pair.

And now when busy crowds retire
To take their evening rest,
The hermit trimm'd his little fire,
And cheer'd his pensive guest:

And spread his vegetable store,
And gayly prest, and smil'd;
And skill'd in legendary lore,
The lingering hours beguil'd.

Around in sympathetic mirth
Its tricks the kitten tries,
The cricket chirrups in the hearth;
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart
To sooth the stranger's woe;
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the hermit spy'd,
With answering care opprest:
'And whence, unhappy youth,' he cry'd,
'The sorrows of thy breast?

'From better habitations spurn'd,
Reluctant dost thou rove;
Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
Or unregarded love?

'Alas! the joys that fortune brings,
Are trifling and decay;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

'And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?

‘And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one’s jest:
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle’s nest.

‘For shame fond youth thy sorrows hush
And spurn the sex,’ he said:
But while he spoke a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray’d.

Surpriz’d he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view;
Like colours o’er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms:
The lovely stranger stands confest
A maid in all her charms.

‘And, ah, forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn,’ she cry’d;
‘Whose feet unhallowed thus intrude
Where heaven and you reside.

‘But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way.

‘My father liv’d beside the Tyne,
A wealthy Lord was he;
And all his wealth was mark’d as mine,
He had but only me.

‘To win me from his tender arms,
Unnumber’d suitors came;
Who prais’d me for imputed charms,
And felt or feign’d a flame.

‘Each hour a mercenary crowd,
With richest proffers strove:
Among the rest young Edwin bow’d,
But never talk’d of love.

‘In humble simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

'The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of heaven refin'd,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

'The dew, the blossom on the tree,
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but woe to me,
Their constancy was mine.

'For still I try'd each fickle art,
Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain.

'Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret where he died.

'But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay.

'And there forlorn despairing hid,
I'll lay me down and die:
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I.'

'Forbid it heaven!' the hermit cry'd,
And clasp'd her to his breast:
The wondering fair one turn'd to chide,
'Twas Edwin's self that prest.

'Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see,
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restor'd to love and thee.

'Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And ev'ry care resign:
And shall we never, never part,
My life, — my all that's mine.

'No, never, from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that tends thy constant heart,

Shall break thy Edwin's too.'

While this ballad was reading, Sophia seemed to mix an air of tenderness with her approbation. But our tranquillity was soon disturbed by the report of a gun just by us, and immediately after a man was seen bursting through the hedge, to take up the game he had killed. This sportsman was the Squire's chaplain, who had shot one of the blackbirds that so agreeably entertained us. So loud a report, and so near, startled my daughters; and I could perceive that Sophia in the fright had thrown herself into Mr. Burchell's arms for protection. The gentleman came up, and asked pardon for having disturbed us, affirming that he was ignorant of our being so near. He therefore sat down by my youngest daughter, and, sportsman like, offered her what he had killed that morning. She was going to refuse, but a private look from her mother soon induced her to correct the mistake, and accept his present, though with some reluctance. My wife, as usual, discovered her pride in a whisper, observing, that Sophy had made a conquest of the chaplain, as well as her sister had of the Squire. I suspected, however, with more probability, that her affections were placed upon a different object. The chaplain's errand was to inform us, that Mr. Thornhill had provided music and refreshments, and intended that night giving the young ladies a ball by moonlight, on the grass plot before our door. "Nor can I deny" continued he "but I have an interest in being first to deliver this message, as I expect for my reward to be honoured with miss Sophy's hand as a partner."

To this my girl replied that she should have no objection, if she could do it with honour: "But here" continued she "is a gentleman", looking at Mr. Burchell, "who has been my companion in the task for the day, and it is fit he should share in its amusements." Mr. Burchell returned her a compliment for her intentions; but resigned her up to the chaplain, adding that he was to go that night five miles, being invited to a harvest supper. His refusal appeared to me a little extraordinary, nor could I conceive how so sensible a girl as my youngest, could thus prefer a man of broken fortunes to one whose expectations were much greater. But as men are most capable of distinguishing merit in women, so the ladies often form the truest judgments of us. The two sexes seem placed as spies upon each other, and are furnished with different abilities, adapted for mutual inspection.