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Andrew Robinson

STONEY

BOWES

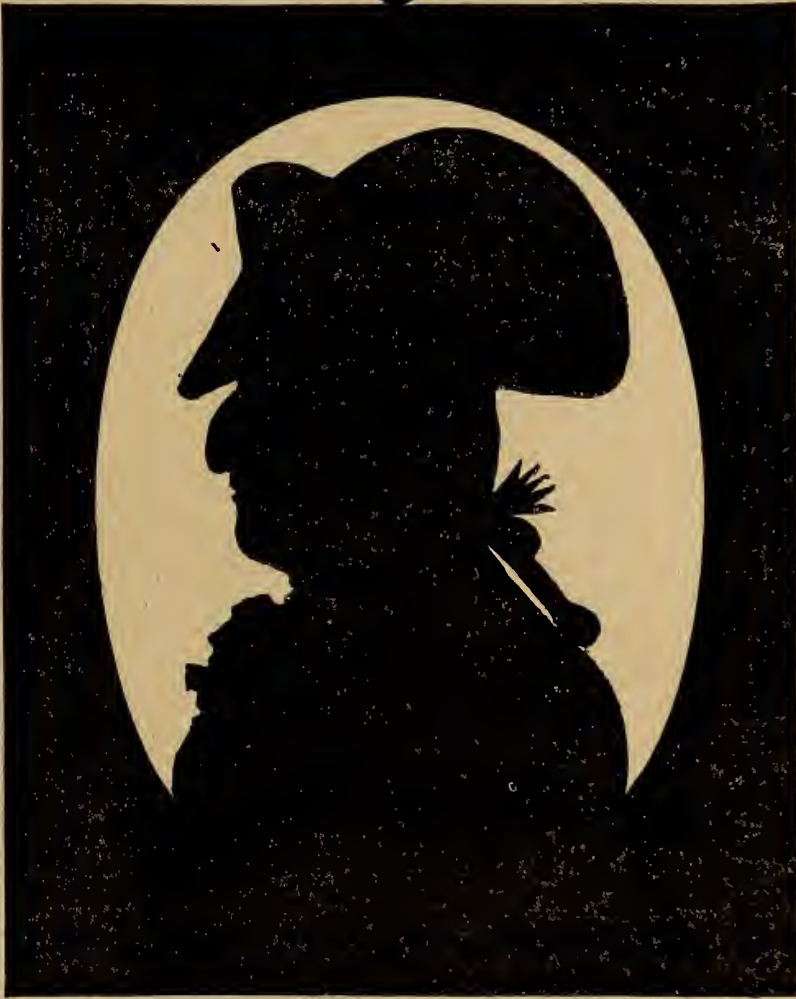
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Cc.









ANDREW
ROBINSON STONEY
BOWES.

THE following notice from the
“Local Records of Newcastle-
upon-Tyne” may, not inaptly,
be quoted as a fitting introduc-
tion to the subject of the present
memoir:---“Sept. 17th, 1760, died at his
seat at Gibside, George Bowes, Esq., of
Streatlam and Gibside, M.P. for the
County of Durham, which he had repre-

sented in the Parliaments of 1727, 1734, 1741, 1747, and 1754. On the 26th of this month his remains were deposited in the family vault at Whickham, in a grand manner, there to remain till the chapel at Gibside was finished (the first stone of which had been laid a little before his death), then to be removed and placed in the vault intended for the future interment of his family. Mr. Bowes left an only daughter, Mary Eleanor, sole heiress to an estate of £600,000." She married John, ninth Earl of Strathmore, who assumed the name of Bowes, and died at Lisbon in 1776, leaving his Countess still a young woman, with five children.

In addition to immense wealth the Countess was not only a pretty, lively, and very accomplished woman, but she had the character of being literary, and with the recommendations of a fine house in Grosvenor Square, a house and extensive gardens and conservatories at Chelsea, her seats at Paul's-Walden, Gibside, Barnard Castle, and the castles of Streatlam and Hilton, besides lands in Middlesex,

numerous suitors soon appeared on the stage. The relater of this strange history, Mr. Jesse Foot, surgeon of Stoney Bowes, says that she was reputed to be the best female botanist of the time, and spent vast sums in greenhouses, conservatories, and curious plants, at her house at Chelsea. Her house in Grosvenor Square was the resort of many literary and scientific men, and in particular of naturalists. Mr. Foot describes her at that time as scarcely thirty years of age. "She possessed a very pleasing *embonpoint*. Her bust was uncommonly fine. Her stature was rather under the middle class; her hair brown; her eyes light, small, and she was near-sighted. Her face was round; her neck and shoulders graceful; her lower jaw rather underhanging, and which, whenever she was agitated, was moved very uncommonly, as if convulsively from side to side. Her fingers were small, and her hands exceedingly delicate."

With great accomplishments, and the knowledge of many languages, she became by her position the centre of a set of

bafe flatterers and defigners ; and the live-
linefs of her difpofition led her into follies
and extravagances that might have taken
effect in a ftronger and wifer woman.
She had troops of learned pretenders, and
even pretending domestics about her.
Soon after her husband's death, a Mr.
Gray, who had a fortune in the Indies,
aimed at her hand, and became an accepted
fuitor ; but Stoney Robinfon appeared on
the fcene. Mr. Gray foon was driven
from the field, and the Countefs became
the victim of the moft perfect villain
which modern times can boast of.

This Andrew Robinfon Stoney was a
lieutenant in the army. He had been
ftationed at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and there
contrived to win the hand of a Mifs
Newton, only child of William Newton,
of Burnopfield, in the county of Durham,
who inherited about £30,000. He foon
haftened her out of the world by fuch
ingenious proceffes as pitching her head-
long down a flight of ftairs, fhutting her
up in a clofet in her chemife (fome fay
without it) for three days, and feeding her

on an egg a-day, and by other modes of torture, mental and physical, of which he was an eminent master. Foot describes him at the time he first knew him thus :---
“The person of Bowes was rather in his favour, and his address was probably, when young, captivating. His speech was soft; his height more than five feet ten; his eyes were bright and small---he had a perfect command over them. His eyebrows were low, large and sandy; his hair light; and his complexion ruddy. His smile was agreeable; his wit ready; but he was always the first to laugh at what he said, and forced others to laugh also; his conversation was shallow, his education was bare, and his utterance was in a low tone, and lisping. There was something uncommon in the connection of his nose with his upper lip. He could never talk without the nose, which was long, and curved downwards, being also moved ridiculously with the upper lip.”

Having, as we have seen, disposed of his first wife, he was on the look-out for another, if possible with a better fortune,

in the meantime amusing himself by the usual routine of men of pleasure---in gaming, cock-fighting, horse-racing, watering-places, and the petty clubs in St. James's.

The gay widow of Grosvenor Square now attracted his attention, and he determined to make a bold stroke for so tempting a prize. The mode by which he set about this was one of the most remarkable and inspired efforts of demoniacal genius. He first of all stormed the street-door and ante-chamber, cultivated the acquaintance of certain members of her household, corrupted them, and engaged them in his cause. The family consisted of the Countess, Mrs. Parish, the governess of the children, Miss Eliza Planta, sister to the governess, confidante to the Countess, and the Rev. Mr. Stephens, just then about to be married to Miss Eliza Planta, both in the interest of Bowes. The chief visitors of the family were Mr. Magra, a botanist, and a friend of Dr. Solander, and Mr. Matra, a consul at Barbary. These, besides accidental visitors, were the *dramatis per-*

sonæ at the Temple of Folly in Grosvenor Square.

Thus, by flattery, by gallantry, by every possible means, Bowes made his way to the Countess through her creatures. His connection in Durham, by his marriage with Miss Newton, afforded him a plea of introduction to the Countess's house. He had no occasion to say who he was, if he could once get in and obtain an audience in Grosvenor Square. To accomplish this object, he rested not a moment. He made all the male literati his friends, and secured the smiles of the female. The Countess's companion, Eliza, was propitious to him, and every stratagem that the ingenuity of man or woman could devise was resorted to until he succeeded in becoming one of her circle, when he progressed rapidly. Perceiving that she was of a romantic and visionary turn of mind, he got a conjuror tutored to his wishes, and planned with Miss Planta a party in which the Countess was to be included, to have their fortunes told. He caused letters to be sent to the Countess with the Durham postmark on

them, purporting to be from a lady, who complained that for the sake of the Countess he had forsaken her. In these letters, suspicion was hinted that Mr. Gray, the accepted lover, was in the interest and supported in his wishes by the relatives of the late Earl of Strathmore, which above all was calculated to alarm the Countess, and excite a jealousy of their interference; and though these schemes succeeded in a measure to the extent of his wishes, the master-stroke was yet to come.

Whilst he had been making these advances, a sweeping attack had appeared in the *Morning Post* on the character, pursuits, and associates of the Countess. Her whole life was analysed and exposed to the public, with the most malicious and irritating exaggerations. Vindications were made by her friends. A vehement and continued correspondence took place. Public attention was attracted, and the friends of the late Lord Strathmore secretly rejoiced in it, because they hoped it would prevent her marrying again; a

step which, on account of the vast property in her own power, they exceedingly dreaded. Thus the controversy grew louder, and the attacks on the character of the Countess grew so intolerable that she declared that whoever would avenge her, by challenging and fighting the editor of that paper, should be rewarded with her



heart and hand. At this crisis Andrew Robinson Stoney, who was the secret assailant, now dexterously

wheeled round and challenged the unwary editor, who had been his tool, fought him, contrived to be wounded, as well as to wound in the affair, and received from the grateful and unsuspecting Countess her hand at the altar, as a reward for his gallantry.

Thus this adventurer, by one of the most

artful and audacious schemes, stepped into the possession of a splendid fortune, the enjoyment of the sole daughter, castles, and wide estates of an ancient and illustrious line. Having gratified his vanity by remaining a while in town, where the visits of congratulation on his marriage were like a levee, where cards in heaps were left by visitors in coaches, on horseback, and on foot, he proceeded to the north to rejoice in his newly acquired estates. Scarcely had he arrived there, when the greedy eye of the adventurer fell on the splendid woods of Gibside, which were at once doomed to the axe.

He felled large quantities of timber, but merchants refused to purchase it, and it lay and rotted on the ground. His career was now such as might be expected ---extravagance and expense, tyranny and meanness. He got into Parliament for Newcastle ; he became high sheriff for the county ; he attempted to rival in splendour the ancient nobility, at the same time that he was employing all his arts to raise money, and to draw his friends, bankers,

anybody into his meshes to make a profit of them.

After having given a few parliamentary dinners to some of the members and his acquaintances, he quitted his house in Grosvenor Square, and took up his residence at hotels. As to what he did in Parliament, there can be no trace, for he only gave silent votes. He had been fortunate in having served the office of sheriff just in time to be chosen, in 1780, a member for Newcastle; and it is beyond question, that he meditated standing for the county at a future time, and had got some strong interest on his side. He had also made the purchase of the Benwell estate, from the family of Shafto; but this could not have distressed him much, as he mortgaged it deeply; and this he contrived to keep to the day of his death, though from that time to this he raised money upon the plea of losing it.

He parted with everything he could in town, sold Chelsea House, and took the family plate into his own possession. He raised £30,000 upon annuities. He in-

fured the life of the Countess only for a year or two at most, by which he squandered away vast sums. He went directly down to Gibside, and cut down the timber; the neighbours would not buy it; the felled timber lay upon his hands. He got the nomination of sheriff; he opened early his canvass for Newcastle, kept open house, and entertained the heads of that town at Gibside.

His dinners were good, and his table enriched by massive plate; but there was always a smack of mean splendour about him, as he did not purchase one single new carriage, and his coach-horses, originally of high value, were never in good condition. He took a chaplain into his house, and always had somebody about him whom he made a butt of.

The expenses he incurred by his shrievalty, by his election and horse-racing, by his insurances and the purchase of Benwell, kept him in a constant distress for money; and at the very time when he wrote adulatory letters to his friend, that he never should be happy till he was

out of debt, and had some to the good, he went upon the turf and into an election. His letters were literally the letters of a hypocrite. He got as much from his banker as he could, and when he could get no more, he abused him. He sold a friend an estate at a cheap rate, but a claim remaining upon it, the bargain was all on Bowes's side.

Such was Bowes, and his general transactions; but all this while what was his conduct to the Countess---to her who had unwisely, but still most kindly, admitted him to a sphere and a fortune far beyond his just expectations? It may well be supposed that such a man would not be more exemplary in his attentions and his gratitude to her, than he was commendable in his other proceedings; but Bowes was---

“A tyrant to the weak, and a coward to the strong.”

He was such a man as Shelley describes in “Rosalind and Helen,” at whose approach the very children fell into silence

in the midst of their play, and who clapped their hands and danced when they heard that he was dead. He possessed the art of tormenting as if he had learnt it under the personal and especial instruction of the arch-fiend himself. While pretending great tenderness to this unhappy, but to him generous woman, he kept her as a boy keeps a young bird by the leg with a string, and at every moment of his own wicked caprice, or of her apparent pleasure, gave her a pluck. It is easier to imagine than to describe all the secret villainies and degradations by which such a tyrant can make every moment of a woman of feeling and refinement bitter as death. In the first place, Bowes carried on the most licentious intercourse with women of all kinds on all sides. He seduced almost every maid-servant, and all the farmers' daughters that he could. He expended on other women great sums in jewellery and other extravagances; and cared not how much of all this came to the knowledge of his wife. In order to silence her, and to hold her *in terrorem*, as



ANDREW ROBINSON BOWES ESQ^R



well as to provide himself with a weapon against her, should she at any time be driven by desperation to seek the protection of the law against him, he resorted to means which only such an accomplished scoundrel could imagine.

He compelled his wife to write, or wrote it for her, the "Confessions of the Countess of Strathmore," in which he made her draw the strangest picture imaginable of herself and her life before her marriage with him. That any woman of education would voluntarily thus sketch out a confession of the grossest infamy against herself, is beyond all conception; and who can say what were the secret tortures by which this history of shame was wrung from this miserable woman, when withdrawn to one of his secret retreats, by the man who had shut up his former wife for three days, and fed her on an egg a day? Who can even shape to himself the long and foul-killing indignities which such a monster would compel his victim to undergo, in order to effect his diabolical purpose? It is not men-

tioned by Mr. Foot, but we have heard it stated by others, that one means employed by him was to enclose the Countess's hair, which was long and very fine, in a chest, and locking it down, keep her thus confined in a lying posture till her will gave way to his diabolical wishes! Certain it is that he accomplished his end. The "Confessions" were written; and were, says Foot, "laid behind his pillow by night, and read by him in scraps for his purposes by day. He got them by heart; they formed part of his travelling equipage to Paris and everywhere else. They were a treasure which he hugged to his bosom, and brooded over with a rancorous rapture." Nor did he forget, at the necessary moment, to hand them into a public court of law against his wife.

Mr. Foot thus describes the Countess, six years after her marriage to Bowes: "The Countess, whom I had not seen for some time, appeared wonderfully altered and dejected. She was pale and nervous, and her under jaw constantly moved from side to side. If she said any-

thing, she looked at him first. If she was asked to drink a glass of wine, she took his intelligence before she answered. She sat but a short time at dinner, and then was out of my sight. I did get one morning's walk with her and Mr. Harison, into the once beautiful pleasure-garden, where, in spite of the ruinous state of it, much was left for admiration; because the taste which gave it a creation was not as yet totally obliterated.

“The Countess pointed out to us the concern she had formerly taken in the shrubs, the flower-beds, the lawns, the alcoves, and the walks of this most delectable recess---(Paul's Walden). She even pointed out the assistance her own hand had lent to individual articles. In observing her during the conversation, the agitation of her mind was apparent by the action of her mouth. She would look for some time, hesitate, and then her under-jaw would act in that convulsive manner, which absolutely explained her state of melancholy remembrance beyond all other proofs abstracted knowledge could con-

firm, or technical teachers could demonstrate."

Was there ever a more perfect delineation of the effects of those horrors which are, in many a solitary nook of affluence, perpetrated by men-monsters, on that delicate, shrinking, fond, faithful thing, often too forgiving, and often wondrous in patient endurance, called---a wife? Many such a scene could we draw forth from the annals of old Halls, that would

"Draw iron tears down Pluto's cheeks ;"

but none more perfect in its kind than the history of Stoney Bowes and his victim, the Countess of Strathmore. At this very time, there was a child or children, which should have melted the heart of the scoundrel, if it had not been harder than the nether millstone, and have made it feel one sensation of affection, at least towards her who had endowed him with such magnificent gifts. But the wretch was one of Satan's elect; and at this very time he had got a new man-cook, and was feasting and giving entertainments to

the neighbours in grand style. Amongst others was a most beautiful young woman, one of his farmer's daughters, whom he had ruined. Her mother and sister came after dinner, *and they all drank tea with the Countess.*

One victim was but poor employment for Bowes. The Countess had five children by Lord Strathmore, and Bowes now set himself to torment the guardians by endeavouring to get them into his hands. The sons were totally out of reach, but he hoped to be able to secure the two eldest daughters, Lady Maria Jane and Lady Anna Maria. To accomplish this, he commenced his hypocritical whinings. All of a sudden, he appeared to be so tender, so alarmed about the decay of the Countess's health, and the inward pinings, pangs, and sufferings of her peace of mind, that he actually succeeded in getting one of the daughters into his possession, and the other had a narrow escape. This escape was owing to the firmness and prudence of the guardians. They had permitted the young lady to go to the

house, on the plea that the very life of the Countess depended on seeing her children; and there she was speedily abstracted from her attendants; they looked out, and it was only by raising a speedy and thorough alarm that she was regained. With the other Bowes made off to Paris, taking the Countess along with him. His correspondence, and his endeavours to move the Court of Chancery in his favour, by his hypocritical lamentations over the Countess are very curious, but they did not avail; he was compelled to restore the young lady to her proper protectors, and in no hands could the Countess have more dreaded their being than in those of Bowes. In this cause he employed the professional powers of the greatest lawyers of their time---Erskine, Scott, and Law, afterwards Lords Erskine, Eldon, and Ellenborough. The time was, however, now arriving for the occurrence of more striking events in this strange history. The continued cruelties of Bowes at length roused the mind of the unhappy Countess to a paroxysm of desperation, and she

determined to escape from him and throw herself under the protection of the laws. The strict watch which he and his satellites constantly maintained over her, was happily broken in upon by his going out to dine at Captain Armstrong's, in Percy Street. The Countess had, at length, found a maid who was not to be corrupted by Bowes, but conceived a deep compassion for her unhappy lady. The Countess and she had long planned and concocted an escape; the opportunity seemed to have arrived. The male servants were despatched on some errand or other. He who was appointed more expressly to watch her was sent to the stationer's for some book of amusement for the Countess to read, in the absence of Bowes. Some doors were locked that it might not too soon be found out that she was gone; and thus they stole out of the house and got, undiscovered, into Oxford Street, where they had to wait a considerable time, no coach being upon the stand. They were in the greatest danger, as Bowes had been apprised the moment

their escape was discovered, and they had scarcely got into a coach, when as they came opposite to Berner's Street, they saw him in a hackney-coach driving very fast, with his head out and without his hat. Providentially he saw them not; but the escape was so narrow, that the Countess, in her low state of health, and from the lively imagination in her mind of the misery which threatened her if retaken, fell into hysterics, and was with difficulty persuaded that she was safe, and out of his power.

She was conducted to Mr. Shuter's, the barrister, in Curfitor Street; and an apartment was taken for her in Dyer's Buildings. Bowes, in the meantime, lost not a moment in inquiry and pursuit. On receiving the news of what had happened, he had run out into Oxford Street without his hat, and driven off in a hackney-coach. He was not long in ferreting out her retreat, but it was not before she had exhibited articles of the peace in the Court of King's Bench against him for ill-treatment of her person, and was put under the protection

of the Court. But Bowes was not daunted by that ; he took lodgings in the same street, and watched her as a cat watches a mouse, ready to pounce upon her. “ All the foul-weather birds,” says Foot, “ were hovering about his distressed house in Grosvenor Square. There used to come, one after another, such a draggled-tailed set as are seen in wet weather canvassing about at elections. A more pitiable object was never beheld than Bowes. His mind was every moment upon some new device ; and although he had more than a dozen engines at work, not one of them knew what the other was about. He appealed vehemently, as an injured man, to the Courts of Chancery, of King’s Bench, and even to Doctors’ Commons. He had, however, employment enough of itself to bribe all the maid-servants and others whom he had ruined, to silence the cries of their distressed children, and to keep hunger and ruin out of the way of any honest justification and strong temptation ; but in spite all this, there were sufficient who found their way to Doctors’ Commons to answer the Countess’s purpose.”

The Countess had gone off in such haste that she scarcely took more things with her than she had on her back, leaving behind all her jewels and everything, to secure only the greatest jewel of all--- safety from his tyranny. The proofs that were exhibited against him in Court were of the most horrid kind, and to feel the force of them, we must recollect the rank and sensitive mind of the Countess, what she had done for Bowes, and that these inflictions had been the ordinary treatment of long years. They consisted in "beating, scratching, biting, pinching, whipping, kicking, imprisoning, insulting, provoking, tormenting, mortifying, degrading, tyrannising, cajoling, deceiving, lying, forcing, starving, compelling, and a new torment, wringing of the heart." To all these allegations Bowes had little to oppose, except those precious confessions which he had had manufactured expressly for such an emergency, and which he put into the hands of his proctor to make the most of.

All this time, however, Bowes kept a sharp eye on his victim. She moved from

residence to residence to elude him; he still discovered her and took his lodgings at hand. Her last remove was into Bloomsbury Square, and here he resolved to corrupt the constable whom the Court had appointed to guard her. This man, Lucas, was a highly respectable man, in whom the Court had high confidence, but Bowes did not despair of winning him over. "He found out where his wife and family lived; he gratified all their immediate wants. He made himself an injured man; he produced his credentials, 'The Confessions'; and by time, and close attention, soon got the wife and her visitors on his side. 'Sure he is a charming man, and 'tis a shame he should be so used. He is as mild and as meek as a lamb, and as good and generous as a prince. One of my children was ill, he saw it every day, nursed it, and gave it the medicines himself.'" Lucas was soon a lost man; and the plan to carry off the Countess was settled. The following is the narrative of this singular transaction from the *Gentleman's Magazine* of December, 1786.

“Some weeks previous to the day of carrying into execution the conspiracy formed against her, several suspicious persons were seen lurking about her ladyship’s house in Bloomsbury Square; and the same persons were observed frequently to follow the carriage, sometimes in hackney-coaches and sometimes on foot. Her ladyship was not wholly unapprised of their attendance, nor unapprehensive of their designs; but to counteract their measures, she took into her weekly pay one Lucas, a constable, to keep a constant eye on her carriage whenever she went out, and never to be out of call.

“This man, on the 10th November, inquired of the coachman, as his custom was, if his lady went out that day, was answered in the affirmative, and received orders to attend between one and two in the afternoon. About that time her ladyship had business at Mr. Forster’s, in Oxford Street; and, for company, took Mr. Farrer, brother to her solicitor, and her maid, Mrs. Morgan, in the coach with her. In their way they met with no interruption; but

they had scarce been five minutes in the house of Mr. Forster, before some of those persons came into the shop who had been marked as above, and were well-known to her ladyship.

“Being much alarmed at their appearance, she withdrew to an inner room and locked the door, requesting Mr. Forster at the same time to go privately and procure assistance, to be in readiness for her protection, in case any violence should be offered to her person.

“Mr. Forster had scarce left the house when the constable, whose business it was to watch the motions of his lady, went up and tapped at her room door, and by telling her his name, obtained immediate admittance. Interrogating him as to his business, she was ready to sink when she was told that her ladyship was his prisoner ---that a warrant had been put into his hands---that he must do his duty, but that it was rather fortunate for her ladyship, as he would take her before Lord Mansfield at Caen Wood, who, no doubt, would frustrate all the wicked purposes

of her enemies, and take her under his own immediate protection. With this artful tale, in the then state of her mind she was easily prevailed upon to step again into her coach, as Mr. Farrer was permitted to accompany her. The moment she was seated her servants were all discharged by a pretended order from her ladyship, a confederate coachman mounted the box, and a new set of attendants, all armed, surrounded the coach. In this manner they proceeded, without noise or interruption, till they reached Highgate Hill, at the bottom of which stood Mr. Bowes, who, addressing himself to Mr. Farrer, very civilly requested to change places with him, and then seated himself at the right hand of his lady, who was no longer in doubt as to his design. The coachman was now ordered to proceed, and to quicken his pace.

“Mr. Farrer being now at liberty, made all possible haste to London, and application was immediately made to the Court of King’s Bench, in order to effect a

rescue. On Monday, the 10th, two of Lord Mansfield's tipstaffs set off for that purpose to the north. In the meantime Mr. Bowes continued his journey.

“ At Barnet, fresh horses were ready to put to, and a post-chaise and four, with some accomplices, were in waiting to attend. Though the windows of the coach were broken, and the lady in the coach appeared in great distress, yet not the least effort was made to interrupt their progress; and it was not until the next day at noon, when a servant of Mr. Bowes arrived at the Angel Inn, at Doncaster, a hundred and ninety-five miles from London, and ordered horses to be put to his master's coach, that we have any account of their further proceedings. In half-an-hour the coach stopped in the street; and while the horses were changing, Mr. Woodcock, the master of the inn, handed some cakes to Mr. Bowes, which Mr. Bowes presented to the lady, but whether she accepted them or not he could not positively assert. The moment the horses were in harness they pursued

their course northward; and the next notice that we have of them was at Branfby Moor, where the lady was shown into a room, attended by a chambermaid, and guarded by Mr. Bowes, who hastened her return, and seemed all impatience till she was again seated in the coach.

“What further passed till they arrived at Streatlam Castle, in the principality of Durham, remained a secret till her ladyship’s arrival on Tuesday, the 21st of November, in the evening, at the house of Messrs. Farrer and Lacey, on Bread Street Hill. The detail she then gave of her sufferings, during the eleven days of absence, was truly pitiable:---At the time of taking her away, the confederates were all armed; that, as they drove along, Mr. Bowes endeavoured to persuade her to sign a paper, to stop proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court, and to consent to live under the name and character of his wife ---both which she positively refused to do; that he then beat her on the face and body with his clenched fists; that, when she attempted to cry out, he thrust a



Reader. if wed. - thys Scvlptvre I'd commend:

Yn Svnshyne

vse y^e brvshie parte. yn Storms y^e othyr ende.



handkerchief into her mouth ; that, on the most trifling contradiction, while on the road, he beat her with the chain and seals of his watch on the naked breast ; and that, when provoked by her firmness, he presented a loaded pistol to her head, and threatened her life, if she did not instantly sign the paper, but this she was determined never to do.

“ Being arrived at Streatlam Castle, he then endeavoured to persuade her to take upon her the government of the family, and to act in every respect as his wife, which she still most solemnly refused to do. On which, in a glow of passion, he pulled out a pistol, bid her say her prayers, and, with a trembling hand, presented it to her head. This, too, failing of effect, he violently beat her, then left her, and she saw no more of him for a whole day ; when coming up to the room rather more calm than usual, he asked her if she was not yet reconciled to a dutiful domestic life ? and, being answered with some asperity, he flew into a more violent passion than she had ever yet seen him, pulled out his

pistol, bid her say her last prayers---she did say her prayers, and then bid him fire !

“ By this time the country began to be alarmed for her, and Bowes for his own safety. He therefore, in order to cover his escape, and keep her still in his power, ordered two of his domestics to be dressed so as to personate himself and her ladyship, and to show themselves occasionally before the windows to appease the populace, and to deceive his pursuers. This stratagem had its full effect; the people were quiet while they thought her ladyship was safe; and the sheriff's officers who were sent to execute the attachment, actually served it on the wrong persons; while, in the meantime, Bowes took her out a back way, dragged her, between ten and eleven o'clock, in the dark, to a little cottage in the neighbourhood, where they spent the remainder of the night, and where he behaved to her in a manner shocking to the delicacy of civilized life, reiterating his threatenings, and, finding threats in vain, throwing her on the bed, and flogging her with rods.

“On leaving the cottage in the morning, he had her set on horseback behind him, without a pillion, and took her over dismal heaths and trackless wilds, covered with snow, till they came to Darlington, to the house of Mr. B., an attorney, where she was shut up in a dark room, and where she was threatened (a red-hot poker being held to her breast) with a mad doctor and strait-waistcoat ; but all in vain.

“The hour of deliverance drew near. Hither they had been tracked, and here it was no longer safe for Bowes to continue; he therefore set out with her before day, in the same manner that he brought her, taking her over hedges and ploughed fields, till, being seen by the husbandmen at work, he was so closely hemmed in, that an old countryman taking hold of his horse’s bridle, and Bowes presenting his pistol to frighten him, he was knocked down by a constable that was in pursuit of him, and felled to the ground with a hedge-stake.

“Seeing him in that position, her ladyship put herself under the protection of

the peace-officer, and being on horseback, in a kind of womanish exultation, bid him farewell, and mend his life, and so left him weltering in his blood; while she, with the whole country in her favour, made the best of her way to London, attended only by her deliverers, where she arrived safe, as has already been stated.

“ On Wednesday the 22nd, she appeared in the Court of King’s Bench, but the Court being up, no proceedings could that day be had on her case. The next day she was again presented to the Court; and as soon as the judges were seated, Mr. Law, her counsel, moved, ‘ That she might exhibit articles of the peace against her husband, A. R. Bowes.’ The articles were read, and being sworn to and signed, an attachment was immediately granted against Bowes.

“ On the 27th, Bowes was produced in Court, to answer the articles. He was dressed in a drab-coloured great-coat, a red silk handkerchief about his head. He was supported by two men, yet nearly bent double with weakness, in consequence

of his wounds. He frequently appeared on the point of fainting, and his appearance, on the whole, was the most squalid and emaciated that can possibly be imagined.

“The upshot of this desperate undertaking of Bowes was, that he was sentenced to pay a fine of £300 to his Majesty; to be imprisoned in the King’s Bench for three years; at the end of that term to find security for fourteen years, himself in £10,000 and two sureties of £5,000 each. Lucas, the constable, was justly sentenced to a fine of £50, and three years’ imprisonment in Newgate, and the other accomplices to proportionate punishment. The Countess obtained a sentence of divorce from Doctors’ Commons, and in her exultation at her liberation, wrote the following epitaph on the fallen villain, and sent it by Lady Strathmore to Bowes in the King’s Bench Prison:

HERE RESTS,

Who never rested before,

The most ambitious of men :

For he fought not virtue, wisdom, nor
Science, yet rose by deep hypocrisy,
By the folly of some,
And the vice of others,
To honours which Nature had forbade,
And riches he wanted taste to enjoy.

He saw no faults in himself,
Nor any worth in others.

He was the enemy of mankind ;
Deceitful to his friends,
Ungrateful to his benefactors,
Cringing to his superiors,
And tyrannical to his dependants.

If interest obliged him to assist
Any fellow-creature, he regretted the
Effect, and thought every day lost
In which he made none wretched.

His life was a continual series
Of injuries to society ;
Disobedience to his Maker ;
And he only lamented in despair

That he could offend them no longer.

He rose by mean arts
To unmerited honours,
Which expire before himself.

Passenger ! examine thy heart,
If in aught thou resemblest him ;
And if thou dost---
Read, tremble, and reform !
So shall he, who living
Was the pest of society,
When dead, be against his will
Once useful to mankind."

With this very pardonable act of triumph over her fallen tyrant, we may here leave this perhaps weak, but most unfortunate woman ; a woman still, with talents, accomplishments, and endowments of mind, person, and estate, which would have made her under happier circumstances an ornament to society, and a blessing to those about her. She survived the recovery of her freedom about four years, and it is to

be hoped had learned in her misfortunes wisdom enough to make those closing years a period of peace and a pure hope in a better existence. There is nothing in romance more wild, strange, or harrowing, than the realities of her fearful existence in the hands of Andrew Stoney Bowes. Had she written her "Confessions" after this period, they would have constituted one of the most fearful and interesting narratives of the sensations of a delicate nature and sensitive mind, under the Satanic power of a legal inquisitor, that ever was penned. As it is, the glimpses that we have of the inflictions and the degradations that she had to endure, immured in solitary places with that arch-villain, and surrounded eternally by his creatures, male and female---what she had to suffer in her own halls, and on her ancestral hearth, the possessions of these mighty old warriors of many a generation, with which she had endowed him; and his strange flight with her, over heaths and mountains, over hedges and fields, in winter, in darkness, and in terror---now

mounted behind him with a blanket instead of a pillion, and now, with the pistol at her head---romance has nothing like it, but what it must first borrow from such scenes.



