London boards, is, nevertheless, but little above mediocrity in its properties and general exhibitions: a want of due patronage may cause this evident deficiency, but it's effect is to be lamented on any ground.

Romeo and Juliet was to me, a fond enthusiast in Love's heraldry, the most exceedingly affecting play of Shakespear's most inventive imagination. I sighed with the hero, wept with the heroine, and delightedly did I

"See how she lean'd her cheek upon her hand:"

though, to tell the honest truth, I could not for the life of me, carry my complaisance so far as to wish

"That I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek,"

in the representation I shall describe.

Seeing in the bills of the day the
announcement of this poisoning catastrophe, I took a box, and accompanied the Neverspar family to the theatre. I thought the comical little brunette would enjoy the description given by Mercutio of Queen Mab:

"Drawn with a team of little atomies,
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep."

The unfortunate illness of the lady, who had undertaken to portray the soft sorrows of the first of poets, however, soon threw a gloom around my expectations, and the appearance of her substitute finished the despair I had anticipated.

O, Nora! Nora! how had I wished before the curtain drew up to have dispatched a fiery-footed steed for thee, and placed thee by my side! where sat the comical little brunette, negligent of sweet, impending horror, read-
ing the characters of the Farce of "Killing no Murder;" but when the heroine came on, this wish subsided: no female in the whole corps-dramatique could have acted the part with a worse grace; and no lady in the auditory, excepting, perhaps, the brunette, would have looked it so little.

Her voice too was a deep tenor, and her accent so characteristic of her country, that the most obliging stretch of imagination could never have laid the scene in Mantua. A fair confidence in her own abilities, in which, I confess, I did not participate, carried her through the play with so much spirit, that when I eagerly expected her to pour forth her soft sorrow, she uttered her soliloquies with all the pertness of a Mistress Jobson. Certain it is, that there was the "Devil to Pay!" and I was so much mortified at seeing the comical little
brunette enjoying the murder of the sweet tale, that I was determined not to countenance it by my applause.

I had on a former occasion heard a wag, by substituting the concluding word “Juliet” for that of “Romeo,” in the following line:

“Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?”

put a question, which in the present case it might have been difficult to have answered, so far as regarded the lady.

She proceeded in fine style to the garden scene, where the “pretty fool” appeared, as usual, at the balcony, and the “god of her idolatry” beneath: she very saucily told him that,

“Th’ that which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet;”

and hastily concluded with
"Romeo, quit thy name,
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself."

Romeo's representative was a strong athletic Irishman, with more muscular, than mental power: in this, for once at least, fortune befriended him, as well as the lady above; for upon his replying in the appropriate words of his unrivalled author,

"I take thee at thy word,"

Juliet, the balcony, and frontage of the veranda, descended into his unexpecting arms!

The ludicrous "fall of Bajazet" in Hogarth's Southwark Fair was eclipsed by this headlong embrace; and twenty minutes elapsed before the prostrate beauty could be prevailed upon to reappear.

What an opportunity this, had Nora
been witness to the accident, for a converse sweet! But the comical little brunette, and her parents twain, had not concluded their flood of laughter, before the daughter of old Capulet, somewhat bruised, but no wise dejected, came forth a second time from her chamber window. Some slight manifestation of disapprobation occurring among "the gods," just as she came to this line,

"What satisfaction can't thou have to night?"

it proved a truism, that turned their hissing into an irresistible roar, which echoed through the house.

Things now assumed a better aspect; she "cut him out in little stars," with the effective action of a notable housewife, eking out a scanty allowance of drapery, and exerted herself so much in this passage,

"Oh break my heart, poor bankrupt, break at once,"
that it produced the untoward frac-
ture of an ugly broad red velvet gir-
dle, which, though it caused a momen-
tary titter, evidently improved her ap-
pearance. She received the news of
Romeo's banishment with a declama-
tory tone that delighted the gallery
amazingly; and really drank the
friar's "potent draught" very gen-
teeelly: but in the concluding scene of
the monument, she conveyed such a
different character to the line,

"O churl! drink all, and leave no friendly drop
To help me after!"

to what is intended, that I fervently
hoped she might never again rise from
the tomb of the Capulets; at least not
to personify their lovelorn daughter.

The patience of Job, generally pe-
rennial, was now on the ebb; he de-
clared, that he could not be satisfied,
that "Killing was no Murder" in the
way he had seen it represented; and the quartette carried an adjournment from Crow's Street to Mountjoy Square, nem. con., at the conclusion of the play.

This was as unlucky a début for the Neverspars, as it had proved for the tearful maid, Juliet: but their primitive good-nature made ample allowance for the casualty that had destroyed the tragic bowl ere it's liquor was drunk. To me it was the greatest possible consolation, that I had not contributed any inaccuracies of conduct to the mistakes of the stage; and though Nora's brilliant form rested in the glittering ramifications of the chandelier before me, I am not aware that her appellation escaped my lips.

I should have mentioned, that the morning of this day was passed in the same company; the anterior part of it in viewing the Irish House of Parliament, now converted into the Na-
tional Bank; the Castle and Courts of Justice; Custom House and other public buildings; finishing our circuit, which, to less curious eyes, might have afforded an hebdomadal inquiry, at the Museum of a celebrated glass-blower, "just arrived from London!" He was the king of respiration! I was highly amused with the near relationship he had traced between love and air; a pedigree, I had to my cost, long, long ago, discovered! The productions of his breath were all either principals or accessories in the court of the dove-drawn queen; and my enamoured eye wandered over a chain of brittle Cupids, disporting in vitreous "yellow meads of asphodel;" or reposéd on the ascending form of some Venus Anadyomene, fabricated with her attributes of the aphiya and lycostomus, and fusible as her amorous prototype!

The foam of the glassy sea was exc-
cuted to nature, and the empress of the conchologists, in an attitude the most captivating, let her hair of chrysolite hue wave over a pellucid bust of alabaster!

Some unfinished figures of Hermes, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, gave the fairest promise of perfection; while many a bed of the brightest carmine formed rosy couches for recumbent doves. In this emblematical Heaven of profane history, satire, keen, and as it were episodical satire! exerted a baleful influence.

The censorious king of the frangible repository of curiosities, wisely conceiving, that where love was, mischief should be near at hand, had in this allusive region of delight introduced the diabolical majesty of darkness, as companion with Venus in her throne of love; and of all the bewitching specimens of his frail art, that di-
vided her choice, what think ye, my gentle Reader, the comical little brunette at last selected? Verily, the god of love astride a brayer, and drawn by the devil! This was monstrous! it showed her contempt of his soft power; and could I subscribe to so criticising an exposition of it? No: I offered not to be the bearer of high treason against the state, of which I was, however unworthy, a tender subject; and the conquering, un conquered, comical little brunette, carried the commentary in her own ridicule, a proper depository for so heinous a burden.

It was placed, as a memento of her good taste, on the chimney-piece of the drawing-room in Mountjoy Square; and Mrs. Neverspar would frequently ask me, if I had ever seen the magic of the glass-blower's crucible during the sojourn I made at Athlone.
Although, literally, somewhat declining in hope, I determined to possess it in a figurative sense.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
Man never is, but always to be blest."

"Hope is the balm and life blood of the soul; it pleases and it lasts:" and I purchased a semblance of this divinity leaning on a slender anchor (alas! too often the case) to adorn my lodging, in opposition to the preposterous ornament of the comical little brunette's mantel-piece.

"Est natura hominum novitatis avida."

The Neverspars were new to me; by their means I seceded a little from the solitude I had imposed upon myself; my fondness for eels gradually subsided into an endurance of other animal food; and as I have before observed, although I
did not intend in the remotest degree, "to pin my faith upon their sleeve," I considered their occasional society no way inferior to my harassing contemplations.

Where a person's spirits are not altogether at low-water mark, an intermixture of objects and occurrences tends, sometimes effectually, to keep up the tide; and as mine had more pressure from a temporary than an ultimate despair, I always found that I returned to my wilderness of reflection with more quicksilver in my composition, than I could muster upon leaving it. The association I had contracted was inconclusive of happiness;

"O happiness, our being's end and aim!"

but it afforded a present styptic to the deep wounds that Nora had inflicted; and the comical little brunette, whether from habit or positive improvement,
undoubtedly appeared in a more supportable point of view. Custom is a great reconciler of early prejudices. Now do not imagine, kind Reader, for one moment, that any tergiversation of my former troth is about to be brought on the canvass. No, no: Mercutio in the play says of the heir to the house of Montague,

"Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in! Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench, Dido a dowdy! and Cleopatra a gipsy! Helen and Hero, hildings and harlots! Thisbe a gray eye, or so, but not to the purpose."

These comparisons suit mine, which is to assure you, that Nora and the comical little brunette were still with me the bane and antidote of love!

Neverspar and his wife were beginning to be endeared to me by a perpetual display of good-nature: not that they made an ostentation of it; it was on the contrary a quality of their dis-
position, which, like the genial dewdrop, invigorated the arid stems of life, and shed its latent, though perceptible influence, on all they said and did.

Socrates was supposed to have repented of his conjugal vows to Xantippe, but the sun never went down on the anger of Mr. and Mrs. Neverspar.

Gossips have an anecdote explanatory of the origin of matrimony, and its good or evil effects in high estimation among them.

It was once told me, as an infallible method of discovering, how to discern between an intended and a chance match. Marriages, say they, are made in the regions above, and the happy duplicates find their way to our lower abodes in jars expressly modelled to contain them. The rapid transition from the one element to the other, is frequently productive of a fracture in the vessels, which leaving
the distributed parties in ether, tends, not very uncommonly, to an union extraneous from the original design. A connexion is thus formed which was never meant; and the feuds and dissentions, which now and then imbitter the matrimonial state, arise from the intercourse of couples, who, commencing their downward voyage in separate jars, become, in the concussion of pottery, partners for life, though not joint partakers of it's primary blessing.

The inference I drew from this story was, that the Neverspar package reached our terrestrial globe preserved and unbroken.

The thirst for novelty, I have just alluded to, and the consequent impression that any new scene makes on our minds, will possibly account for the minute description, into which I have entered, of my first knowledge of
these dear and inestimable friends of my Uncle Singlestick.

I shall not, however, in the progress of my relation continue to trouble my Reader with the sections and intersections of a regular series of days, weeks, and months, whereon and wherein such and such a plan was devised, and so and so was executed, bringing him with mathematical precision to the conclusion of the narrative; but he will be good enough to take the remaining particulars in as orderly a manner as I can arrange them, ever holding in memory the caution I heretofore gave, that as perfection is not a synonymous term with mortality, he must not expect it in an "Absent Man."

Job's patience was now put to a trial, as severe in point of corporeal sufferance, as could attack him. I found him on the sofa with all the
initiatory horrors of a fit of the gout; and it is said, that Job himself would have winced on a similar occasion. The easy-chair, the large shoe, the ample hose, the crutch, the ottoman uncovered: all, all bespoke the expectation of this most unwelcome visitant, and all required the unimpeachable endurance of a Neverspar.

I understood that he was hereditarily subject to this excruciating malady: it was only an additional reason for his fortitude, and coming in the autumn of the year, fears (and who amongst us can avoid their intrusion?) were entertained that his creeping, sluggish, companion would pass the winter with him.

Job had incautiously indulged in too free a libation of claret upon first coming to Ireland: he found the quality of this wine particularly fine in Dublin, and anticipated no harm from drinking an occasional bumper of it to
the friends he had left behind him: in this list he invariably included my Uncle Singlestick, and his good nature, circulating with the circulation of the glass, would have given a flavour to the most inferior vintage, had his toast been even an exceptionable one.

We not unfrequently are kept in ignorance of the price of a luxury, though perhaps too ready to put an excessive value upon it, till the balance day arrives, and Job was now threatened with a heavy payment for his racy claret.

His mind still, however, preserved its usual tone of undisturbed peace, the harmony of his nature kept him aloof from any encroachments of care; and I wished, as I beheld him prostrate on the couch, which he was almost fearful of touching with his foot, and deprived of the enjoyment of nearly every alimentary pleasure, when I saw him, I say, in this distressing
prédicament, with a smile on his cheerful countenance, and not a sigh escaping him, or a complaint quivering on his lip, I wished, that if in the page of my destiny, the Parcæ had set me down for a fit of the gout, I might follow the excellent example of Job Neverspar of Placid Hall.

He received the praises and dispraises of a fashionable remedy for his disorder with equal indifference, though he was too good-natured to upbraid the friends who mentioned it's composing properties, implying at the same time, that he had no intention of making his own quietus by the cure proposed to him; that, he jocularly said, he would leave for his Irish friends, when necessity might prompt them to the experiment, and closed a series of the most unanswerable positions by promising to drink largely; (here I feared that he began to faulter, knowing how inviting one glass-
is to the taste of another, and so on, toties quoties) but my apprehension subsided upon his assuring us it should only be of the cup of patience; and he laughingly told the comical little brunette, who, poor thing, warmed his stockings and mixed his oatmeal potation (next to patience in her dear father’s pharmacopoeia,) with an affection that would have graced my Nora! that he should certainly find his cure at the bottom of it!

I pleased him greatly by an anecdote of a person in a similar situation, who begged very hard for permission to treat himself with a single bumper of Hermitage. His importunity at length wringing his physician’s slow consent, he restricted him to one glass; but repented of his ready acquiescence on hearing that his unruly patient had pledged him in three times three!

Neverspar thought the doctor much more in fault than his tippling sufferer,
and almost hinted that he should have done the same.

Thus, this painful disease was conducive of mirth and good-humour, and had it not been for the awkward, and otherwise unaccountable appearance of the paraphernalia around me, I should have fancied myself offering a genuine sacrifice at the Temple of Momus, rather than inclining over the pillowcd sofa of a sickening friend!

"Levius fit patientia quicquid corrigere est nefas,"

was a maxim to which Neverspar adhered most implicitly; it was, he said, wrong to correct the fit, for which assertion he had classical authority, and he was sure that it would be alleviated by patience.

I have heard of a terrible dismay being often occasioned by a mutability of temper in one or other of the contracting parties to a marriage so-
lemnity, and that when the gorgeous apparel of the bridal morn has been the sole employment of an eyry of town milliners for many a day, and the legal preparations have been signed and sealed with a trembling hesitating hand, the equipage ordered, and the establishment provided, this indecision has caught the whole frame, and the "baseless fabric of the vision leaves not a wreck behind."

Whether this wavering tendency is attributable to a sudden discovery of the fractured jar I have touched upon in an earlier page, or takes it's origin in the instability of all human affairs, it is sometimes equally to be lamented, and the necessary abandonment of their excursive plan, it's prospects and preparations, caused an equal degree of regret to the good Mrs. Neverspar and her daughter Fatima. I am, however, willing to assure myself, that their lamentation sprung from a fountain of
pity for the object of their hinderance, and that the shallow recondite waters of pleasure found no sympathetic tear in their eyes.

My geographical communications were, as it turned out, quite sufficient; and the comical little brunette refuted my controvertible localities by the aid of a map purchased for the tour. She now saw the real situation of the Lakes of Killarney, entered Bantry Bay, cast a wistful look at Limerick, and crossed the Giant’s Causeway, as many a credited and highly celebrated well-informed and intelligent classical traveller had done before her by the fire-side, and that which was wanting in natural scenery was made up for in a fertile imagination, aided by the useful observations I was so capable of contributing, and so proud of letting her know that it was in my power to furnish.

The comical little brunette as an in-
terlude to this soft dalliance with Hibernia, which indeed only reminded Neverspar of his infirmity, amused him very good-humouredly with the exhibition of some Lilliputian waltzers she had purchased at a library in College Green. This dwarf pigmy race were very satirical little fellows, and like the king of respiration, and emperor of all blowers, blended the "snarling cynic" with the amusement they afforded. They were about the height of the two first joints of a middle finger, and dressed in the airy costume of the profession they copied. Their support in this bitter world was composed of four bristles cut to an equal length, and equidistant from each other: their mould was of cork, light-headed, light-fingered, light-footed gentry, and they were framed to imitate and ridicule the circumvolutions and circumrotations of a style of dancing recommended by fashion, not patronized by
taste: and the mode by which they accomplished it was effected by the vibration of the sounding board of the piano, on which, in close embracing groups, they whirled their giddy way, and whirled and wheeled, and wheeled and whirled again, till at length they fell as others would have done in a similar pursuit in Neverspar's approbation.

One morning during the visit of the surly guest above described, Mrs. Neverspar read from the newspaper an account, always flourished and highly coloured in such instances, of a sale of some fashionable garniture, which Mr. Auctioneer "assured the ladies, particularly, would fully recompense them for any little time and attention they might be pleased to bestow upon it."

The paragraph gained a brace of advocates immediately; so winning is any circumstance that opens a field for
curiosity; and I was requested by the ladies to afford the use of my head in case any great bargains should become irresistible.

The trio, O, Nora! O for thy more equal arm! sallied forth to fulfil the designs of the advertiser, or in other words to have their pockets picked; and seeing in our road a vast concourse of miserable looking citizens apparently in dreadful consternation, I was desired to impart any knowledge I might possess of the cause of the fray. "Oh it's only the Black Cart, Madam." "La, Sir," (says the comical little brunette) "pray what may that be!" "Why, madam, you must know, that this beautifully constructed city, in that part of it called the 'Old Town,' contains an assemblage of wretched habitations, the wretched abodes of the wretched people now before you. They have no occupation, and are merely mecha-
nies in the trade of begging: this system is their only pursuit, and here at least they are very industrious.

"The police of Dublin endeavour by all fair means to keep this numerous clan in proper subjection; but there are individuals in this, as in other communities, governed by a ruler, not of the people's choice, whose disposition to anarchy, republicanism, and insubordination, becomes exceedingly troublesome, especially when all control, moral, social, and political, is held in such utter contempt by their ring-leaders, who, having arisen from a tainted stock themselves, are perpetually sowing the seed of vice amongst their infatuated followers; this, taking an early thrift, for 'ill weeds grow apace,' in their separate breasts, spreads its poisonous qualities over the whole body, and the infection becomes general; a canker succeeds, and all hope of any healthy amendment being vain,
this blighted and unpitied race continue in their diseased state to the close of their existence. 'Indolence is the parent of vice!' Law becomes their laughing-stock, and government their aversion.

"An active intelligent man is, however, notwithstanding their antipathy to order, appointed by the police to superintend these refractory people; and from the peculiar duties of the sphere in which he moves, he has been so commonly styled 'the king of the beggars,' that he is as well-known by that name, as the residence of the Lord Lieutenant is by the appellation of 'the Vice-regal Lodge.'

"His presence among this lawless brotherhood is, for the time, attended by every mark of personal respect: but he shares the common fate of monarchs; and the subject, who was foremost to bow the knee before him, is not unfrequently, perhaps from an im-
bided idea of equality, the first to pick a hole in his coat, as he leaves the mendicant generation in the rear.

"The Black Cart, madam, is a kind of ruse de guerre, for when positive commands would only promote disorder and commotion, his majesty thinks it more wise, knowing how unpopular he is in the estimation of his people, to succeed by stratagem where force might fail; and consequently issues his daily royal mandate, 'that the said Black Cart be put in motion and kept in revolution in terrorem throughout the city.' His faithful emissaries, the police, constantly attend it's progress, and if any suspicious character or characters be seen lurking about a great man's door, or congregating to compose a tale of wo, that might work upon the feelings of the unwary passenger, or placing or dislocating any false legs or arms, or obscuring or patching up any real eye or eyes, or other-
wise infringing upon the good order of things: his said majesty's explicit injunctions are, that the said police show any and every such offender or offenders the environs of the city on the elevated seat of the Black Cart, and land them eventually at his Majesty's Bridewell for the better management of his unruly subjects. I must, madam, in conclusion, observe further, that the charitable and benevolent disposition of his present majesty, the king of the beggars, is the just theme of universal encomium; and that no panegyric of mine could, were I to wish it until the opposite sides of our beautiful bay met in mid ocean, add to the already overflowing measure of his merited reputation.

"The disturbance of social order you have just noticed, madam, is occasioned by the distinct rumbling of the wheels of the Black Cart, a sound from which the culprits are well ac-
customed to flee, and their confusion will speedily be increased, for see, it approaches.” The cleanser of the Augean stable passed us as we reached the place of our destination.

I thus imparted what little knowledge I had of the moving scene in my most collected and approved manner. I began to flatter myself, that I had overcome that unfortunate absence of mind, which occasioned me so much inconvenience as well as my friends, and that I was making progress in that calm region of thought and intellect, which I was so ambitious of obtaining. But, ah me! how did the following occurrences falsify my hopes! Nora still bewitched me!

An auction is of all others a killtime, that obtains most in the fashionable circles: it has so various a claim upon the attention, and creates such an imperceptible impulse for the attainment of “vertu,” that many a cap-
tivated purchaser has been at a loss for an adequate museum, in which to exhibit the articles of taste, when he has conveyed them home, that opened his purse-strings, aided by the enslaving rhetoric of the orator when there.

In the present instance, Fame had sounded her trumpet far and near, and curiosity, as illustrated in the ample eager group of amateur old china dealers, and deceitful furbishers of spurious paintings, was at its height.

We entered a large room resounding with the impressive eloquence of "knock them down!" and being persons, as the Reader may guess, of some appearance, were accommodated with seats contiguous to the pulpit of Demosthenes.

Fatima was soon caught in the mesh spread for her cornucopia of cash, and I was requested to nod and nod till bidding was on the wane. At length a rich prize of real Brussels lace, all
manufactured doubtless within an hour's walk of the scene before u; and a plaster mould of Time mowing down a nest of Cupids, frolicking on a bed of roses, intended as a companion to the glass-blower's satirical work, were declared to be my property: and the youthful clerk asking me to what address I would please to have the lot delivered, it was my unhappy lot to say, "The Rev. Arthur Cavannah's, Athlone!"

This dissonant declaration diverted the comical little bruncette exceedingly; and causing a determined flood of laughter among some ladies who occupied the benches behind us, I turned round to see to whom I had been the cause of so much mirth, and to my inexpressible confusion, whom should I see, on the broad grin, but the rosy Miss O'Carol, the fancier of pomegranates! and her excellent philosophical mother!

The little remaining reason I had
now left me fled. A puzzled, rack-
ing, incoherent, phrenetic, gesticula-
tion succeeded. I hurried over, in my
wanderings, the misfortunes at Crazy
Castle, the demolition of the chimney
ornaments, and the partridge and cus-
tard; the two-pronged fork stuck in
my throat, and the table-cloth yet
fixed in my button-hole, brought down
a second time upon me a load of woe.

I continued nodding (as I supposed
afterwards was the case,) for Milton,
Pope, and the whole collection of En-
glish Poets, were put down to the
same direction I inadvertently gave,
and Cavannah, who owned them be-
fere, was again made master of a dupli-
cate assortment! I dared not for some
time, by venturing another curve of
my perplexed head, to accost Mrs.
O'Carol or her rosy daughter.

Nora, and the recollection that I
had by my absence forfeited that claim
to their favour, from which I expected
preferment in love, and the fear that I might have been detected in my attempt to join hands in the Phœnix Park, though baffled by the interposition of the carriage window, all argued against the bow I was meditating, and Mrs. Neverspar for a time preserved my original position by begging of me to bid for a purple morocco Grecian couch, upon which she thought her gouty husband might experience some repose.

After having encountered a phalanx of merciless brokers, who upon similar occasions invariably pride themselves on their opposition, I was declared victor; but the prudent comical little brunette whispered to her mamma to give her own card of address.

My delighted eyes were next feasted with an excellent cast of "the great and good King William!" The place, the crowd, the comical little brunnete,
were all forgotten; the griping brokers requested to examine the sooty physiognomy of the dear bust! I caught it from their grasp! The glorious majesty of William was now put up at twenty ten-pennies! I run him as high as ten pounds against the brokers; when turning to the clerk I urged him to close the contest: the spirit of the brokers however increasing, I purchased the shade of William at double the money! and holding in triumph the royal legator, thus at last essayed to address Mrs. O'Carol, whose presence had reminded me of the destruction of his prototype! "Madam, I now, as you see, possess a fac simile of the bust, which I, in an absent moment, destroyed at Crazy Castle! happy, indeed, shall I be made, if by your presenting it to Mr. O'Carol, I may hope that I am healing the infliction, the unintentional infliction of a severe wound." Here, as the fates made no
lines of me, I added to my former aberrations that of mentioning names.

I stared Mrs. O'Carol full in the face, but the philosophical lady kept her countenance so admirably, that I began to suspect I had mistaken my object, and that the similarity between the person before me and the real Mrs. O'Carol had caused another mistake.

I have little doubt of the interpretation the company put upon my conduct in either case; and I am candid enough to acknowledge, that it merited any comment, however severe, they might please to visit it with.

I was sufficiently sane to bear away my victory under my arm, and the comical little brunette under the other; and the party, headed by Job's better half, proceeded to congratulate him on the acquisition of his Grecian couch.
The evening of this eventful day witnessed the mortification of this placid sufferer, upon discovering that his wife had been duped by the brokers, and that the repose she had kindly purchased for him was injured and unfit for use.

The comical little brunette, too, missed the scythe of old Time, which diminished the point of her satire, and rendered her bed of roses a retreat for the sportive Cupids, unimpaired by the hoary mower, who threatened them in vain.

These disappointments were only productive of a laugh, and the unruffled tide of the Neverspar disposition maintained its tranquil flow.

Hearing that a troop of horse was expected to land in the course of a day or two at the Pigeon House, in consequence of some serious disturbances in the vicinity of Athlone, (O Nora! how, thought I, should I be delighted
with a commission even in its awkward squad! I proposed that we should witness the landing of the "defence of the country." This challenge being accepted, I again embraced the bust of the "good king," and retiring to my uncaptivating apartments, and my insurmountable ideas, with every intention to immure my elaborate burden in all possible safety, I for once contrived to effect my purpose, and had the gratification of securing him under lock and key, in the excellent society of Milton, and Hector and Andromache, until a favourable opportunity should occur to dispatch the cargo to Cavannah's abode. These worthies might, if reanimated for about ten minutes, have been exceedingly entertaining to each other, particularly as a great part of the history of the one would be altogether new to the rest, and the various occupations of the
whole have produced that novelty now so universally admired.

I attributed my good conduct of the bust to the circumstance of its having no material analogy to that train of cogitation, which might bring Nora Cavannah before my view: and the kind Reader has undoubtedly observed, that where I had the exercise of my mind uncontrolled by any abstracting and distracting influence of this species, I was generally as capable of fair ratiocination as many other persons, who, affecting a studied attention to the legitimate forms of society, frequently illustrate by their intemperate measures, that notwithstanding their endeavours at a contrary character, their true description was still to be found in the words which openly bespeak mine.

The gossip of the morning having announced the arrival of the warriors of the sable plume, I called in Mount-
Square to retrieve the gauntlet I had thrown down, and attend the comical little brunette, who was much addicted to sights, and her amiable slender mamma, who from propriety, more than inclination, joined in the peripatetic exercises to the Pigeon House: poor Job still moved but in idea, and I left him on the summit of the Wicklow mountains, enjoying the imaginary splendour of the surrounding scenery, with much more real satisfaction of countenance than I have seen beaming from the impenetrable lines of many an immovable physiognomy, apparently dead to the glories of the creation when actually presented with them.

Upon our arrival at the point of disembarkation, we were wonderfully struck with the appearance, then novel, of the military costume, which custom has now established; but the first sight of an enormous antique helmet,
overpowered by a waving mass of the blackest horse hair, and confined under the throat of the wearer by a heavy brassy scale; the thick mustache on the upper lip, the loose flowing fur pelisse, the blood-coloured pantaloons-overall, the massy chain, the enormous spur, the gorgeous trappings of the war-horse, the rich sabretache, the embroidered housings, one and all demanded our attention, and excited our surprise.

Caesar crossing the Rubicon, and leading a hostile army on the plains of Pharsalia, might have looked uncommonly fierce at Pompey in this masquerade: but I should as readily have suspected the Pope of apostacy, as that a British officer would in the eighteenth century have been partly apparelled in the ornaments of the year 40 B. C.

The Spectator tells us, that “nature
designed the head as the cupola to the most glorious of her works;” how far the ponderous helm of art exhibited the dome to advantage is not for me; “an Absent Man,” to determine. It struck me, that the proportion was destroyed, and the symmetry lost. However, the comical little brunette declared, “it was an extremely pretty dress, and very tasty and complete.”

I always yielded in matters of taste to the ladies, and would not attempt to argue the point, though I thought at the time, that if I had been inclined to have split upon straws, Mrs. Nevverspar would have sided with me on the field of battle.

Our eyes becoming somewhat reconciled, as well as our minds made up to the landing of the Romans in the green Isle of Erin, I fancied (being now in possession of myself,) that I had discovered an intimate friend in
the disguise of a successor of the Julian family.

I asked a soldier, who stood near me, the name of the officer giving directions to the men unlading the transport. He replied, "Count Vanderheyden." This titular addition I could but consider as an antiphrasis. No, no, it was impossible, thought I, that the puny, sickly, good little fellow, who had so often assisted me in robbing an orchard, and was constantly on the apothecary's list, could now be transformed into a Count, and at the head of a host of heroes!

"Seeking the bubble reputation
E'en in the cannon's mouth."

And yet I recollected the face of little Van! the Count! The Count! no, it could not be: yes it was, and I fancied, that, if it were deprived for a mo-
ment of its incumbrances, I could trace every feature to its original impression.

Pliny says of Cæsar, that he could employ at the same time his ears to listen, his eyes to read, his hand to write, and his mind to dictate! One of these avocations was as much as I could compass; and I called upon my eyes to read the lines horizontal, diagonal, and perpendicular, in the Count's phiz, being as sure that it was the very identical little Van, my school-fellow, as I was confident it could not be he.

This anxious suspense was immediately removed upon the removal of the Count's helmet, which seemed to be a vast relief to him! It certainly proved a relief to me, for on the instant, the puny orchard robber stood before me! I flew up to him; but, being always modest, the little Count appalled me, and I stood, not knowing
whether to retreat or advance. In the dubious medium of uncertainty, the comical little brunette, as was her practice, laughed at my evident distress; and her mamma rebuked her in my hearing, to show that such conduct had not the sanction of her approbation. Van in the mean time beheld me in a kind of suspended animation; and though my wasted form, the poor remains of a series of shrinking calamities, had preserved but little of its earlier image, his mind, contemplative and premeditative, supplied every deficiency of my former outward appearance: he saw me! he knew me! he embraced me!

I introduced my long-lost, unexpectedly recovered playmate, associate, marshal, Count Vanderheyden, to Mrs. Neverspar and the simpering comical little brunette; and he politely attended us (leaving the requisite directions, from which we had
averted him, with a confidential ser-
geant) on our return to the hospitable
mansion of gout and good-nature.

The intimacy I have mentioned to
have formerly subsisted between us
was contracted at that period of life,
when, as my acknowledged and very
worthy good friend above quoted tells
us, that boys are seen

"Creeping like snails unwillingly to school."

I need scarcely add, that he was of
Dutch extraction. His parents had by
the ravages of a storm, which encoun-
tered and finally subdued their richly
freighted vessel on it's passage to this
country, been lowered in the scale of
monied people, from a state of afflu-
ence to that of a comfortable medioc-

ity.

The reserve, however, by manage-
ment, was an ample provision; and
they learnt from their misfortune to
husband what remained to them of their shipwrecked treasure. The consequence also of this metamorphosis in their golden dreams was, that their children were taught to initiate themselves in the wiles of this world, where otherwise it’s shoals and quicksands might not have been exposed to their view; for rich folk have seldom time for any thing but the expenditure or further accumulation of their coffers: but in this instance

"Meliora piii docuere parentes;"

and the infants were told, they must one day or other fight for themselves.

It appeared, as we proceeded, that in furtherance of this notion, my friend little Van, the Count! had, upon quitting the academical trammels, the relaxation of which had, memiserum! rendered Ireland within the bounds of my tether, enrolled his name in the volume
of Mars, about the same time that I enlisted under the banners of his all-subduing queen consort! The contrast in the following fortune of the twin satchel-bearers was most oppressive to me, and

"Made each particular hair to stand on end."

Van, "the Count," young in war, though matured in glory, "bore his blushing honours thick upon him." I, the "Absent Man," had only conducted a fruitless siege: the enemy had forced me to retreat; I was too much wounded to renew the attack! an aged faithful ally had determined to defend the fortress of his hopes, till the last drop of blood, and my escalade fell from it's walls, hurled into the dark despair of the circumvallation that skirted the victorious battlements.

The kind Reader has probably observed, that throughout the pages of
this narrative I have ever been a wholesale dealer in hope; and though I am altogether of his opinion, that hope without foundation is an "ignis fatuus," that should not be encouraged and pursued, I still think, that the sentence of "dum spiro spero" is as good a motto on the dexter side of an Absent Man's shield, as the words "nil desperandum" would prove to the sinister; and as it is always best to have two strings to our bow, it might not be amiss to have them made of equally durable materials.

The anecdotes of a soldier of fortune, always amusing, beguiled the way to Dublin, as far as my punctilio of behaviour would enable me to discern, by no means unprofitably. Curiosity now and then interfering with her goggle-eyed distension of pupil, I heard Mrs. Neverspar endeavouring, by all the circuitous inquiries of an inquisitive female, to learn from the
Count if by affinity, or by consanguinity, he was at all related to the famous Dutch painter, whose appellation he carried.

A digression of thought upon the comical little brunette's noticing the rays of light darting along the Wicklow Mountains, forbade our coming into his genealogical succession; and the polite Count immediately declared (in unison with the enraptured Fatima) that the view around him was much superior to any cisalpine scenery he had ever beheld.

There was yet, however, one point to be cleared up, before I could wholly persuade myself of the identity of Vanderheyden. The assumption of "the Count" was too much for affection to excuse without a satisfactory explanation. With this only remaining question on my mind, I ventured to beg of little Van to pour forth the sources of his ennoblement.
The diffident Pangloss says, that "on their own merits, modest men are dumb;" but the awkward, variable, alternate red and white, in the school-boy's face, had by the bronze of time, and the vicissitudes of temperature which it had experienced, become settled into an unblushing, not to say an impudent visage in the Count, and with somewhat of secret pride, though no pomp of ostentation, he informed us, (and this was surely not confident,) that fortune had favoured him "in the imminent deadly breach" of a German fortress. It was, he said, in the possession of the French, and had through a series of desperate attacks resisted the united valour of the allied forces; till exhausted in supplies of every kind, and diminished in numbers as in ammunition, (a corps of the enemy who bivouacked in some unsuspected entrenchments, having cut off the succours they so urgently re-
quired,) it was declared to be impracticable to effect a breach.

The possession of the fortress was of the last consequence, not only from present necessity, but with a view to any ulterior operations that might ensue from it; and the surmise that the anticipated relief was destroyed by an insidious antagonist led also to the conclusion, that their destruction must soon follow upon his other success.

In this critical situation of things, Vanderheyden volunteered the forlorn hope! The breach was effected! the fortress surrendered! and the British ensign triumphantly waved over the fallen banner of despotic tyranny! His wounds were considered, he said, to be mortal, and a rapid delirium, occasioned at first by the acuteness of his sufferings, deprived him for some weeks of the sense of pain.

He then began gradually to recover, and was rewarded for his intrepidity
by an honorary distinction, which the Austrian Cabinet had graciously been pleased to bestow upon him, in the presentation of a collar of a military order. He appeared to be perfectly aware that this badge was merely a thing sui generis, and that its nominal adoption in this country must depend most exclusively upon the courtesy of those, who thought proper to count him among their friends.

He humorously said, that soldiers were always fond of recurring to scenes rendered in any way memorable by the prowess of their officers, and that he expected the dignified title of "Count Vanderheyden" to extend no further than the circle of his own troop, to the command of which he had arisen by the circumstance that so far warranted the title.

I was thus gratified to have my doubts so agreeably dissipated, and continued during the remaining part of our interview to Count little Van
(who deserved perhaps a more substantial acknowledgment of his services,) as much as possible.

This period was very circumscribed, and all the entreaties of Mrs. Never-spar (the comical little brunette of course had not a word to say, though I fancied she admired the Count, or perhaps his dress) were unavailing; and the society of little Van, the Count, could not upon any terms be obtained for the day. His orders, he said, were preremptory, and must be obeyed, though his inclination suffered; and as the march to Athlone must positively be commenced on the following morning, he requested permission to return to the vessel, that his absence might not impede the necessary arrangements.

Here then we parted with our Count of the horse-hair crest! but not until (happy presence of mind!) I had requested him to convey with his bag-
gage, a small parcel to the vicar of Athlone; to whom, being as well as himself a particular friend of mine, I should be rejoiced to introduce him by letter of recommendation.

The sable plume nodding assent, it rapidly vanished from my sight (like an April cloud) at the angular turning of the Square.

Neverspar unaffectedly, and with his wonted good-nature, assured me, that he should have been happy to have shaken the Old Roman by the hand, if he could have been prevailed upon to have taken his mutton with him. "You, Sir," said he, pointing to his unwrapped limb, "must have toasted the exploits at the German fortress!"

In this kind of gradual progressive advance, time, "who steals our years away," passed with us.

I was the alternate sport of expectation and despondency, and though
though the acute pang of my first absence from Nora was a little softened by the balm of the hoary sage, oblivion of the past, could not, by all the offices of attention, good-nature, and a constant unreprouaching endurance of my failing, which ever welcomed my visits under Neverspar’s roof, be commuted into an entire approbation of the present scene: I confess that they had their effect, but not to any material extent; and Fatima, though she had now considerably won upon my esteem, heard nothing of my love.

Some of my antipathies to the comical little brunette yet preserved their original force, though, I must acknowledge, that others were frittered away.

The image of Nora, which generally interrupted the recurrence of any lucid interval, was particularly (now that I was about to give it by my letters to the view of another) very au-
thoritative at this period; and as I perceived that a fit was coming on, which, militating against the even-ness of my mind, might lead to fur-ther expositions, as unnecessary as lamentable, I quitted the society of my friends for the solitude in which I proposed to make preparations for the dispatch of my worthies to Athlone.

The truth is, that I cherished a fervent hope, through the intimacy that subsisted between "the Count" and the "Absent Man," and by a little management on his part, though I could not dream of much on my own, to revisit, (O healing thought!) the transparent Shannon, and in it's natural mirror again to behold the reflected form of Cavannah's dark-eyed daugh-ter. I had for a time serious thoughts of assuming the disguise of a Roman warrior; and thus by taking an intro-duction, written by my own hand, "in favour of my particular friend,"
to re-enter the abode of Nora; but I feared that this unformed and romantic idea savoured more of theatrical than real accomplishment.

I had now so far seceded from a former position of mine, "that the Camelion's dish was food for one," as to entertain solid doubts of its sufficiency for two. The Reader may remember, if not an "Absent Man," that I had long ago relinquished my singular indulgence in eels; and I knew full well by tradition, and by experience, that Cupid was a terribly bad man-cook. Moreover, I felt a rooted conviction, that my Uncle would disinherit me, and of our total abandonment by Arthur Cavannah, should an elopement occur. Here then I paused again, eventually resolving to confide in my friend Vanderheyden, who, without letting him into the secrecy of my breast, which would have been ridiculously intem-
perate, I meant to visit, so soon as he should become a neighbour of my still-adored Nora.

After this conflict of opposite ideas was thus disposed of, I proceeded to procure a packing case, wherein my worthies were to be encompassed: Milton, as the most solid of the party, and the least open to injury from any occasional rubs he might receive, first entered the receptacle prepared for him: Hector and Andromache, enfolded in some loose sheets of Pope's Homer, were thus again translated, and the lady was granted, as she requested, "an early tomb!" "The great and good king William" next descended into the envelope, in all the stern majesty of dust and bronze. I dared not to tell him, that he was to be conducted by a Dutchman, lest he should wish to enter upon an historical disquisition with him, on the Orange Societies. Ophelia tells the
beauteous majesty of Denmark,
"There's a daisy; I would give you
some violets, but they withered all
when my Father died;" and I, in humble imitation of this tenderly loving
unwitted maid, would have sent Nora
some hope, but it vanished all when
my anchor snapped.

Ah! what an opportunity to write!
No letter-sorter! to stand between
your love and you: no signature re-
quired! no superscription needed! but
if any, addressed under cover to the
Cook, to be forwarded by the first
conveyance! No burning-wax want-
ing to make an impression!

Patience, gentle Reader! I did
write of course, but as a punishment
for your suspicion that I did not, you
shall never hear a word of the letter.

By the time that "the iron-tongue
of midnight had tolled twelve," I had
completed my laborious undertaking;
and considering that Nora rather in-
interrupted me in its close, I got through with it much sooner than I had any reason to expect I should.

With what kind of repose I was favoured, as a reward for my trouble, the Reader is already well enough acquainted with my nocturnal vagaries to conjecture without farther remark.

I certainly rejoiced in the day-spring, and, uprising from my tumbled couch, caught the precious casket in my arms, and ran out to meet Vanderheyden, whose brazen clarions bespoke his near approach!

"The glorious chief resumes
His tow'ry helmet, black with shading plumes!"

takes my resolution to visit him, my close-packed worthies, my letters of recommendation, and my adieu!

I returned to my tender-hearted landlady, with the loss of my right eye, like the Calendars in the Arabian
Night's Entertainments, or not to amplify misfortune, the deprivation of it's exercise, from the effect of the dust raised by the trample of the retreating power of Vanderheyden's coursers.

This very good woman had by a kind of pseudodiploma, originating, as I once foolishly thought my reintroduction at Cavannah's might have done, in the proper hand-writing of the person concerned; and deriving every contingent advantage, arising from an unimpeached practice in the several mysteries of pharmacy, through a long series of years; attained as her bright reward the high fame, which established her as the Queen of Charlatans. Far be it from me to breathe the breath of calumny on a reputation so deservedly exalted: but, when I tell the Reader, that the Majesty of Quacks had one fair book, as inseparable from her as her heart-strings, and that this said book was "the Di-
pensatory!" I shall leave him to form his own conclusions upon her science in physic. However, she was not entirely bound by this inestimable volume: there were many extraneous vegetable preparations, decoctions, concoctions, syrups, acids, herbal abductions, and draughts in every sense cordial, of which this good doctress was complete mistress, and administered with the most unqualified success.

Amongst other never-failing applications, she possessed at the head of the list "an infallible eye-water!" It signified but little in what manner the organ of sight should be impeded in its usual functions, whether injured by a blow, by cold, by heat, by the flight of a swarm of gnats, by the effect of a concealed lash, by the puncture of a busy fly, or by the lodging of subtle dust; her art was superior to any accidental calamity of
any kind, and her eye-water subdued
every otherwise irreducible inflamma-
tion.

The painful state of my swollen
optics attracted her majesty’s notice,
and produced, as soon as she had exa-
mined into the cause of my suffering,
and blamed me for not seeing the dan-
ger in which I was, (which by the by
spoke for itself) a pint bottle of “the
finest eye water ever yet discovered!”
She had the receipt, she told me as she
applied the collyrium, from a maiden
aunt, who was a little known for her
skill in medicine, but not so celebrated
as herself; who had it from her grand-
father, who practised in Connaught,
who had it from his maternal uncle,
who was nephew to a famous phy-
sician, who reigned with undivided
prosperity in the court of Queen Anne
of England! She added, to this enor-
mous pedigree, that she had deter-
mined, upon coming into possession of

8 5
the receipt, "a fortune for any one," never to advertise the cure; that she distributed the eye-water gratis amongst the poor in great abundance; and that she hoped, when her eyes were closed, her successor would continue to do the same.

I derived not more than half the information she intended me by this summary history, owing to the acute sting that accompanied the application; but in justice to my landlady, who was really a well-meaning woman, though no witch! I certainly should add, that from some cause or other, I recovered the temporary failure of my right eye in a few days, but it opened upon a scene of misery, which it had been better far for me, that the dust had concealed for ever!

Before I unfold the page of distress, I must presume, that the logical Reader flatters himself, he has caught me tripping, in a palpable, egregious error
of representation, by my heaping the unnecessary indignities of a deal packing case upon the head of the substitute for the calcined king, when the O'Carol's themselves were in Dublin, and would have taken him into their custody; but if I could impart to him half the horror I experienced at the bare idea of ever seeing them again, or putting it in their power by any civility of mine, to renew theirs, he would readily acknowledge, that the exposure of an "Absent Man" in an auction-room filled with elegant company, and which was principally caused by their presence, was an adequate excuse for the employment of Cavan- nah in the presentation of the bust. It was a satisfactory apology with me, and I did not set out with any idea of pleasing "a logical reader."

But to the scene that greeted my opening eye: it was in the form of a letter in Cavanaugh's writing: it bore the
Athlone post-mark: "'twas strange, 'twas passing strange." I have it now, and shall ever keep it while life is preserved to me!

Having come to an open rupture with my close enemy, "Fyn-segellak-well-brand en-vast-houd," I read, gentle Reader, (judge for yourself of my emotions, as I pored again and again, over the foul blots on a skin so fair!) I read, I say, as follows:

"Dear Sir,

Fearing that you may, through the information of Mrs. O'Carrol, who is resident in Dublin, have heard of the alteration in the deportment of my dear child, I am anxious to give you particulars, upon which you may rely as genuine.

It would be ridiculous in me to affect an ignorance of the passion you entertained for Nora,) or to deny that she once met your advances with an
encouraging approbation. Her grief at your departure was too evident for concealment; and were any further proof necessary, it would appear from her subsequent conduct, which has assumed a vacancy of manner so coequal with your separation from her, that nothing but love could effect it. A total indifference to the objects before her, and a general abstraction of thought, have succeeded her once lively and unaffected behaviour; and where I fondly expected the solace of my few remaining days, I look in vain for a single expression of the love that promised it.

"Her days are passed in futile, incoherent employments: now will she, under the shadow of our terebinth poplars, weave a chaplet of poppies, and deadly night-shade, calling it 'sweet William!' and now sit by the hour together, on the banks of the Shan-
non, and read Romeo and Juliet with the book turned the wrong end uppermost! She has little appetite for any food except eels, on which she principally lives; and which I think extremely prejudicial to her health.

"Her apothecary increases my lamentation, by assuring me that the whole materia medica would not accelerate the recovery of her former calmness, which he says the healing hand of time can alone restore.

"It issomewhatsingular, that although you were undoubtedly the primary party to her aberration, she has of late never mentioned your name, or any circumstance that led to the most remote belief, that you still engaged her varied, or varying thoughts: and I am in constant alarm lest by any unexpected event, the sight of a person to whom she has not been accustomed, may lead to a repetition of those
dreadful wanderings, which, within this day or two, have been somewhat tranquillized.

"I have been thus explicit, my dear Sir, in order that I might the better introduce my very earnest wishes, and most unconditional injunctions, that you may not, either out of friendship for me, or any hope of restoring my daughter to her usual temperament, be induced, upon receipt of this, to afford us any personal condolence; and most positively to require your absence on the grounds I have before stated to you, feeling confident that your presence would, by leading my poor Nora into additional deviations, be planting another, and a sharper dagger in my breast.

"As you value the commands of one, who, though he bears you no enmity, must also protect a daughter's peace, so act; and I hope your discrimination,
aided by a sense of propriety, which in such a case ought not to be overbalanced by any other consideration, will ensure your own quietude, while it materially assists mine.

"I should have given you these mournful particulars some long time back, but that I hoped until Mrs. O'Carol's arrival in Dublin became known to me, to have kept them from you altogether; her developement, if not embellishment of facts, I then determined to meet, for a story is seldom repeated in it's original authenticity.

"I regret that I am obliged to close my letter, already prominent in sorrow, with a lamentable addition of your worthy Uncle's serious indisposition, the news of which reached me this morning. My esteem for him could only be excelled by the grief I should most sincerely feel at an occurrence I will not anticipate; it is
sufficient to meet our misfortunes when they assail us, without enduring their sting in embryo.

"Believe me, my dear Sir, though circumstances may not appear to authorize the term,

"Your faithful friend,

"Arthur Cavanaugh."

Here then, Reader, was a trial for an "Absent Man," who having barely reason enough to compass the fact, was given to understand, that his want of it had occasioned a similar deprivation in the mind of one, who had heretofore robbed him of its exertion; told too, that he must not visit her—her, Nora! on pain of the complicated penalty of her own distraction, and her father's indignation! and told too that his Uncle Singlestick had some idea of speedily seeing

"That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns."
This was not all! the identical circumstance of which Cavannah was apprehensive, was about, by the operation of mine own hand, to occur. Had I not written in legible characters a letter of introduction to him?

Vanderheyden had accepted the letter; and was there any doubt that Cavannah would read the letter? No, no; not any, not any: this then was an incontrovertible syllogism; and a person to whose sight Nora was accustomed, was now at this perilous moment on the road to—No, no! nonsense! blind, ridiculous hope! he was positively at Athlone! in the barracks, or in the stables of the barracks at Athlone! His alibi was out of all question impossible! and I covered my confusion in a clean white pocket-handkerchief, which I kept in my hand, as young ladies do who witness tragedies, against any attack.
of ophthalmia! A cold chill followed!

In my agitation, Nora's apothecary, "an alligator stuffed, and other skins of ill shaped fishes," swam across my brain! I instantly rang the bell: it was not answered. It happened to be an Orange anniversary, and the maid was gone to see the show; but the apothecary in petticoats soon appeared: I begged her to mix an opiate with all speed, and bring it to me.

Queen Elizabeth's modesty, when upon the victorious destruction of the Spanish Armada, she chose for the motto of her commemorative medal, the simple and diffident inscription of "Afflavit Deus et dissipantur," was not superior to the unostentatious behaviour of the Queen of Charlatans upon her recommendation of some home-made extract of poppies, in preference to the use of the Turkish species of poppy-juice, which she always
considered excessively deleterious, and caused a hurried sleep.

I consented to take any thing, and every thing in her medicine chest, to procure oblivious moments of repose.

She returned with a phial, and left me: the lady of Macbeth might have called it

"Proper stuff!"

I thought it was proper, and fixed the glassy substance to my lips.

I passed the night in the sweetest sleep imaginable, and had every reason to be satisfied with my physical landlady's nice and efficacious discrimination between opium and Irish poppy-juice.

I was, however, but in a very slight degree restored, before a fresh calamity, for which Cavannah's concluding sentence had in some measure prepared me, awaited my perusal.
I shall only laconically inform my Reader, should I have one, that I received intelligence from a near neighbour, and intimate acquaintance of my Uncle Singlestick, of his rapid decline; that he was subject to occasional fits of apoplectic plethora, which had been increasing upon him, since the death of his favourite old horse, and that considerable fears were entertained, that his dissolution was not very distant.

He had been, he said, desired by my Uncle, to inform his Nephew of the change that had already taken place, and of the still farther alteration he shortly expected, and to entreat him, should circumstances not render his departure from Ireland particularly oppressive, to take his final blessing, ere he quitted the world for ever. (Here my affection got the better of me, and the tears that flowed
for my Uncle, moistened the words he had dictated.)

My correspondent proceeded to suggest, that as in all possibility the Neverspar family would wish to revisit their comfortable home at Placid Hall, before the approach of winter should impede their progress to it, I might by chance contrive to accompany them in their journey; and concluded, by begging of me to deliver my Uncle's affectionate remembrance, and farewell to his esteemed friends; and his lamentation at being in too weak a state to address them by his own hand.

With all my follies, of which alas! there has been ample proof, I yet maintained a small share of pristine feeling: and I could not reflect upon the expected loss of my Uncle, though distance had lately separated us, without emotion.
It may perhaps be imagined, that I was laying the foundation of some subsequent operations on the stone of my Uncle’s tomb; and that whatever regret I might feel at the first idea of his decease would quickly be converted into the channel of joy at his final dissolution. I protest, however, against an acknowledgment of such sentiments, because I feel a radical conviction, that I was not in any measure actuated by their influence. My grief was genuine, and it’s excuse, had it needed any, affection!

In what page have I informed my Reader of Neverspar’s amendment? Let me see—no—not there—no, nor any where.

Here then the “Absent Man,” is caught!

I shall not apologize for the omission, holding in mind my original position of the impracticability of unerring details, from a pen that must of
course be as absent as it's guide: the guide and the pen may suffer, but cannot beg pardon.

However, it may be as well to mend the matter a little, and upon second thoughts, by which there will be nothing lost, mention, that the visitor of my friend Job, not finding so hospitable a reception, as, from the known liberality and good nature of his patient, he was taught to anticipate, had in utter despair of wrinkling his brow, or hearing the bitter language he usually experienced wherever he went, left the sofa of his unconquered host, and retired amid the ridicule of the laughing Victor, and the pleasant sallicies of Mrs. Neverspar and the comical little brunette—The comical little brunette! • Yes, certainly, she was still the comical little brunette; but as certainly, she was not the same comical little brunette, whose round awkward shoulders at first sight shocked me so
terribly, that is to say, she was uncommonly improved. Fatima had one qualification, which it might be well, were it set up as an example, if many young ladies of my acquaintance would follow: She was always the same, always good-natured, always affable, always charitable, and consequently never peevish, never uncivil, never severe: there was an evenness of disposition in Fatima, which might fairly be balanced against the beauty of other persons, who might in this point be deficient: I shall not say how the scale would preponderate.

The sympathetic coincidence of ideas is perfectly astonishing; this has been shown by the various likes and dislikes, that at one and the same period attacked Nora and the "Absent Man." You heard of his partiality for eels, at the time Nora would eat no other animal food. You heard of his pleasure in Romeo and Juliet, at the time Nora
would read it constantly, though perhaps the position of the book might be reversed: and, though it may appear still more singular, at the very identical point of time, when my poor Uncle Singlestick's friend undertook to advise for me a passage to England, the Neverspars were contemplating the scenery of Placid Hall.

I learnt at the time that I missed the gouty chair, and all the implements used in support of the gout, which, though a treasurable subject, must never be put down, that plans were in agitation, to give up the beauties and elegancies of Ireland for the more substantial comforts of dulce domum! and indeed the comical little brunette was in the act of packing up her young gentleman on the donkey led by the old gentleman in advance, as I rapped at the door to give the sad tidings, with which I was commissioned by my Uncle's friend. This
mournful intelligence accelerated Job’s movements, for now he could move; and he declared he would sail for Holyhead with the first fair wind.

I now became plunged in a predicament by far the most complex that I ever endured; learning on one side, that Nora was only a few removes from literal distraction; (Alas! it was no longer figurative!) and on the other, that my Uncle wished for me in the chamber of death, at the time when my presence in Ireland was the only, and that the most remote, chance of my ever again beholding the dark eye of Savannah’s daughter. Duty called me in all the pathetic appeals a dying relation could furnish to repair to England! Love prompted me, in all the silent rhetoric of Nora’s flashing gaze, to remain at Dublin! Duty demanded my continued residence there! Love, through the means of Vanderbilt, went yet further, and whis-
pered a faintly caught hope, that I might again vegetate at Athlone! Jealousy, (O beware of jealousy!) rankled in my breast, when I recollected that the Count would be the unaccustomed one.

O, nautical Reader! if you are not indignant at the idea of waiting for a fair wind for Holyhead (remember that as the Neverspars were not to carry the mail, there could be no harm in getting across the channel pleasantly,) pilot my love-sick bark into any haven you can. The mental storm has shipwrecked my ideas! my anchor is carried away! I sink hopelessly! and my rudder floats on the billows of anarchy!—Here I must pause awhile, my passions having led me a little into the bowers of romance, and effected in their absolute sway some slight deviation from the plain unvarnished style of the prior pages of this narrative, wherein I have attempted
to depict simply what I felt, and how I acted as an "Absent Man."

I can now go on to state, that as I was thus tormentingly occupied, the Neverspars were pursuing their intention of a speedy adieu to the Sons of Erin, by every previous measure their activity could supply. I grieve, to add, that the enviable mirth I ever admired, as twin possessor with good-nature, in the even paths of Job's mind, had gradually lost their wonted zest, from the time he heard of my Uncle Singletick's decline. I imagined, that he regretted, in addition to this circumstance, that the wishes of his friend, with regard to the marriage of his daughter, remained wholly unfulfilled, and that the grave would, for all he could divine, close upon my Uncle's mortal remains ere they should be accomplished!

A train of thought, cheerless and unusual, had evidently clouded th-
late jocund countenance of Never-
spars: Mrs. Neverspar saw it, and la-
mented it, but took every precaution
to avoid Job's consideration of its ef-
fects, by diverting him in a way pe-
culiarly likely to dissipate his care,
because, though she fully witnessed
the distress, and felt for the cause of
her husband's disquietude, she never
suffered him to see that she was aware
of it.

Fatima was certainly, though a co-

mical little brunette, a girl of no com-

mon mental ability: she was always
superior to any untoward circum-
stances, and in proportion as any
point of difficulty in which she was
engaged increased, her happy dispo-
sition arose above the level of it's
temporary depression.

There was, at the period of prepa-
ration for her family's departure, a
look of regret in Fatima's countenance,
which I had not before regarded: It
could not be for my Uncle Singlestick! It could not be for the Count! whom she had only seen for an hour or two, and scarcely mentioned since! It could not be for parting with the delights of Dublin! which contained only one intimate acquaintance, and that an "Absent Man!" It could not be for the loss of that Absent Man! and yet it certainly was regret of some sort or other!

I myself felt much concern at the approaching loss of my kind and forgiving friends, in whose society I had been so frequently relieved from my own. I was asked to accompany them; even Fatima said my Uncle would expect to see me; but, alas! how was I to act! I knew not: I was in the dreadful state of suspense and anxiety of a person, who, knowing that "there is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune," knew not in what
direction to steer on the opposing current: it served but one way, there were two contrary channels!

Thus situated, I believed the Neverspars to be on the very point of embarkation! I could not take leave of them! they had quitted their house, and were at a hotel in Dawson Street, and an opportunity was offered me on the preceding day of a final adieu, in this laconic note from Neverspar: "Off to morrow!" but my spirits forbade the interview!

At this precise period, the crisis! the climax of every thing interesting! I found on my table another dispatch from Arthur Cavannah! the contents I shall insert without comment: indeed all observation would be superfluous on materials, that bring their explanation with them.

The letter was written in an evident state of agitation, for which indeed it's contents most fully account-
ed. It began by stating in the most affectionate terms, that as I had been somewhat apprised in a former sheet of the melancholy alteration in his dear daughter, I should now, Cavan-nah hoped, receive the further relation of its consequences, with which he felt it to be his duty to furnish me, without blaming him for insisting on my continued absence from Athlone.

He proceeded to inform me, that since his last communication, every symptom of a total absence, and alienation of mind, of which he was then apprehensive, had increased: and that his poor Nora, acting in direct opposition to every dictate of reason and common sense, would continually wander into the regions of romance: she would take nothing that was not, as she fancied, presented by the hand of her true knight! and as the instances were very rare, in which the act and
the ideas were in unison with each other, she had, several times, been on the point of starvation! Her attitudes became as inconsistent as her thoughts, and she would often sit sideways on the lounging chair in the library, and declare, that her fiery-footed steed would soon canter her to the entrance porch of her William’s castle! then she would be heard shrieking aloud, and desiring the maid to take the portcullis from her head, “it pressed so hard.” Sometimes, said Cavannah, she would nurse her favourite Je-mima, the beautiful white cat, in her lap, and sing, in broken melodies, “for bonny sweet William is all my joy:” then suddenly throw her from her embrace and cry out, “hence, loathed Melancholy! of Cer-berus, and blackest Midnight born!” These terrible and distressing ramblings continued, he said, for a few days, and were then followed by a
complete derangement of his daughter's faculties.

The apothecary, who attended her, urged in the strongest terms the absolute necessity of a gentle treatment, as the last hope of her recovery: he had declared her to be insane, but considered, that as the cause of the temporary relaxation of her mind was too evident to be mistaken, it's unfortunate effect would not be permanent.

She remained, however, said Savannah, although in a tranquil, yet positively in a lost state of intellectual discernment for three whole days and nights; at the close of which period; his delighted ears were assailed with the well-known accents of "dear father:" a debilitated frame had, he said, rendered any exertion of utterance excessively fatiguing, and he would not suffer her to finish the sentence.
Cavanaugh next commenced a disquisition on the various effects that ensued from an insanity occasioned by love, and said, that if the patient escaped danger from her own hand, which sad infliction he was happy to think was not much to be apprehended, it not unusually happened that the very object, by which her mental stream had been diverted from it’s right course, would, upon her recovering the former channels of reason, immediately become the very bane of her happiness; and that frequently a person thus circumstanced considered the recollection of her former love as the only drawback upon her present joy, and consequently banished it for ever from her thoughts.

He proceeded to acknowledge the receipt of the package, and said, he had sent his Majesty to Crazy Castle: that he had read my letter, expressing in such handsome terms my opinion of Captain Vanderheyden with much
personal disquietude, as he had felt it to be impossible, situated as he was to take that notice of him, which the laws of hospitality, and the impulse of his own mind, would in any other case have prompted him to have done; but under existing circumstances he had contributed his utmost to prevent the occurrence of a calamity, of which he had long been apprehensive from the peculiar state of his daughter's mind, in case she should in her delicate condition obtain a sight of a person she had been unaccustomed to see.

His efforts had therefore since the arrival of Vanderheyden, whose gorgeous trappings were so alluring, been principally directed to the concealment of his daughter! •Alas! continued he, "Nora was more than a match for me!" your counterfeit friend, attended with his men the service of our parish church: I was ob-
liged to do my duty there, and left the strictest orders I could express, that, as I could not do it at home at the same time, Nora might by no means be permitted to leave the house. I knew that if I had taken her with me, the danger would have been great: but, alas! it ended in the same way, and to my inexpressible grief and astonishment my daughter deliberately walked into her pew, just as I commenced, "when the wicked man!"

The accommodation allotted to the military was immediately opposite, and you may form your own notions of my agitation.

"I will not dwell upon a subject which causes more grief in the relation, than you can possibly suffer in the perusal of it, and circumscribe the catastrophe as much as my convulsed frame of mind will allow me.

"I saw that the fatal glance had been given! my Nora's eye was ri-
veted on the embroidery of the unaccustomed one! It was love at first sight! it was precisely what I had dreaded! My active watchfulness never slept subsequently, till the curtain of night had drawn its veil over my fears.

"Vanderheyden was notoriously smitten! He, your false deceitful friend, sought every subterfuge within the reach of man to enter my house. I pursued every invention a zealous parent could devise, to throw obstacles in the way, and combat his ingenuity. I saw through his plot, and baffled for a length of time his artifices, till (to close my sad tale) this esteemed friend this honourable Captain Vanderheyden! This robber—this—Oh! what epithet can express my indignation: this Count! stole my Nora in the dead of night! and with her my only solace in this affliction world.
"I can no more, farewell! Your Uncle's blessing attend you ever!"

The shock of an earthquake, gentle Reader! was calmness to my feelings, as the communication dropped from my nervous hand.

I had but one step to take; that step brought me to the packet! and I embarked with the Neverspars at last!

"England, with all thy faults I love thee still."

THE END.