

THE BLUE WONDER.*

A MARRIAGE ON CREDIT.

DOCTOR FALCON looked one way, and pretty Susan looked another, as it has been customary for young people to do, from the remotest antiquity. The doctor was a very pretty fellow, had been to two universities, had walked the hospitals of Vienna, Milan, and Pavia, and had learned so much that there was not one of his craft better able than himself to post his patients to a better world according to the most legitimate principles of the most modern systems of the medical art. But science such as this, is not to be acquired for nothing; it had cost our worthy doctor nearly every penny of his modest patrimony. "Never mind!" thought he to himself; "when I get home, I'll marry some rich girl or other, who may take a fancy to become the doctor's lady; and so both our turns will be served."

But what are the wisest resolutions against the eloquence of a pretty face? Susan was as pretty as a lover could wish her; she felt the best disposition in the world to become a doctor's lady, but then she had no money.

"Never mind, my dear Susan!" said the doctor, as he impressed a kiss on the lips of the weeping maid; "you see, a doctor must marry; else people have no confidence in him. You will bring me *credit*, credit will bring me *patients*, the patients money, and, if they should fail, we have good expectations. Your aunt, Miss Sarah Bugle, is forty odd, not far from fifty, and rich enough for the seventh part of her fortune to help us out of all our trouble. We may venture something upon that!"

Heavens! what will a young girl not venture for her lover! Susan's mother had nothing to object, nor her father either, for they were both in heaven; and her guardian was well pleased to see his ward form a respectable connexion. Her aunt, Sarah, was also well-pleased, though, in general, she was little friendly to wedding of any kind: but, as long as Susan remained unmarried, she saw very clearly that she would every year be obliged to make some pecuniary advances to the worthy guardian; and Miss Sarah Bugle was rather stingy, or, as she was herself wont to say, "she had not a penny more than she wanted."

Well: Susan became Mrs. Falcon, and the doctor looked most industriously out of his windows to see the customers pour into his house, on the strength of his increased claims to credit. They came very sparingly; but in their stead there appeared every year, a little merry face that had never been seen in the house before, to augment the parental joys of Doctor Falcon and his lady. Sometimes the doctor would pass his finger, cogitatingly, behind his left ear; but what could that avail him? There was no driving the little Falcons out of the nest. They could not cut their bread into thinner slices, for the children must live; but the doctress made her soups thinner. However, they all seemed to thrive,—father, mother, and the four little ones. They sat on wooden benches and straw chairs as comfortably as they could have done on quilted cushions; they slept soundly on

* This story has been adapted from the German of Zschokke.

hard mattresses, and wore no costly garments, being well contented if they could keep themselves neatly and respectably clad. And this was an art in which Susan was a perfect adept; everything in her house looked so pretty and neat, that you would have sworn the doctor must have been extremely well off. "How they manage to do it, I can't think!" Aunt Sarah would often exclaim. "It's a blue wonder to me!"

Not that it was always sunshine: there were days when the exchequer was quite exhausted; and sometimes whole weeks would elapse without a single dollar finding its way into the house. But then it was always some consolation to know that Aunt Sarah was rich, and sickly, and growing old; and, the worse matters looked at home, the more hopeful they always became at the maiden's mansion.

EXPECTING HEIRS.

The doctor and Susan reckoned rather too confidently on the inheritance of the aunt; for, even supposing that the dear old lady had been so near to her beatification as her loving friends imagined, still it was matter of speculation whether her dear niece would or would not be her heir. The sighing pair of wedded lovers stood indeed most in need of the inheritance: but it so happened that there was another niece, married to one Lawyer Tweezer; not to speak of two nephews, the Reverend Primarius Bugle, and a certain doctor of philosophy of the same name. Their claims were all as strong as those of Susan and her husband, and all looked forward with equal longing to the ascension of the blessed virgin.

Bugle, the philosopher, had perhaps least cause of all. He was rich enough; and, while enjoying the delicacies of his table, and smacking his lips after his Burgundy, his philosophy was perfectly edifying to his guests. We have a proof of his acuteness in a work of his, in five volumes, now forgotten, but once immortal, entitled "*The Wise Man surrounded by the Evils of Life*;" in which he proved that there was no such thing as suffering in the world; that pain of every kind was the mere creature of imagination; and that all a man had to do, was to contemplate every object on the agreeable side.

Accordingly, he always contemplated his aunt on the *agreeable*, namely, on her *money* side. He visited her assiduously, often invited her to dinner, sent her all sorts of tit-bits from his kitchen, and was accordingly honoured with the appellation of her "own darling nephew."

He would have succeeded well enough with his philosophy, had not his cousin, the Reverend Primarius Bugle, by means of his theology, exercised great influence over the aunt. She was very pious and devout, contemned the vanities of the world, visited the congregations of the godly, in which the spiritual bugle at times was heard to utter a loud strain, and was mightily comforted by the visits of her reverend nephew, who joined her frequently in her devotions, and gave her pretty clearly to understand, that, without his assistance, she would find it difficult to prepare her soul for its future blissful abode. When, sighing and with weeping eyes, she would come from the edifying discourses of her godly nephew, she would call him the saviour of her soul, her greatest of benefactors, and promise to think of him in her last hour. This was music to the ears of the theologian. "I

can scarcely fail to be the sole legatee," he would think to himself; "or, as our pious aunt is wont to say, it would be a blue wonder indeed."

Nor would his calculation have been a bad one, but for his cousin Lawyer Tweezer; whose legal ability made him a man of great importance to the aunt. The chaste Sarah did indeed despise the Mammon of unrighteousness, and sincerely pitied the grovelling children of the world; but on that very account she did her best to detach them from their Mammon, or at least their Mammon from them, which is all the same. She lent money on high interest and good security, and worked so diligently for the salvation of those who borrowed from her, that they were always sure to become poorer and poorer under her ministration. "Blessed are the poor!" she would exclaim when they were paying her interest on interest; "if I could have my way, I would have the whole town poor, that they might all inherit the kingdom of heaven. The less people have in this world, the more they will long for the world to come."

It would sometimes happen, however, that the pious maid was carried too far by her virtuous zeal for the future welfare of her neighbours; so that, what with her securities, and her compound interest, and the wickedness of her debtors, she would occasionally find herself involved in disputes and litigation. Without the aid of Lawyer Tweezer, who was universally looked on as the most cunning pettifogger in the whole town, she would frequently have seen interest and principal slipping through her fingers. But, between her piety, and his cunning and obduracy, a poor debtor was fain to bundle with bag and baggage out of his house, rather than a single guilder she had lent out, should miss its way back to her strong-box.

"I should be a poor, forsaken, lost woman, my dearest nephew," she would often say to Tweezer, "if you were not there, to take my part. I may thank you for nearly all I have; but the time may come when I shall be able to repay you." This was music to the ears of the jurist. He hoped one day to find himself sole heir, and fancied he should be able to touch the right note when it came to the drawing out of the will.

THE PICTURE OF THE VIRGIN.

Miss Sarah Bugle, in her fits of devotion, talked much of death, and of her longings after the heavenly Jerusalem and her spiritual bridegroom; yet this did not prevent her from thinking, even more frequently still, of an earthly bridegroom. Since her five-and-fortieth year she had indeed solemnly declared that she never would marry; nevertheless, she had her fits of maiden weakness, particularly when some stately widower would banter her, or some gay bachelor look up to her window as he went by. "I dare say he has some designs," she would then say. "Well, time will show; it's wrong to swear anything rashly! If it is to be,—well; the Lord's will be done! I'm in my best years. My namesake in the Old Testament was eighty when she christened her first child. It would be no blue wonder if it did turn out so!"

Thus she would soliloquize, particularly when some single man had been looking kindly at her; and, as this seemed to her to be frequently the case, she at last came to suspect every man in the place, of

“evil designs,” as she called it, on her chaste person. At length,—for her imagination had been wanton with her for more than twenty years,—she came to look upon every single man as her silent adorer, and every married man as her faithless one.

It may easily be conceived with what inveteracy she declaimed against weddings of every kind, and how bitterly she abused the whole godless, light-minded male sex, (for her quarrel was with the whole sex,) and with what transcendent venom she inveighed against the coquettish minxes who had the impudence to think of a man before they were out of their leading-strings; though these same minxes in leading-strings were all the while walking about in shoes such as are generally manufactured for damsels about to bid adieu to their teens.

Some elderly maidens, pure and pious like herself, assisted her in the laudable occupation of prying into the domestic occurrences of the town, and moralising over them while sipping their coffee. In this conclave, every new gown, every wedding, every christening, was conscientiously discussed; and no time was lost in dispersing the result of their amiable confabulations through every corner of the town. A saucy sign-painter being once called on to paint a picture of the goddess of Fame, armed her with a bugle instead of a trumpet; and, when some pre-eminent piece of scandal became current, it was customary to say “the bugle has been sounded,”—by which it was intended to indicate the quarter where the report originated.

If to these amiable qualities we add the extreme godliness of the chaste Sarah, and her invincible partiality for compound interest, it is not difficult to understand why, with the exception of the said ancient maidens and the four expecting nephews, every creature was careful to remain at a most respectful distance from her.

THE CARES OF LIFE.

She had not the least inclination to die. She was, therefore, by no means displeased with the competition of the four faculties, for her inheritance. Nobody gained by it more than herself. It brought her the dainties of philosophy, the consolations of religion, the protection of the law, and moderate doctor's bills. Doctor Falcon was as dear to her as the others, but not a bit more so: only when some transitory indisposition seemed to hint at the instability of everything human, the doctor never failed to become, for the time, the dearest of all her nephews.

“Quick, doctor! Pray come immediately! Miss Sarah is dying!” exclaimed one morning, the antiquated maid-servant of the aunt, as she popped her head in at the door. “My lady has been looking most wretchedly for some days.”

Falcon was sitting, when this news came, upon his unpretending sofa; and, with his arm round her waist, was endeavouring to console his weeping Susan. He knew that Miss Sarah was not likely to be very serious in her intentions of dying: so he promised the maid he would come immediately, but remained nevertheless with his wife, to console her.

But he had little success this time in his attempts at consolation. Poor Susan wept more bitterly than ever; and the poor doctor sat beside her, unconscious of the cause of her tears.

"Come, be open-hearted to your husband, my dearest love," he said; "you torture me,—you kill me,—to see you thus, while you conceal from me the cause."

"Well, then listen to me. Oh!"

"What further, my dear Susan? you said that before."

"We have four children."

"Ay, and the finest in the town, if I am not mistaken! They are all so gentle, so amiable, so——"

"Oh! they are little angels."

"You are right; they *are* angels, all of them. You do not, I hope, grieve over the presence of the little angelic circle?"

"No, my dear husband; but what is to become of the future?"

"Oh, thou unbelieving Susan! Let us rely on Providence."

"It is difficult for us to bring them up decently. The older they grow, the more they want."

"They have been growing older all this while, and they have wanted for nothing as yet."

"Ay; but, if——"

"What then?"

"Alas!" she sighed, and sobbed more bitterly than before.

"What then?" exclaimed the doctor, with undissembled anxiety.

She concealed her face in his bosom, clung to him with both her arms, and, in a scarcely audible whisper, said: "I am to be a mother for the fifth time."

The papa was half inclined to cry himself at this un hoped-for announcement; however, he concealed his consternation as well as he could. "Nay, sweetheart, is that all?" he exclaimed. "Come, Susan, we shall have five little angels instead of four. We cannot fail to be happy!"

"But, my dear husband, we are so very, very poor!"

"The little angels will bring a blessing upon us. He who feeds the young ravens will also show me where to find a crumb for my little ones. Come, tranquillise yourself."

Susan had had her cry out, and so became more tranquil, as a matter of course; but the doctor had found no such vent for his uneasiness. He walked up and down the room, looked out of the window; nothing could divert his thoughts.

"Every year more children and less bread! Every year bigger boarders and thinner slices!" sighed he to himself. He would have forgotten the dying Miss Bugle, had not Susan reminded him that it was time to hasten to her death-bed.

THE BLUE WONDER.

He took up his hat, but he did not run. The little domestic dialogue still weighed on his spirits. He thought only of the small number of his patients, and the exhausted state of his exchequer. He drew his hat over his brow, and looked straight before him like a rhymester: on his way he saluted neither right nor left, and had nearly run down the superintendent-general,—a man looked upon by most people as one of the brightest shining lights in the church.

When he arrived at his dearly-beloved aunt's, he did not, indeed, find her on her death-bed; but she had mounted her spectacles, and was seated before a large book, from which she had opened at Reflections

on Death, and from which she was devoutly reading sundry Prayers for the Dying. She looked wretchedly; but it would have been difficult to say when her face looked anything else. Round her head she had tied one handkerchief; and another, which passed over her head, was fastened under her chin.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the learned Doctor Falcon, as he laid his hat and stick aside.

"The Lord knows," sighed Miss Bugle in a soft and plaintive tone; "I have suffered much for several days. I feel as if my hour were come; and that would be terrible."

The doctor thoughtfully felt her pulse, and said unconsciously, half to himself, "It fills, with a vengeance!" All the good man's thoughts were at home with Susan.

"I thought as much," sighed the terrified virgin. "Do you think there is danger, my dear Falcon?"

"Not at your years," replied the doctor, scarcely knowing what he said.

"Well, that is some consolation," replied the lady in a more cheerful tone; "in fact, I am in my best years; my strength unbroken. My constitution must bring me through. Don't you think so, dear Falcon? Only, no expensive medicines, if they can be done without. Since bark, rhubarb, and mixtures have been turned into colonial produce, there's no enduring them. The Lord be merciful to us! but really, my dear Falcon, I am not at all well."

Our worthy aunt now gave the reins to her tongue; spoke, as she was wont to do, of a thousand different things, none of them in any way connected with her indisposition. The doctor, meanwhile, hummed a tune, and beat the devil's tattoo upon the table, without listening to a word of what the good lady was saying. At length he was beginning to lose patience.

"What then *is* the matter with you?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, my appetite! I have not relished a spoonful of soup these two days. And then my head aches as if it would burst."

"Something you have eaten has, perhaps, disagreed with you, aunt; some philosophical *pâté de foie gras* may be in fault."

"Gracious Heaven! no, Falcon, the stomach cannot be in fault. I live so simply, so frugally. Seriously, I don't think I have for several weeks eaten anything likely to disagree with me. But sometimes I have a tooth-ache, sometimes qualmishness, heartburn, vomitings—Good Heavens! do look at me, Falcon, and don't keep drumming upon the table so; look how pale I am,—how my eyes are sunk in my head: oh dear! I am certainly very unwell."

"Well, what do I care?" said the doctor in a peevish tone: his mind entirely occupied by the condition of his Susan: "you're in the family way, that's all."

"Merciful Heaven!" screamed the chaste virgin, in a voice that might have been heard three streets off. "Merciful Heaven! that would be a blue wonder indeed!"

A cold sweat came over the doctor as he heard these animated tones from the maiden lips of Miss Sarah Bugle. He immediately recollected that, what with ill-humour, and what with absence of mind, he had been betrayed into a superlatively foolish speech, and one that no chaste virgin was ever likely to forgive; particularly a

maid who had triumphantly preserved her painful dignity unimpaired to her fiftieth year; one who never pardoned in another damsel even a gentle pressure of the hand; one who was neither more nor less than an immaculate personification of purity and sanctity; one who was, in short, that virgin of virgins, Miss Sarah Bugle!

"I will let the storm vent itself, and seek safety in flight, before the neighbours come pouring in, to see what 's the matter," thought the terrified doctor, as he opened the door and rushed into the street.

ANOTHER BLUE WONDER.

The other three faculties had by this time, by their jealousy, rapacity, and endless misrepresentations concerning each other, utterly ruined themselves in the good opinion of the virgin. Doctor Falcon was the only one who at all bore up against the sudden storm. He could not, for the soul of him, help laughing at his own blunder. Susan, however, on the following day began to reprove her husband's levity, though she had at first joined in the laugh at his thoughtlessness. He caught her in his arms, stopped her mouth with his kisses, and said, "You are right: I ought not to have so rudely assaulted the maiden purity of the heaven-devoted vestal. But, 'faith! when I left you yesterday, I scarcely knew myself which way my head was turned."

"I would not say another word, my dear, if I were not convinced that you have offended my aunt for ever. Such an affront can never be forgiven by so pious a maiden lady. It is ill for us, and particularly now. We have a long winter before us. I heat the stove so sparingly that the windows scarcely thaw the whole day, and yet our stock of wood is going fast, as you know yourself. And for our exchequer, look here!" So saying, she jingled a few small pieces of silver in a large purse close to his ears.

A slight tap at the door, and Sarah's aged attendant entered with a sealed note, and an urgent request from his aunt that the doctor would without fail, immediately after dinner, precisely at one o'clock, favour her with a visit.

"I shall be sure to come," said Falcon; he took the note, and dismissed the maid.

He weighed the note in his hand, and turned jestingly to his wife. "Feel, Susan; it is as heavy as lead." He opened it, and, lo! in a Queen of Hearts sundry delicate incisions had been made, into which had been slipped ten new full-weighted Dutch ducats. He looked at the envelope; it was addressed to Dr. Falcon: there could be no mistake. Such unheard-of liberality on the part of the immaculate Sarah justly excited the amazement of the wedded pair.

"Well, this is the bluest of all my aunt's blue wonders!" exclaimed Falcon. "Come, my pretty one; how long is it since we had such a treasure as this, in our house? Look! Providence watches over us and our children. The winter is provided for; so we'll have no more croaking. What! are you crying still?"

"Oh!" sobbed Susan, as she threw her arms round his neck; "it's for joy I am crying now. But," added she in a lower tone, "I was praying fervently, nearly the whole night, for it was little I could sleep."

Falcon clasped his wife in his arms. He said not another word for

several minutes, but he wept inwardly; for he was unwilling that she should see how deeply he was affected.

BLUER AND BLUER.

As the clock struck one, he stood by the bedside of the aunt. With real emotion, with sincere gratitude, he approached her; and—he had vowed to Susan he would do it—impressed a fervent kiss on the benevolent hand that had just diffused so much joy through his little family circle.

“Best of aunts!” he said, “your present of to-day has made Susan and me very happy.”

“Dear nephew,” said the sick lady, in the gentlest tone of which her voice was capable, for it was long since her hand had been kissed so warmly, “I have long, very long, been your debtor.”

“And forgive me my rudeness of yesterday,” continued the doctor.

Aunt Sarah modestly covered her face with her handkerchief. After a while she said, but without looking at him, “Nephew, I am about to repose unlimited confidence in you:—my life depends on you. Can you be secret? Will you?”

Falcon was ready to promise everything. Still the lady was not satisfied; she promised him her whole fortune if he would be faithful to her. He made the most solemn oath.

“I know,” said she, “that you young people are often badly enough off. Well, I will come and board with you; for my old maid, who has served me so long and so faithfully,”—here she sobbed bitterly,—“I must turn her away. But as long as you keep my secret, I will give you a thousand guilders every year for my board; and, when I die, you shall have all I leave behind me.”

The doctor fell on his knee by her bedside, and renewed his oath with increased solemnity.

“But you must live outside the town; for I will not remain here. I will make you a free gift of my large house outside the gate, with the garden and all the grounds belonging to it. You know my house close to the large inn—the Battle of Aboukir; the house was left me six months ago, by my mother’s brother, the Director of Excise.”

The doctor vowed with extended hand he would move into it the very next day, in spite of wind, frost, and snow.

“As long as you keep my secret, nephew, I will pay you my board half-yearly in advance; and for the little expenses you will be at, in arranging your house for your own family and for me, you will find four rouleaux of dollars in the little cupboard yonder behind the door.”

The doctor swore all his vows of secrecy over again. She must imagine the day of judgment or the millennium at hand, he thought. Nothing less can possibly account for so sudden and miraculous a conversion.

But, with all this, Sarah came no nearer than before to the confession of the great secret. As often as she attempted to begin, the words died upon her lips, and she covered her face and sobbed. These beginnings, and breakings off, and lamentations endured for a long time. The doctor rose, seated himself by the side of the bed, wiped his knees with the sleeve of his coat, took a pinch of snuff, and

said to himself, "We may pump a well dry in time; it would be hard if the lachrymal glands of an afflicted virgin could boast of an inexhaustible store of water."

THE BLUEST OF ALL.

He was in the right: when she could cry no longer, she believed she was recovering her Christian resolution, and said with a trembling voice, "Nephew, when you left me yesterday after that dreadful expression——"

The doctor was about to fall once more on his knees: "Pardon the expression, my angelic aunt! It was——"

"No, nephew; perhaps you were right."

"It was an unpardonable stupidity on my part."

"No, nephew; I believe you are not wrong."

"Impossible, my angelic aunt!"

"Alas! only too true, nephew."

"Impossible, aunt! And even if—even supposing—no, aunt, you are certainly——"

"Nephew, you are right. I ought to have been wiser at my time of life, you mean. You are right; but now you know all. The misfortune has happened. I was married,—secretly, very secretly indeed,—but all in an honourable way, all quite orderly. Now who'll believe me? There he lies dead in the Tyrol, killed by a bullet;—here are letters and vouchers. He is dead, and——"

"Who, aunt?" exclaimed Falcon in utter amazement.

"Alas! the trumpeter of the French regiment of hussars, that was quartered here during the summer and autumn,—God be merciful to his soul! He was no common trumpeter, but trumpeter to the regiment; his father and grandfather beat the kettledrums for many years with great applause. But, gracious Heaven! I could not bear to be called a hussar's wife; and, before he could buy his discharge, the regiment was ordered to march. Here I am now, a young widow, not a soul knows it, not a soul would believe it. It will kill me if it become known: it would be a blue wonder to the town. I care little for the trumpeter; but my good name is all in all to me."

The doctor shook his head; he could scarcely recover from his surprise. The trumpeter had indeed been frequently seen in Miss Bugle's apartments; but Falcon, who had always laughed at Goethe's idea of a chemical elective affinity, had never dreamt of such a powerful elective affinity between a trumpeter and a Bugle. As to the immediate uneasiness of the disconsolate maid, for such the widow chose to be still called, he considered it groundless; but she returned such strange replies to his questions as to her sensations, that he began himself to have some suspicions. He had no difficulty now in accounting for the munificence of the anxious lady, who would rather have lost her life than that the whole town should have known that the brightest mirror of all maiden virtue had been dimmed and breathed upon.

He now pledged his word of honour that he would keep her secret, and conceal her from all the world till she was able to appear again with safety. Till then it was to be reported that she was ill; and, under the plea of receiving more careful attendance, she was to live at the doctor's house, and break off every other intercourse.

The gift of the country-house near the large hotel of the Battle of Aboukir was duly and legally executed; the country-house was entered upon in the middle of winter; the maiden matron became invisible there; and no one was allowed to wait on her, but Susan, whom she had herself initiated into her mystery.

GOOD RESULTS.

“Well, to be sure,” she would say to Susan in her cheerful hours,—for it was impossible to be always in despair; and, as her niece anticipated all her wishes, she had never felt herself half so comfortable as in the bosom of this happy family,—“Well, to be sure, it is a blue wonder, indeed, to think that I should come to this! Who would have thought it! Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. I believed myself too secure, and now I am chastened for my pride. Oh, trumpeter! trumpeter!”

The event, meanwhile, had exercised a very salutary influence on the maiden lady. Through very fear of betraying herself to the curious eyes of her former companions and gossips, she weaned herself from all intercourse with them, and acquired a taste for more refined pleasures in the circle of Dr. Falcon's family. She continued, indeed, rather too fond of all the tittle-tattle of the town; but then she thought of her own weakness, and judged more charitably that of others. She became so indulgent, so modest, nay, so humble, that the doctor and his wife were completely amazed. The change of circumstances and society,—the heroic resolution by which she had divested herself of a part of her property,—the assurance of the doctor that she was still rich enough to live at her ease,—all this had effected so singular a change in her character, that she seemed to live quite in a new world. She even abandoned all her usurious dealings, which, to be sure, she would have found it difficult to continue in her present seclusion.

The three faculties, meanwhile, were vomiting fire and flame. The two Bugles were apparently reconciled, but only that they might unite more vigorously in their hostility against the pettifogger, who watched their every step for a plausible ground of action against them. The philosopher wrote an excellent book against the human passions; and the worthy ecclesiastic delivered every Sunday most edifying discourses on the abomination of ingratitude, calumny, envy, evil-speaking, and malignity. Both did much good by their arguments, but their own gall became more and more bitter, every day.

THE PIOUS FRAUD.

The winter passed away, and was succeeded by spring. The warm days of summer were approaching. Dr. Falcon had very soon obtained the conviction that his aunt had little cause for her uneasiness. He had told her so, and had explained to her the real nature of her indisposition. In vain: the erring vestal would on no account be undeceived. Susan and her husband were at length obliged to desist from every attempt to dispel the ridiculous illusion of Aunt Sarah, who threatened that she should begin to doubt the doctor's friendship. She seldom left her bed.

“She makes me uneasy,” said Susan to her husband; “at times I almost fancy her cracked.”

"And she is so, in every sense of the word," said the doctor. "It is hypochondria,—a fixed idea. My physic is of no avail against the extravagancies of her imagination. I know of nothing I can do, unless it be to drive away one fancy by substituting another. Suppose we pass our child off upon her for her own."

"But will she believe it?"

"If she does not, it is of little consequence."

After a few weeks Susan appeared no longer in Sarah's room,—it had been so arranged by the doctor; and our aunt was informed that Susan had had a misfortune.

"Is the child dead?" inquired Sarah.

"Alas!" replied the doctor.

"Alas!" rejoined the aunt.

One day before daybreak, Aunt Sarah was awakened in an unusual manner. Her face was sprinkled with water, and strong scents were held to her nose, till it seemed they were going to send her out of the world by the very means apparently employed to bring her to life again.

She opened her eyes, and saw the doctor busy with her nose.

"Righteous Heaven! I am dying!—You are killing me! Nephew, nephew, what are you doing to my nose?"

"Hush, aunt!—don't speak a word!" said the doctor with a mysterious look; "only tell me how you feel yourself."

"Tolerably well, nephew."

"You have been insensible for four hours, aunt. I was uneasy for your life; but it's all right now,—you are saved. A lovely child—"

"How!" exclaimed Sarah, almost rubbing her nose from her face.

"A sweet little boy. Do you wish to see the pretty fellow? If you will keep yourself tranquil, and not stir a limb, why——"

"But, nephew——"

"I have passed it off upon every one in the house for my wife's child."

"Oh, nephew! your prudence, your assistance, your counsel! Oh, you are an angel!"

Falcon went away. Aunt Sarah trembled all over with terror and joy. She looked round her:—on the table were burning lights and countless phials of medicine were strewn around. A woman brought in the baby: it was in a gentle sleep. Sarah spoke not a word, but looked at it long, wept bitterly, kissed the little creature again and again; and, when it had been carried away, she said to the doctor, "It is the living picture of the trumpeter to the French regiment—God be merciful to him! It is his living picture—I say, his living picture!"

CONSEQUENCES.

After the prescribed number of weeks had been punctually expended in the consumption of gruels and broths, the chaste Sarah perfectly recovered her spirits, and tripped about the house more cheerful and active than she had been for many years before. She dandled the baby, would scarcely allow it out of her sight, and evidently doted on it with unbounded tenderness. She had been successfully cured of one ridiculous illusion, by one yet more ridiculous. Overflowing with gratitude, her first visit out of the house was to the

church, and thence she proceeded to a lawyer to execute a deed of gift of her whole fortune to Dr. Falcon; reserving for herself only a large annuity by way of pocket-money. Between herself and the doctor, to be sure, a secret article was drawn up, by which he bound himself in due time to transfer half of her bounty to the little living picture of the regimental trumpeter.

In this way, the blue wonders of Miss Sarah Bugle suddenly converted our Dr. Falcon into a rich man. The triumph of the medical faculty was irrevocably confirmed; the more furiously did law, theology, and philosophy rage against each other. They could not forgive one another the loss of the expected legacy. Dr. Falcon was readily excused, for he was innocent. With him, all parties were ready to renew a friendly intercourse, for he was now one of the wealthiest men in the town; and a wealthy man, or rather his money, may at times be useful to the philosopher as well as to the jurist: and to the theologian as much as to either.

THE YOUTH'S NEW VADE-MECUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY.

SIR,—In submitting for your inspection, the poem which I now do myself the honour of forwarding to you, permit me to intimate to you the origin of its composition, and to indulge in one or two remarks.

The author is a particular friend of my own; a gentleman who, marrying at a rather advanced stage in the journey of life, was unexpectedly and agreeably presented with a small earnest of posterity in the shape of a son. Parental feelings, like many other good things, are better late than never; and it has often struck me that such feelings are much stronger, considerably more fervent, and, indeed, a great deal better when they do come late. Methinks the love of grandfather, grandmother, uncle, great-aunt, and a whole *kit* of cousins, is blended in the sexagenarian sire. It will be perceived, from the affecting apostrophe or invocation, that my friend commenced his poem with praiseworthy promptitude; and I do hope that its success will be more than commensurate with his expectations. The youth is now half-past six, in the morning of existence. I have, once only, had the pleasure of meeting him. He entered his father's study somewhat abruptly, mounted on a timber steed, which, I am advised, he is already perfectly able to manage; and, immediately he opened his mouth, with a raspberry-jam border to it, I perceived that he would, at no distant day, become not only a worthy member, but an undoubted ornament, of society. But this is from my present purpose.

Your Miscellany, sir, professes to furnish materials for the amusement and delight of the community; and hitherto you have acted up to your professions. But were it not as well, allow me to suggest, that you should combine instruction with amusement,—that you should clear the heart as well as purify the liver—that you should