

Jane Sinclair; Or, The Fawn Of Springvale eBook

Jane Sinclair; Or, The Fawn Of Springvale by William Carleton

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Jane Sinclair; Or, The Fawn Of Springvale eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	8
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	10
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	12
Page 6.....	13
Page 7.....	14
Page 8.....	15
Page 9.....	17
Page 10.....	19
Page 11.....	21
Page 12.....	23
Page 13.....	24
Page 14.....	25
Page 15.....	26
Page 16.....	27
Page 17.....	29
Page 18.....	30
Page 19.....	31
Page 20.....	33
Page 21.....	35
Page 22.....	36

Page 23.....	38
Page 24.....	40
Page 25.....	42
Page 26.....	44
Page 27.....	45
Page 28.....	46
Page 29.....	47
Page 30.....	48
Page 31.....	50
Page 32.....	52
Page 33.....	54
Page 34.....	56
Page 35.....	58
Page 36.....	60
Page 37.....	61
Page 38.....	63
Page 39.....	65
Page 40.....	67
Page 41.....	69
Page 42.....	71
Page 43.....	73
Page 44.....	75
Page 45.....	77
Page 46.....	78
Page 47.....	80
Page 48.....	82

Page 49.....	84
Page 50.....	86
Page 51.....	88
Page 52.....	90
Page 53.....	92
Page 54.....	94
Page 55.....	96
Page 56.....	97
Page 57.....	98
Page 58.....	100
Page 59.....	102
Page 60.....	103
Page 61.....	105
Page 62.....	107
Page 63.....	108
Page 64.....	110
Page 65.....	111
Page 66.....	113
Page 67.....	114
Page 68.....	115
Page 69.....	116
Page 70.....	118
Page 71.....	120
Page 72.....	122
Page 73.....	124
Page 74.....	126

Page 75.....	128
Page 76.....	129
Page 77.....	131
Page 78.....	133
Page 79.....	134
Page 80.....	135
Page 81.....	136
Page 82.....	138
Page 83.....	139
Page 84.....	140
Page 85.....	141
Page 86.....	143
Page 87.....	145
Page 88.....	147
Page 89.....	148
Page 90.....	149
Page 91.....	151
Page 92.....	153
Page 93.....	155
Page 94.....	157
Page 95.....	159
Page 96.....	160
Page 97.....	161
Page 98.....	162
Page 99.....	164
Page 100.....	166

Page 101.....	168
Page 102.....	170
Page 103.....	172
Page 104.....	174
Page 105.....	176
Page 106.....	178
Page 107.....	180
Page 108.....	182
Page 109.....	184

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
By William Carleton		1
PART I.		1
PART II.		24
PART III.		49

Page 1

By William Carleton

PART I.

If there be one object in life that stirs the current of human feeling more sadly than another, it is a young and lovely woman, whose intellect has been blighted by the treachery of him on whose heart, as on a shrine, she offered up the incense of her first affection. Such a being not only draws around her our tenderest and most delicate sympathies, but fills us with that mournful impression of early desolation, resembling so much the spirit of melancholy romance that arises from one of those sad and gloomy breezes which sweep unexpectedly over the sleeping surface of a summer lake, or moans with a tone of wail and sorrow through the green foliage of the wood under whose cooling shade we sink into our noon-day dream. Madness is at all times a thing of fearful mystery, but when it puts itself forth in a female gifted with youth and beauty, the pathos it causes becomes too refined for the grossness of ordinary sorrow—almost transcends our notion of the real, and assumes that wild interest which invests it with the dim and visionary light of the ideal. Such a malady constitutes the very romance of affliction, and gives to the fair sufferer rather the appearance of an angel fallen without guilt, than that of a being moulded for mortal purposes. Who ever could look upon such a beautiful ruin without feeling the heart sink, and the mind overshadowed with a solemn darkness, as if conscious of witnessing the still and awful gloom of that disastrous eclipse of reason, which, alas! is so often doomed never to pass away.

It is difficult to account for the mingled reverence, and terror, and pity with which we look upon the insane, and it is equally strange that in this case we approach the temple of the mind with deeper homage, when we know that the divinity has passed out of it. It must be from a conviction of this that uncivilized nations venerate deranged persons as inspired, and in some instance go so far, I believe, as even to pay them divine worship.

The principle, however, is in our nature: that for which our sympathy is deep and unbroken never fails to secure our compassion and respect, and ultimately to excite a still higher class of our moral feelings.

These preliminary observations were suggested to me by the fate of the beautiful but unfortunate girl, the melancholy, events of whose life I am about to communicate. I feel, indeed, that in relating them, I undertake a task that would require a pen of unexampled power and delicacy. But it is probable that if I remained silent upon a history at once so true, and so full of sorrow; no other person equally intimate with its incidents will ever give them to the world. I cannot presume to detail unhappy Jane's, calamity with the pathos due to a woe so singularly deep and delicate, or to describe that faithful attachment which gave her once laughing and

Page 2

ruby lips the white smile of a maniac's misery. This I cannot do; for who, alas, could ever hope to invest a dispensation so dark as her's with that rich tone of poetic beauty which threw its wild graces about her madness? For my part, I consider the subject not only as difficult, but sacred, and approach it on both accounts with devotion, and fear, and trembling. I need scarcely inform the reader that the names and localities are, for obvious reasons, fictitious, but I may be permitted to add that the incidents are substantially correct and authentic.

Jane Sinclair was the third and youngest daughter of a dissenting clergyman, in one of the most interesting counties in the north of Ireland. Her father was remarkable for that cheerful simplicity of character which is so frequently joined to a high order of intellect and an affectionate warmth of heart. To a well-tempered zeal in the cause of faith and morals, he added a practical habit of charity, both in word and deed, such as endeared him to all classes, but especially to those whose humble condition in life gave them the strongest claim upon his virtues, both as a man and a pastor. Difficult, indeed, would it be to find a minister of the gospel, whose practice and precept corresponded with such beautiful fitness, nor one who, in the midst of his own domestic circle, threw such calm lustre around him as a husband and a father. A temper grave but sweet, wit playful and innocent, and tenderness that kept his spirit benignant to error without any compromise of duty, were the links which bound all hearts to him. Seldom have I known a Christian clergyman who exhibited in his own life so much of the unaffected character of apostolic holiness, nor one of whom it might be said with so much truth, that "he walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless."

His family, which consisted of his wife, one son, and three daughters, had, as might be expected, imbibed a deep sense of that religion, the serene beauty of which shone so steadily along their father's path of life. Mrs. Sinclair had been well educated, and in her husband's conversation and society found further opportunity of improving, not only her intellect, but her heart. Though respectably descended, she could not claim relationship with what may be emphatically termed the gentry of the country; but she could with that class so prevalent in the north of Ireland, which ranks in birth only one grade beneath them. I say in birth;—for in all the decencies of life, in the unostentatious bounties of benevolence, in moral purity, domestic harmony, and a conscientious observance of religion, both in the comeliness of its forms, and the cheerful freedom of its spirit, this class ranks immeasurably above every other which Irish society presents. They who compose it are not sufficiently wealthy to relax those pursuits of honorable industry which constitute them, as a people, the ornament of our nation; nor does their good-sense and decent pride permit them

Page 3

to follow the dictates of a mean ambition, by struggling to reach that false elevation, which is as much beneath them in all the virtues that grace life, as it is above them in the dazzling dissipation which renders the violation or neglect of its best duties a matter of fashionable etiquette, or the shameful privilege of high birth. To this respectable and independent class did the immediate relations of Mrs. Sinclair belong; and, as might be expected, she failed not to bring all its virtues to her husband's heart and household—there to soothe him by their influence, to draw fresh energy from their mutual intercourse, and to shape the habits of their family into that perception of self-respect and decent propriety, which in domestic duty, dress, and general conduct, uniformly results from a fine sense of moral feeling, blended with high religious principle. This, indeed, is the class whose example has diffused that spirit of keen intelligence and enterprise throughout the north which makes the name of an Ulster manufacturer or merchant a synonym for integrity and honor. From it is derived the creditable love of independence which operates upon the manners of the people and the physical soil of the country so obviously, that the natural appearance of the one may be considered as an appropriate exponent of the moral condition of the other. Aided by the genius of a practical and impressive creed, whose simple grandeur gives elevation and dignity to its followers;—this class it is which, by affording employment, counsel, and example to many of the lower classes, brings peace and comfort to those who inhabit the white cottages and warm farmsteads of the north, and lights up its cultivated landscapes, its broad champaigns, and peaceful vales, into an aspect so smiling, that even the very soil seems to proclaim and partake of the happiness of its inhabitants. Indeed, few spots in the north could afford the spectator a better opportunity of verifying our observations as to the mild beauty of the country, than the residence of the amiable clergyman whose unhappy child's fate has furnished us with the affecting circumstances we are about to lay before the reader.

Springvale House, Mr. Sinclair's residence, was situated on an eminence that commanded a full view of the sloping valley from which it had its name. Along this vale, winding towards the house in a northern direction, ran a beautiful tributary stream, accompanied for nearly two miles in its progress by a small but well conducted road, which indeed had rather the character of a green lane than a public way, being but very little of a thoroughfare. Nothing could surpass this delightful vale in the soft and serene character of its scenery. Its sides, partially wooded, and cultivated with surpassing taste, were not so precipitous as to render habitation in its bosom inconvenient. They sloped up gradually and gracefully on each side, presenting to the eye a number of snow-white residences,

Page 4

each standing upon the brow of some white table or undulation, and surrounded by grounds sufficiently spacious to allow of green lawns, ornamented plantations, and gardens, together with a due proportion of land for cultivation and pasture. From Mr. Sinclair's house the silver bends of this fine stream gave exquisite peeps to the spectator as they wound out of the wood which here and there clothed its banks, occasionally dipping into the water. On the loft, attached to the glebe-house of the Protestant pastor of the parish, the eye rested upon a pond as smooth as a mirror, except where an occasional swan, as it floated onwards without any apparent effort, left here and there a slight quivering ripple behind it. Farther down, springing from between two clumps of trees, might be seen the span of a light and elegant arch, from under which the river gently wound away to the right; and beyond this, on the left, about a hundred yards from the bank, rose up the slender spire of the parish church, out of the bosom of the old beeches that overshadowed it, and threw a solemn gloom upon the peaceful graveyard at its side. About two hundred yards again to the right, in a little green shelving dell beneath the house, stood Mr. Sinclair's modest white meeting-house, with a large ash tree hanging over each gable, and a row of poplars behind it. The valley at the opposite extremity opened upon a landscape bright and picturesque, dotted with those white residences which give that peculiar character of warmth and comfort for which the northern landscapes are so remarkable. Indeed the eye could scarcely rest upon a richer expanse of country than lay stretched out before it, nor can we omit to notice the singularly unique and beautiful effect produced by the numerous bleach-greens that shone at various degrees of distance, and contrasted so sweetly with the surface of a land deeply and delightfully verdant.

In the far distance rose the sharp outlines of a lofty mountain, whose green and sloping base melted into the "sun-silvered" expanse of the sea, on the smooth bosom of which the eye could snatch brilliant glimpses of the snow-white sails that sparkled at a distance as they fell under the beams of the noonday sun. The landscape was indeed beautiful in itself, but still rendered more so by the delicate aerial tints which lay on every object, and touched the whole into a mellower and more exquisite expression.

Such was the happy valley in which this peaceful family resided; each and all enjoying that tranquility which sheds its calm contentment over the unassuming spirits of those who are ignorant of the crimes that flow from the selfishness and ambition of busy life. To them, the fresh breezes of morning, as they rustled through the living foliage, and stirred the modest flowers of their pleasant path, were fraught with an enjoyment which bound their hearts to every object around them, because to each of them these objects were the sources of habitual gratification. On

Page 5

them the dewy stillness of evening descended with tender serenity, as the valley shone in the radiance of the sinking sun; and by them was held that sweet and rapturous communion with nature, which, as it springs earliest in the affections so does it linger about the heart when all the other loves and enmities of life are forgotten. Who is there, indeed, whose spirit does not tremble with tenderness, on looking back upon the scenes of his early life? And, alas! alas! how few are there of those that are long conversant with the world, who can take such a retrospect without feeling their hearts weighed down by sorrow, and the force of associations too mournful to be uttered in words. The bitter consciousness that we can be youthful no more, and that the golden hours of our innocence have passed away for ever, throws a melancholy darkness over the soul, and sends it back again to retrace, in the imaginary light of our early time, the scenes where that innocence had been our playmate. Let no man deny that groves, and meadows, and green fields, and winding streams, and all the other charms of rural imagery, unconsciously but surely give to the human heart a deep perception of that graceful creed which is beautifully termed the religion of nature. They give purity and strength to feeling, and through the imagination, which owes so much of its power to their impressions, they raise our sentiments until we feel them kindled into union with the lustre of a holier light than even that which leads our steps to God through the beauty of his own works. For this reason it is, that all imaginative affections are much stronger in the country than in the town. Love in the one place is not only freer from the coarseness of passion, but incomparably more seductive to the heart, and more voluptuous in its conception of the ideal beauty with which it invests the object of its attachment. Nor is this surprising. In the country its various associations are essentially impressive and poetical. Moonlight—evening—the still glen—the river side—the flowery hawthorn—the bower—the crystal well—not forgetting the melody of the woodland songster—are all calculated, to make the heart and fancy surrender themselves to the blandishments of a passion that is surrounded by objects so sweetly linked to their earliest sympathies. But this is not all. In rural life, neither the heart nor the eye is distracted by the claims of rival beauty, when challenging, in the various graces of many, that admiration which might be bestowed on one alone, did not each successive impression efface that which went before it. In the country, therefore, in spring meadows, among summer groves, and beneath autumnal skies, most certainly does the passion of love sink deepest into the human heart, and pass into the greatest extremes of happiness or pain. Here is where it may be seen, cheek to cheek, now in all the shivering ecstasies of intense rapture, or again moping carelessly along, with pale brow and flashing eye, sometimes writhing in the agony of undying attachment, or chanting its mad lay of hope and love in a spirit of fearful happiness more affecting than either misery or despair.

Page 6

Everything was beautiful in the history of unhappy Jane Sinclair's melancholy fate. The evening of the incident to which the fair girl's misery might eventually be traced was one of the most calm and balmy that could be witnessed even during the leafy month of June. With the exception of Mrs. Sinclair, the whole family had gone out to saunter leisurely by the river side; the father between his two eldest daughters, and Jane, then sixteen, sometimes chatting to her brother William, and sometimes fondling a white dove, which she had petted and trained with such success that it was then amenable to almost every light injunction she laid upon it. It sat upon her shoulder, which, indeed, was its usual seat, would peck her cheek, cower as if with a sense of happiness in her bosom, and put its bill to her lips, from which it was usually fed, either to demand some sweet reward for its obedience, or to express its attachment by a profusion of innocent caresses. The evening, as we said, was fine; not a cloud could be seen, except a pile of feathery flakes that hung far up at the western gate of heaven; the stillness was profound; no breathing even of the gentlest zephyr, could be felt; the river beside them, which was here pretty deep, seemed motionless; not a leaf of the trees stirred; the very aspens were still as if they had been marble; and the whole air was warm and fragrant. Although the sun wanted an hour of setting, yet from the bottom of the vale they could perceive the broad shafts of light which shot from his mild disk through the snowy clouds we have mentioned, like bars of lambent radiance, almost palpable to the touch. Yet, although this delightful silence was so profound, the heart could perceive, beneath its stillest depths, that voiceless harmony of progressing life, which, like the music of a dream, can reach the soul independently of the senses, and pour upon it a sublime sense of natural inspiration.

Something like this appears to have been felt by the group we have alluded to. Mr. Sinclair, after standing for a moment on the bank of the river, and raising his eyes to the solemn splendor of the declining sun, looked earnestly around him, and then out upon the glowing landscape that stretched beyond the valley, after which, with a spirit of high-enthusiasm, he exclaimed, catching at the same time the fire and grandeur of the poet's noble conception—

These are thy glorious works. Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal fame—
Thus wondrous fair—thyself how wondrous then—
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works.

Page 7

There was something singularly impressive in the burst of piety which the hour and the place drew from this venerable pastor, as indeed there was in the whole group, as they listened in the attitude of deep attention to his words. Mr. Sinclair was a tall, fine-looking old man, whose white flowing locks fell down on each side of his neck. His figure appeared to fine advantage, as, standing a little in front of his children, he pointed with his raised arm to the setting sun; behind him stood his two eldest girls, the countenance of one turned with an expression of awe and admiration towards the west; that of the other fixed with mingled reverence and affection on her father. William stood near Jane, and looked out thoughtfully towards the sea, while Jane herself, light, and young, and beautiful, stood with a hushed face, in the act of giving a pat of gentle rebuke to the snow-white dove on her bosom. At length they resumed their walk, and the conversation took a lighter turn. The girls left their father's side, and strolled in many directions through the meadow. Sometimes they pulled wild flowers, if marked by more than ordinary beauty, or gathered the wild mint and meadow-sweet to perfume their dairy, or culled the flowery woodbine to shed its delicate fragrance through their sleeping-rooms. In fact, all their habits and amusements were pastoral, and simple, and elegant. Jane accompanied them as they strolled about, but was principally engaged with her pet, which flew, in capricious but graceful circles over her head, and occasionally shot off into the air, sweeping in mimic flight behind a green knoll, or a clump of trees, completely out of her sight; after which it would again return, and folding its snowy pinions, drop affectionately upon her shoulder, or into her bosom. In this manner they proceeded for some time, when the dove again sped off across the river, the bank of which was wooded on the other side. Jane followed the beautiful creature with a sparkling eye, and saw it wheeling to return, when immediately the report of a gun was heard from the trees directly beneath it, and the next moment it faltered in its flight, sunk, and with feeble wing, struggled to reach the object of its affection. This, however, was beyond its strength. After sinking gradually towards the earth, it had power only to reach the middle of the river, into the deepest part of which it fell, and there lay fluttering upon the stream.

The report of the gun, and the fate of the pigeon, brought the personages of our little drama with hurrying steps to the edge of the river. One scream of surprise and distress proceeded from the lips of its fair young mistress, after which she wrung her hands, and wept and sobbed like one in absolute despair.

"Oh, dear William," she exclaimed, "can you not rescue it? Oh, save it—save it; if it sinks I will never see it more. Oh, papa, who could be so cruel, so heartless, as to injure a creature so beautiful and inoffensive?"

Page 8

"I know not, my dear Jane; but cruel and heartless must the man be that could perpetrate a piece of such wanton mischief. I should rather think it is some idle boy who knows not that it is tame."

"William, dear William, can you not save it," she inquired again of her brother; "if it is doomed to die, let it die with me; but, alas! now it must sink, and I will never see it more;" and the affectionate girl continued to weep bitterly.

"Indeed, my dear Jane, I never regretted my ignorance of swimming so much as I do this moment. The truth is, I cannot swim a stroke, otherwise I would save poor little Ariel for your sake."

"Don't take it so much to heart, my dear child," said her father; "it is certainly a distressing incident, but, at the same time, your grief, girl, is too excessive; it is violent, and you know it ought not to be violent for the death of a favorite bird."

"Oh, papa, who can look upon its struggles for life, and not feel deeply; remember it was mine, and think of its attachment to me. It has not only the pain of its wound to suffer, but to struggle with an element against which it feels a natural antipathy, and with which the gentle creature is this moment contending for its life."

There was, indeed, something very painful and affecting in the situation of the beautiful wounded dove. Even Mr. Sinclair himself, in witnessing its unavailing struggles, felt as much; nor were the other two girls unaffected any more than Jane herself. Their eyes became filled with tears, and Maria, the eldest, said, "It is better, Jane, to return home. Poor mute creature! the view of its sufferings is, indeed, very painful."

Just then a tall, slender youth, apparently about eighteen, came out of the trees on the other bank of the river but on seeing Mr. Sinclair and his family, he paused, and appeared to feel somewhat embarrassed. It was evident he had seen the bird wounded, and followed the course of its flight, without suspecting that it was tame, or that there was any person near to claim it. The distress of the females, however, especially of its mistress, immediately satisfied him that it was theirs, and he was about to withdraw into the wood again, when the situation of poor Ariel caught his eye. He instantly took off his hat, flung it across the river, and plunging in swam towards the dove, which was now nearly exhausted. A few strokes brought him to the spot, on reaching which, he caught the bird in one hand, held it above the water, and, with the other, swam down towards a slope in the bank a few yards below the spot where the party stood. Having gained the bank, he approached them, but was met half way by Jane, whose eyes, now sparkling through her tears, spoke her gratitude in language much more eloquent than any her tongue could utter.

[Illustration: *Page 5*— Having gained the bank, he approached them]

The youth first examined the bird, with a view to ascertain where it had been wounded, and immediately placed it with much gentleness in the eager hands of its mistress.

Page 9

"It will not die, I should think, in consequence of the wound," he observed, "which, though pretty severe, has left the wing unbroken. The body, at all events, is safe. With care it may recover."

William then handed him his hat and Mr. Sinclair having thanked him for an act of such humanity, insisted that he should go home with them, in order to procure a change of apparel. At first he declined this offer, but, after a little persuasion, he yielded with something of shyness and hesitation: accordingly, without loss of time, they all reached the house together.

Having, with some difficulty, been prevailed on to take a glass of cordial, he immediately withdrew to William's apartment, for the purpose of changing his dress. William, however, now observed that he got pale, and that in a few minutes afterwards his teeth began to chatter, whilst he shivered excessively.

"You had better lose no time in putting these dry clothes on," said he; "I am rather inclined to think bathing does not agree with you, that is, if I am to judge by your present paleness and trembling."

"No," said the youth, "it is a pleasure which, for the last two years, I have been forbidden. I feel very chilly, indeed, and you will excuse me for declining the use of your clothes. I must return home forthwith."

Young Sinclair, however, would not hear of this. After considerable pains he prevailed on him to change his dress, but no argument could induce him to stop a moment longer than until this was effected.

The family, on his entering the drawing-room to take his leave, were surprised at a determination so sudden and unexpected, but when Mr. Sinclair noticed his extreme paleness, he suspected that he had got ill, and that it might not be delicate to press him.

"Before you leave us," said the good clergyman, "will you not permit us to know the name of the young gentleman to whom my daughter is indebted for the rescue of her dove?"

"We are as yet but strangers in the neighborhood," replied the youth: "my father's name is Osborne. We have not been more than three days in Mr. Williams's residence, which, together with the whole of the property annexed to it, my father has purchased."

"I am aware, I am aware: then you will be a permanent neighbor of ours," said Mr. Sinclair; "and believe me, my dear boy, we shall always be happy to see you at Springvale; nor shall we soon forget the generous act which first brought us acquainted."

Whilst this short dialogue lasted, two or three shy sidelong glances passed between him and Jane. So extremely modest was the young man that, from an apprehension lest these glances might have been noticed, his pale face became lit up with a faint blush, in which state of confusion he took his leave.

Page 10

Conversation was not resumed among the Sinclairs for some minutes after his departure, each, in fact, having been engaged in reflecting upon the surpassing beauty of his face, and the uncommon symmetry of his slender but elegant person. Their impression, indeed, was rather that of wonder than of mere admiration. The tall youth who had just left them seemed, in fact, an incarnation of the beautiful itself—a visionary creation, in which was embodied the ideal spirit of youth, intellect, and grace. His face shone with that rosy light of life's prime which only glows on the human countenance during the brief period that intervenes between the years of the thoughtless boy and those of the confirmed man: and whilst his white brow beamed with intellect, it was easy to perceive that the fire of deep feeling and high-wrought enthusiasm broke out in timid flashes from his dark eye. His modesty, too, by tempering the full lustre of his beauty, gave to it a character of that graceful diffidence, which above all others makes the deepest impression upon a female heart.

"Well, I do think," said William Sinclair, "that young Osborne is decidedly the finest boy I ever saw—the most perfect in beauty and figure—and yet we have not seen him to advantage."

"I think, although I regretted to see him so, that he looked better after he got pale," said Maria; "his features, though colorless, were cut like marble."

"I hope his health may not be injured by what has occurred," observed the second; "he appeared ill."

"That, Agnes, is more to the point," said Mr. Sinclair; "I fear the boy is by no means well; and I am apprehensive, from the deep carnation of his cheek, and his subsequent paleness, that he carries within him the seeds of early dissolution. He is too delicate, almost too ethereal for earth."

"If he becomes an angel," said William, smiling, "with a very slight change, he will put some of them out of countenance."

"William," said the father, "never, while you live attempt to be witty at the expense of what is sacred or solemn; such jests harden the heart of him who utters them, and sink his character, not only as a Christian, but as a gentleman."

"I beg your pardon, father—I was wrong—but I spoke heedlessly."

"I know you did, Billy; but in future avoid it. Well, Jane, how is your bird?"

"I think it is better, papa; but one can form no opinion so soon."

"Go, show it to your mamma—she is the best doctor among us—follow her advice, and no doubt she will add its cure to the other triumphs of her skill."

“Jane is fretting too much about it,” observed Agnes; “why, Jane, you are just now as pale as young Osborne himself.”

This observation turned the eyes of the family upon her; but scarcely had her sister uttered the words when the young creature’s countenance became the color of crimson, so deeply, and with such evident confusion did she blush. Indeed she felt conscious of this, for she rose, with the wounded dove lying gently between her hands and bosom, and passed, without speaking, out of the room.

Page 11

"Don't you think, papa," observed Miss Sinclair, "that there is a striking resemblance between young Osborne and Jane? I could not help remarking it."

"There decidedly is, Maria, now that you mentioned it," said William.

The father paused a little, as if to consider the matter, and then added with a smile—

"It is very singular, Mary; but indeed I think there is—both in the style of their features and their figure."

"Osborne is too handsome for a man," observed Agnes; "yet, after all, one can hardly say so, his face, though fine, is not feminine."

"Beauty, my children!—alas, what is it? Often—too often, a fearful, a fatal gift. It is born with us, and not of our own merit; yet we are vain enough to be proud of it. It is at best a flower that soon fades—a light that soon passes away. Oh! what is it when contrasted with those high principles whose beauty is immortal, which brighten by age, and know neither change nor decay. There is Jane—my poor child—she is indeed very beautiful and graceful, yet I often fear that her beauty, joined as it is to an over-wrought sensibility, may, before her life closes, occasion much sorrow either to herself or others."

"She is all affection," said William.

"She is all love, all tenderness, all goodness; and may the grace of her Almighty Father keep her from the wail and woe which too often accompany the path of beauty in this life of vicissitude and trial."

A tear of affection for his beautiful child stood in the old man's eyes as he raised them to heaven, and the loving hearts of his family burned with tenderness towards this their youngest and best beloved sister.

The sun had now gone down, and, after a short pause, the old man desired William to summon the other members of the household in to prayers. The evening worship being concluded, the youngsters walked in the lawn before the door until darkness began to set in, after which they retired to their respective apartments for the night.

Sweet and light be your slumbers, O ye that are peaceful and good—sweet be your slumbers on this night so calm and beautiful; for, alas, there is one among you into whose innocent bosom has stolen that destroying spirit which will yet pale her fair cheek, and wring many a bitter tear from the eyes that love to look upon her. Her early sorrows have commenced this night, and for what mysterious purpose who can divine?—but, alas, alas, her fate is sealed—the fawn of Springvale is stricken, and even now carries in her young heart a wound that will never close.

Osborne's father, who had succeeded to an estate of one thousand per annum, was the eldest son of a gentleman whose habits were badly calculated to improve the remnant of property which ancestral extravagance had left him.

Page 12

Ere many years the fragment which came into his possession dwindled into a fraction of its former value, and he found himself With a wife and four children—two sons and two daughters—struggling on a pittance of two hundred a year. This, to a man possessing the feelings and education of a gentleman, amounted to something like retributive justice upon his prodigality. His conflict with poverty, however, (for to him it might be termed such,) was fortunately not of long duration. A younger brother who, finding that he must fight his own battle in life, had embraced the profession of medicine, very seasonably died, and Osborne's father succeeded to a sum of twelve thousand pounds in the funds, and an income in landed property of seven hundred per annum. He now felt himself more independent than he had ever been, and with this advantage, that his bitter experience of a heartless world had completely cured him of all tendency to extravagance. And now he would have enjoyed as much happiness as is the usual lot of man, were it not that the shadow of death fell upon his house, and cast its cold blight upon his children. Ere three years had elapsed he saw his eldest daughter fade out of life, and in less than two more his eldest son was laid beside her in the same grave. Decline, the poetry of death, in its deadly beauty came upon them, and whilst it sang its song of life and hope to their hearts, treacherously withdrew them to darkness and the worm.

Osborne's feelings were those of thoughtlessness and extravagance; but he had never been either a libertine or a profligate, although the world forbore not, when it found him humbled in his poverty, to bring such charges against him. In truth, he was full of kindness, and no parent ever loved his children with deeper or more devoted affection. The death of his noble son and beautiful girl brought down his spirit to the most mournful depths of affliction. Still he had two left, and, as it happened, the most beautiful, and more than equally possessed his affections. To them was gradually transferred that melancholy love which the heart of the sorrowing father had carried into the grave of the departed; and alas, it appeared as if it had come back to those who lived loaded with the malady of the dead. The health of the surviving boy became delicate, and by the advice of his physician, who pronounced the air in which they lived unfavorable,—Osborne, on hearing that Mr. Williams, a distant relation, was about to dispose of his house and grounds, immediately became the purchaser. The situation, which had a southern aspect, was dry and healthy, the air pure and genial, and, according to the best medical opinions, highly beneficial to persons of a consumptive habit.

For two years before this—that is since his brother's death—the health of young Osborne had been watched with all the tender vigilance of affection. A regimen in diet, study and exercise, had been prescribed for him by his physician; the regulations of which he was by no means to transgress.

Page 13

In fact his parents lived under a sleepless dread of losing him which kept their hearts expanded with that inexpressible and burning love which none but a parent so circumstanced can ever feel. Alas! notwithstanding the promise of life which early years usually hold out, there was much to justify them in this their sad and gloomy apprehension. Woeful was the uncertainty which they felt in discriminating between the natural bloom of youth and the beauty of that fatal malady which they dreaded. His tall slender frame, his transparent cheek, so touching, so unearthly in the fairness of its expression; the delicacy of his whole organization, both mental and physical—all, all, with the terror of decline in their hearts, spoke as much of despair as of hope, and placed the life and death of their beloved boy in an equal poise.

But, independently of his extraordinary personal advantages, all his dispositions were so gentle and affectionate, that it was not in human nature to entertain harsh feeling toward him. Although modest and shrinking, even to diffidence, he possessed a mind full of intellect and enthusiasm: his imagination, too, overflowed with creative power, and sought the dreamy solitudes of noon, that it might, far from the bustle of life, shadow forth those images of beauty which come thickly only upon those whose hearts are most susceptible of its forms. Many a time has he sat alone upon the brow of a rock or hill, watching the clouds of heaven, or gazing on the setting sun, or communing with the thousand aspects of nature in a thousand moods, his young spirit relaxed into that elysian reverie which, beyond all other kinds of intellectual enjoyment, is the most seductive to a youth of poetic temperament.

There were, indeed, in Osborne's case, too many of those light and scarcely perceptible tokens which might be traced, if not to a habit of decline, at least to a more than ordinary delicacy of constitution. The short cough, produced by the slightest damp, or the least breath of ungenial air—the varying cheek, now rich as purple, and again pale as a star of heaven—the unsteady pulse, and the nervous sense of uneasiness without a cause—all these might be symptoms of incipient decay, or proofs of those fine impulses which are generally associated with quick sensibility and genius. Still they existed; at one time oppressing the hearts of his parents with fear, and again exalting them with pride. The boy was consequently enjoined to avoid all violent exercise, to keep out of Currents, while heated to drink nothing cold, and above all things never to indulge in the amusement of cold bathing.

Such were the circumstances under which Osborne first appeared to the reader, who may now understand the extent of his alarm on feeling himself so suddenly and seriously affected by his generosity in rescuing the wounded dove. His mere illness on this occasion was a matter of much less anxiety to himself than the alarm which he knew it would occasion his parents and sister. On his reaching home he mentioned the incident which occurred, admitted that he had been rather warm on going into the water, and immediately went to bed. Medical aid was forthwith procured, and although the physician assured them that there appeared nothing serious in his immediate state, yet was his father's house a house of wail and sorrow.

Page 14

The next day the Sinclairs, having heard in reply to their inquiries through the servant who had been sent home with his apparel, that he was ill, the worthy clergyman lost no time in paying his parents a visit on the occasion. In this he expressed his regret, and that also of his whole family, that any circumstance relating to them should have been the means, even accidentally, of affecting the young gentleman's health. It was not, however, until he dwelt upon the occurrence in terms of approbation, and placed the boy's conduct in a generous light, that he was enabled to appreciate the depth and tenderness of their affection for him. The mother's tears flowed in silence on hearing this fresh proof of his amiable spirit, and the father, with a foreboding heart, related to Mr. Sinclair the substance of that which we have detailed to the reader.

Such was the incident which brought these two families acquainted, and ultimately ripened their intimacy into friendship.

Much sympathy was felt for young Osborne by the other members of Mr. Sinclair's household, especially as his modest and unobtrusive deportment, joined to his extraordinary beauty, had made so singularly favorable an impression upon them. Is or was the history of that insidious malady, which had already been so fatal to his sister and brother, calculated to lessen the interest which his first appearance had excited. There was one young heart among them which sank, as if the Weight of death had come over it, on hearing this melancholy account of him whose image was now for ever the star of her fate, whether for happiness or sorrow. From the moment their eyes had met in those few shrinking but flashing glances by which the spirit of love conveys its own secret, she felt the first painful transports of the new affection, and retired to solitude with the arrow that struck her so deeply yet quivering in her bosom.

The case of our fair girl differed widely from that of many young persons, in whose heart the passion of love lurks unknown for a time, throwing its roseate shadows of delight and melancholy over their peace, whilst they themselves feel unable in the beginning to develop those strange sensations which take away from their pillows the unbroken slumber of early life.

Jane from the moment her eyes rested on Osborne felt and was conscious of feeling the influence of a youth so transcendently fascinating. Her love broke not forth gradually like the trembling light that brightens into the purple flush of morning; neither was it fated to sink calm and untroubled like the crimson tints that die only when the veil of night, like the darkness of death, wraps them in its shadow. Alas no, it sprung from her heart in all the noontide strength of maturity—a full-grown passion, incapable of self-restraint, and conscious only of the wild and novel delight arising from its own indulgence. Night and day that graceful form hovered before her,

Page 15

encircled in the halo of her young imagination, with a lustre that sparkled beyond the light of human beauty. We know that the eye when it looks steadily upon a cloudless sun, is incapable for some time afterwards of seeing any other object distinctly; and that in whatever direction it turns that bright image floats incessantly before it—nor will be removed even although the eye itself is closed against its radiance. So was it with Jane. Asleep or awake, in society or in solitude, the vision with which her soul held communion never for a moment withdrew from before her, until at length her very heart became sick, and her fancy entranced, by the excess of her youthful and unrestrained attachment. She could not despair, she could scarcely doubt; for on thinking of the blushing glances so rapidly stolen at herself, and of the dark brilliant eye from whence they came, she knew that the soul of him she loved spoke to her in a language that was mutually understood. These impressions, it is true, were felt in her moments of ecstasy, but then came, notwithstanding this confidence, other moments when maidenly timidity took the crown of rejoicing off her head, and darkened her youthful brow with that uncertainty, which, while it depresses hope, renders the object that is loved a thousand times dearer to the heart.

To others, at the present stage of her affection, she appeared more silent than usual, and evidently fond of solitude, a trait which they had not observed in her before. But these were slight symptoms of what she felt; for alas, the day was soon to come that was to overshadow their hearts forever—never, never more were they and she, in the light of their own innocence, to sing like the morning stars together, or to lay their untroubled heads in the slumbers of the happy.

More than a month had now elapsed since the first appearance of Osborne as one of the *dramatis personae* of our narrative. A slight fever, attended with less effect upon the lungs than his parents anticipated, had passed off, and he was once more able to go abroad and take exercise in the open air. The two families were now in the habit of visiting each other almost daily; and what tended more and more to draw closer the bonds of good feeling between them, was the fact of the Osbornes being members of the same creed, and attendants at Mr. Sinclair's place of worship. Jane, while Charles Osborne was yet ill, had felt a childish diminution of her affection for her convalescent dove, whilst at the same time something whispered to her that it possessed a stronger interest in her heart than it had ever done before. This may seem a paradox to such of our readers as have never been in love; but it is not at all irreconcilable to the analogous and often conflicting states of feeling produced by that strange and mysterious passion. The innocent girl was wont, as frequently as she could without exciting notice, to steal away to the garden, or the fields, or the river side, accompanied by her mute, companion, to which with pouting caresses she would address a series of rebukes of having been the means of occasioning the illness of him she loved.

Page 16

"Alas, Ariel, little do you know, sweet bird, what anxiety you have caused your mistress—if he dies I shall never love you more? Yes, coo, and flutter—but I do not care for you; no, that kiss won't satisfy me until he is recovered—then I shall be friends with you, and you shall be my own Ariel again."

She would then pat it petulantly; and the beautiful creature would sink its head, and slightly expand its wings, as if conscious that there was a change of mood in her affection.

But again the innocent remorse of her girlish heart would flow forth in terms of tenderness and endearment; again would I she pat and cherish it; and with the artless I caprice of childhood exclaim—

"No, my own Ariel, the fault was not yours; come, I shall love you—and I will not be angry again; even if you were not good I would love you for his sake. You are now dearer to me a thousand times than you ever were; but alas! Ariel, I am sick, I am sick, and no longer happy. Where is my lightness of heart, my sweet bird, and where, oh where is the joy I used to feel?"

Even this admission, which in the midst of solitude could reach no other human ear, would startle the bashful creature into alarm; and whilst her cheek became alternately pale and crimson at such an avowal thus uttered aloud, she would wipe away the tears that arose to her eyes whenever the depths of her affection were stirred by those pensive broodings which gave its sweetest charm to youthful love.

In thus seeking solitude, it is not to be imagined that our young heroine was drawn thither by a love of contemplating nature in those fresher aspects which present themselves in the stillness of her remote recesses. She sought not for their own sakes the shades of the grove, the murmuring cascade, nor the voice of the hidden rivulet that occasionally stole out from its leafy cover, and ran in music towards the ampler stream of the valley.

No, no; over her heart and eye the spirit of their beauty passed idly and unfelt. All of external life that she had been wont to love and admire gave her pleasure no more. The natural arbors of woodbine, the fairy dells, and the wild flowers that peeped in unknown sweetness about the hedges, the fairy fingers, the blue-bells, the cow-slips, with many others of her fragrant and graceful favorites, all, all, charmed her, alas, no more. Nor at home, where every voice was tenderness, and every word affection, did there exist in her stricken heart that buoyant sense of enjoyment which had made her youth like the music of a brook, where every thing that broke the smoothness of its current only turned it into melody. The morning and evening prayer—the hymn of her sister voices—their simple spirit of tranquil devotion—and the touching solemnity of her father, worshipping God upon the altar of his own heart—all, all this, alas—alas,

charmed her no more. Oh, no—no; many motives conspired to send her into solitude, that she

Page 17

might in the sanctity of unrepining nature cherish her affection for the youth whose image was ever, ever before her. At home such was the timid delicacy of her love, that she felt as if its indulgence even in the stillest depths of her own heart, was disturbed by the conversation of her kindred, and the familiar habits of domestic life. Her father's, her brother's, and her sisters' voices, produced in her a feeling of latent shame, which, when she supposed for a moment that they could guess her attachment, filled her with anxiety and confusion. She experienced besides a sense of uneasiness on reflecting that she practiced, for the first time in their presence, a dissimulation so much at variance with the opinion she knew they entertained of her habitual candor. It was, in fact, the first secret she had ever concealed from them; and now the suppression of it in her own bosom made her feel as if she had withdrawn that confidence which was due to the love they bore her. This was what kept her so much in her own room, or sent her abroad to avoid all that had a tendency to repress the indulgence of an attachment that had left in her heart a capacity for no other enjoyment. But in solitude she was far from every thing that could disturb those dreams in which the tranquility of nature never failed to entrance her. There was where the mysterious spirit that raises the soul above the impulses of animal life, mingled with her being—and poured upon her affection the elemental purity of that original love which in the beginning preceded human guilt.

It is, indeed, far from the contamination of society—in the stillness of solitude when the sentiment of love comes abroad before its passion, that the heart can be said to realize the object of its devotion, and to forget that its indulgence can ever be associated with error. This is, truly, the angelic love of youth and innocence; and such was the nature of that which the beautiful girl felt. Indeed, her clay was so divinely tempered, that the veil which covered her pure and ethereal spirit, almost permitted the light within to be visible, and exhibited the workings of a soul that struggled to reach the object whose communion with itself seemed to constitute the sole end of its existence.

The evening on which Jane and Charles Osborne met for the first time, unaccompanied by their friends, was one of those to which the power of neither pen nor pencil can do justice. The sun was slowly sinking among a pile of those soft crimson clouds, behind which fancy is so apt to picture to itself the regions of calm delight that are inhabited by the happy spirits of the blest; the sycamore and hawthorn were yet musical with the hum of bees, busy in securing their evening burthen for the hive. Myriads of winged insects were sporting in the sunbeams; the melancholy plaint of the ringdove came out sweetly from the trees, mingled with the songs of other birds, and the still sweeter voice of some happy groups of

Page 18

children at play in the distance. The light of the hour, in its subdued but golden tone, fell with singular clearness upon all nature, giving to it that tranquil beauty which makes every thing the eye rests upon glide with quiet rapture into the heart. The moth butterflies were fluttering over the meadows, and from the low stretches of softer green rose the thickly-growing grass-stalks, laying their slender ear's bent with the mellow burthen of wild honey—the ambrosial feast for the lips of innocence and childhood. It was, indeed, an evening when love would bring forth its sweetest memories, and dream itself into those ecstasies of tenderness that flow from the mingled sensations of sadness and delight.

It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to see on this earth a young creature, whose youth and beauty, and slender grace of person gave her more the appearance of some visionary spirit, too exquisitely ideal for human life. Indeed, she seemed to be tinted with the hues of heaven, and never did a mortal being exist in such fine and harmonious keeping with the scene in which she moved. So light and sylph-like was her figure, though tall, that the eye almost feared she would dissolve from before it, and leave nothing to gaze at but the earth on which she trod. Yet was there still apparent in her something that preserved, with singular power, the delightful reality that she was of humanity, and subject to all those softer influences that breathe their music so sweetly over the chords of the human heart. The delicate bloom of her cheek, shaded away as it was, until it melted into the light that sparkled from her complexion—the snowy forehead, the flashing eye, in which sat the very soul of love—the lips, blushing of sweets—her whole person breathing the warmth of youth, and feeling, and so characteristic in the easiness of its motions of that gracile flexibility that has never been known to exist separate from the power of receiving varied and profound emotions—all this told the spectator, too truly, that the lovely being before him was not of another sphere, but one of the most delightful that ever appeared in this.

But hush!—here is a strain of music! Oh! what lips breathed forth that gush of touching melody which flows in such linked sweetness from the flute of an unseen performer? How soft, how gentle, but oh, how very mournful are the notes! Alas! they are steeped in sorrow, and melt away in the plaintive cadences of despair, until they mingle with silence. Surely, surely, they come from one whose heart has been brought low by the ruined hopes of an unrequited passion. Yes, fair girl, thou at least dost so interpret them; but why this sympathy in one so young? Why is thy bright eye dewy with tears for the imaginary sorrows of another? And again—but ha!—why that flash of delight and terror?—that sudden suffusion of red over thy face and neck—and even now, that paleness like death! Thy heart, thy heart—why does it throb, and why do thy knees totter? Alas! it is even so; the Endymion of thy dreams, as beautiful as even thou thyself in thy purple dawn of womanhood,—he from whom thou now shrinkest, yet whom thou darest not to meet, is approaching, and bears in his beauty the charm that will darken thy destiny.

Page 19

The appearance of Osborne, unaccompanied, taught this young creature to know the full extent of his influence over her. Delight, terror, and utter confusion of thought and feeling, seized upon her the moment he became visible. She wished herself at home, but had not power to go; she blushed, she trembled, and, in the tumult of the moment, lost all presence of mind and self-possession. He had come from behind a hedge, on the path-way along which she walked, and was consequently approaching her, so that it was evident they must meet. On seeing her he ceased to play, paused a moment, and were it not that it might appear cold, and rather remarkable, he, too, would have retraced his steps homewards. In truth, both felt equally confused and equally agitated, for, although such an interview had been, for some time previously, the dearest wish of their hearts, yet would they both almost have felt relieved, had they had an opportunity of then escaping it. Their first words were uttered in a low, hesitating voice, amid pauses occasioned by the necessity of collecting their scattered thoughts, and with countenances deeply blushing from a consciousness of what they felt. Osborne turned back, mechanically, and accompanied her in her walk. After this there was a silence for some time, for neither had courage to renew the conversation. At length Osborne, in a faltering voice addressed her:

"Your dove," said he, "is quite recovered, I presume."

"Oh, yes," she replied, "it is perfectly well again."

"It is an exceedingly beautiful bird, and remarkably docile."

"I have had little difficulty in training it," she returned, and then added, very timidly, "it is also very affectionate."

The youth's eyes sparkled, as if he were about to indulge in some observation suggested by her reply, but, fearing to give it expression, he paused again; in a few minutes, however, he added—

"I think there is nothing that gives one so perfect an idea of purity and innocence as a snow-white dove, unless I except a young and beautiful girl, such as—"

He glanced at her as he spoke, and their eyes met, but in less than a moment they were withdrawn, and cast upon the earth.

"And of meekness and holiness too," she observed, after a little.

"True; but perhaps I ought to make another exception," he added, alluding to the term by which she herself was then generally known. As he spoke, his voice expressed considerable hesitation.

"Another exception," she answered, inquiringly, "it would be difficult, I think, to find any other emblem of innocence so appropriate as a dove."

“Is not a Fawn still more so,” he replied, “it is so gentle and meek, and its motions are so full of grace and timidity, and beauty. Indeed I do not wonder, when an individual of your sex resembles it in the qualities I have mentioned, that the name is sometimes applied to her.”

Page 20

The tell-tale cheek of the girl blushed a recognition of the compliment implied in the words, and after a short silence, she said, in a tone that was any thing but indifferent, and with a view of changing the conversation—

“I hope you are quite recovered from your illness.”

“With the exception of a very slight cough, I am,” he replied.

“I think,” she observed, “that you look somewhat paler than you did.”

“That paleness does not proceed from indisposition, but from a far different”—he paused again, and looked evidently abashed. In the course of a minute, however, he added, “yes, I know I am pale, but not because I am unwell, for my health is nearly, if not altogether, restored, but because I am unhappy.”

“Strange,” said Jane, “to see one unhappy at your years.”

“I think I know my own character and disposition well,” he replied; “my temperament is naturally a melancholy one; the frame of my mind is like that of my body, very delicate, and capable of being affected by a thousand slight influences which pass over hearts of a stronger mould, without ever being felt. Life to me, I know, will be productive of much pain, and much enjoyment, while its tenure lasts, but that, indeed, will not be long. My sands are measured, for I feel a presentiment, a mournful and prophetic impression, that I am doomed to go down into an early grave.”

The tone of passionate enthusiasm which pervaded these words, uttered as they were in a voice wherein pathos and melody were equally blended, appeared to be almost too much for a creature whose sympathy in all his moods and feelings was then so deep and congenial. She felt some difficulty in repressing her tears, and said, in a voice which no effort could keep firm.

“You ought not to indulge in those gloomy forebodings; you should struggle against them, otherwise they will distress your mind, and injure your health.”

“Oh, you do not know,” he proceeded, his eyes sparkling with that light which is so often the beacon of death—“you do not know the fatal fascination by which a mind, set to the sorrows of a melancholy temperament, is charmed out of its strength. But no matter how dark may be my dreams—there is one light for ever upon them—one image ever, ever before me—one figure of grace and beauty—oh, how could I deny myself the contemplation of a vision that pours into my soul a portion of itself, and effaces every other object but an entrancing sense of its own presence. I cannot, I cannot—it bears me away into a happiness that is full of sadness—where I indulge alone, without knowing why, in my feast of tears—happy! happy! so I think, and so I feel; yet why is my heart sunk, and why are all my visions filled with death and the grave?”

“Oh, do not talk so frequently of death,” replied the beautiful girl, “surely you need not fear it for a long while. This morbid tone of mind will pass away when you grow into better health and strength.”

Page 21

"Is not this hour calm?" said he, flashing his dark eyes full upon her, "see how beautiful the sun sinks in the west;—alas! so I should wish to die—as calm, and the moral lustre of my life as radiant."

"And so you shall," said Jane, in a voice full of that delightful spirit of consolation which, proceeding from such lips, breathes the most affecting power of sympathy, "so you shall, but like him, not until after the close of a long and well-spent life."

"That—that," said he, "was only a passing thought. Yes, the hour is calm, but even in such stillness, do you not observe that the aspen there to our left, this moment quivers to the breezes which we cannot feel, and by which not a leaf of any other tree about us is stirred—such I know myself to be, an aspen among men, stirred into joy or sorrow, whilst the hearts of others are at rest. Oh, how can my foretaste of life be either bright or cheerful, for when I am capable of being moved by the very breathings of passion, what must I not feel in the blast, and in the storm—even now, even now!"—The boy, here overcome by the force of his own melancholy enthusiasm, paused abruptly, and Jane, after several attempts to speak, at last said, in a voice scarcely audible—

"Is not hope always better than despair?"

Osborne instantly fixed his eyes upon her, and saw, that although her's were bent upon the earth, her face had become overspread with a deep blush. While he looked she raised them, but after a single glance, at once quick and timid, she withdrew them again, a still deeper blush mantling on her cheek. He now felt a sudden thrill of rapture fall upon his heart, and rush, almost like a suffocating sensation, to his throat; his being became for a moment raised to an ecstasy too intense for the power of description to portray, and, were it not for the fear which ever accompanies the disclosure of first and youthful love, the tears of exulting delight would have streamed down his cheeks.

Both had reached a little fairy dell of vivid green, concealed by trees on every side, and in the middle of which rose a large yew, around whose trunk had been built a seat of natural turf whereon those who strolled about the ground might rest, when heated or fatigued by exercise or the sun. Here the girl sat down.

A change had now come over both. The gloom of the boy's temperament was gone, and his spirit caught its mood from that of his companion. Each at the moment breathed the low, anxious, and tender timidity of love, in its purest character. The souls of both vibrated to each other, and felt depressed with that sweetest emotion which derives all its power from the consciousness that its participation is mutual. Osborne spoke low, and his voice trembled; the girl was silent, but her bosom panted, and her frame shook from head to foot. At length, Osborne spoke.

"I sometimes sit here alone, and amuse myself with my flute; but of late—of late—I can hear no music that is not melancholy."

Page 22

"I, too, prefer mournful—mournful music," replied Jane. "That was a beautiful air you played just now."

Osborne put the flute to his lips, and commenced playing over again the air she had praised; but, on glancing at the fair girl, he perceived her eyes fixed upon him with a look of such deep and devoted passion as utterly overcame him. Her eyes, as before, were immediately withdrawn, but there dwelt again upon her burning cheek such a consciousness of her love as could not, for a moment, be mistaken. In fact she betrayed all the confused symptoms of one who felt that the state of her heart had been discovered. Osborne ceased playing; for such was his agitation that he scarcely knew what he thought or did.

"I cannot go on," said he in a voice which equally betrayed the state of his heart; "I cannot play;" and at the same time he seated himself beside her.

Jane rose as he spoke, and in a broken voice, full of an expression like distress, said hastily:

"It is time I should go;—I am,—I am too long out."

Osborne caught her hand, and in words that burned with the deep and melting contagion of his passion, said simply:

"Do not go:—oh do not yet go!"

She looked full upon him, and perceived that as he spoke his face became deadly pale, as if her words were to seal his happiness or misery.

"Oh do not leave me now," he pleaded; "do not go, and my life may yet be happy."

"I must," she replied, with great difficulty; "I cannot stay; I do not wish you to be unhappy;" and whilst saying this, the tears that ran in silence down her cheeks proved too clearly how dear his happiness must ever be to her.

Osborne's arm glided round her waist, and she resumed her seat,—or rather tottered into it.

"You are in tears," he exclaimed. "Oh could it be true! Is it not, my beloved girl? It is—it is—love! Oh surely, surely it must—it must!"

She sobbed aloud once or twice; and, as he kissed her unresisting lips, she murmured out, "It is; it is; I love you."

Oh life! how dark and unfathomable are thy mysteries! And why is it that thou permittest the course of true love, like this, so seldom to run smooth, when so many who, uniting

through the impulse of sordid passion, sink into a state of obtuse indifference, over which the lights and shadows that touch thee into thy finest perceptions of enjoyment pass in vain.

It is a singular fact, but no less true than singular, that since the world began there never was known any instance of an anxiety, on the part of youthful lovers, to prolong to an immoderate extent the scene in which the first mutual avowal of their passions takes place. The excitement is too profound, and the waste of those delicate spirits, which are expended in such interviews, is much too great to permit the soul to bear such an excess of happiness long. Independently of this, there is associated with it an ultimate enjoyment, for which the lovers immediately fly to solitude; there, in the certainty of waking bliss, to think over and over again of all that has occurred between them, and to luxuriate in the conviction, that at length the heart has not another wish, but sinks into the solitary charm which expands it with such a sense of rapturous and exulting delight.

Page 23

The interview between our lovers was, consequently, not long. The secret of their hearts being now known, each felt anxious to retire, and to look with a miser's ecstasy upon the delicious hoard which the scene we have just described had created. Jane did not reach home until the evening devotions of the family were over, and this was the first time she had ever, to their knowledge, been absent from them before. Borne away by the force of what had just occurred, she was proceeding up to her own room, after reaching home, when Mr. Sinclair, who had remarked her absence, desired that she be called into the drawing-room.

"It is the first neglect," he observed, "of a necessary duty, and it would be wrong in me to let it pass without at least pointing it out to the dear child as an error, and knowing from her own lips why it has happened."

Terror and alarm, like what might be supposed to arise from the detection of secret guilt, seized upon the young creature so violently that she had hardly strength to enter the drawing-room without support: her face became the image of death, and her whole frame tottered and trembled visibly.

"Jane, my dear, why were you absent from prayers this evening?" inquired her father, with his usual mildness of manner.

This question, to one who had never yet been, in the slightest instance, guilty of falsehood, was indeed a terrible one; and especially to a girl so extremely timid as was this his best beloved daughter.

"Papa," she at last replied, "I was out walking;" but as she spoke there was that in her voice and manner which betrayed the guilt of an insincere reply.

"I know, my dear, you were; but although you have frequently been out walking, yet I do not remember that you ever stayed, away from our evening worship before. Why is this?"

Her father's question was repeated in vain. She hung her head and returned no answer. She tried to speak, but from her parched lips not a word could proceed. She felt as if all the family that moment were conscious of the occurrence between her and her lover; and if the wish could have relieved her, she would almost have wished to die, so much did she shrink abashed in their presence.

"Tell me, my daughter," proceeded her father, more seriously, "has your absence been occasioned by anything that you are ashamed or afraid to mention? From me, Jane, you ought to have no secrets;—you are yet too young to think away from your father's heart and from your mother's also;—speak candidly, my child,—speak candidly,—I expect it."

As he uttered the last words, the head of their beautiful flower sank upon her bosom, and in a moment she lay insensible upon the sofa on which she had been sitting.

This was a shock for which neither the father nor the family were prepared. William flew to her,—all of them crowded about her, and scarcely had he raised that face so pale, but now so mournfully beautiful in its insensibility, when her mother and sisters burst into tears and wailings, for they feared at the moment that their beloved one must have been previously seized with sudden illness, and was then either taken, or about to be taken from their eyes for ever. By the coolness of her father, however, they were directed how to restore her, in which, after a lapse of not less than ten minutes, they succeeded.

Page 24

When she recovered, her mother folded her in her arms, and her sisters embraced her with tenderness and tears. Her father then gently caught her hand in his, and said with much affection:

“Jane, my child, you are ill. Why not have told us so?”

The beautiful girl knelt before him for a moment, but again rose up, and hiding her head in his bosom, exclaimed—weeping—

“Papa, bless me, oh, bless me, and forgive me.”

“I do; I do,” said the old man; and as he spoke a few large tears trickled down his cheeks, and fell upon her golden locks.

PART II.

It is a singular fact, but one which we know to be true, that not only the affection of parents, but that of brothers and sisters, goes down with greater tenderness to the youngest of the family, all other circumstances being equal. This is so universally felt and known, that it requires no further illustration from us. At home, Jane Sinclair was loved more devotedly in consequence of being the most innocent and beautiful of her father’s children; in addition to this, however, she was cherished with that peculiar sensibility of attachment by which the human heart is always swayed towards its youngest and its last.

On witnessing her father’s tenderness, she concealed her face in his bosom, and wept for some time in silence, and by a gentle pressure of her delicate arms, as they encircled his neck, intimated her sense of his affectionate indulgence towards her; and perhaps, could it have been understood, a tacit acknowledgment of her own unworthiness on that occasion to receive it.

At length, she said, after an effort to suppress her tears, “Papa, I will go to bed.”

“Do, my love; and Jane, forget not to address the Throne of God before you sleep.”

“I did not intend to neglect it, papa. Mamma, come with me.” She then kissed her sisters and bade good-night to William; after which she withdrew, accompanied by her mother, whilst the eyes of those who remained were fixed upon her with love and pride and admiration.

“Mamma,” said she, when they reached the apartment, “allow me to sleep alone tonight.”



“Jane, your mind appears to be depressed, darling,” replied her mother; “has anything disturbed you, or are you really ill?”

“I am quite well, mamma, and not at all depressed; but do allow me to sleep in the closet bed.”

“No, my dear, Agnes will sleep there, and you can sleep in your own as usual; the poor girl will wonder why you leave her, Jane; she will feel so lonely, too.”

“But, mamma, it would gratify me very much, at least for this night. I never wished to sleep away from Agnes before; and I am certain she will excuse me when she knows I prefer it.”

“Well, my love, of course Jean have no objection; I only fear you are not so well as you imagine yourself. At all events, Jane, remember your father’s advice to pray to God; and remember this, besides, that from me at least you ought to have no secrets. Good-night, dear, and may the Lord take care of you!”

Page 25

She then kissed her with an emotion of sorrow for which she could scarcely account, and passed down to the room wherein the other members of the family were assembled.

"I know not what is wrong with her," she observed, in reply to their enquiries. "She declares she is perfectly well, and that her mind is not at all depressed."

"In that I agree with her," said William; "her eye occasionally sparkled with something that resembled joy more than depression."

"She begged of me to let her sleep alone to-night," continued the mother; "so that you, Agnes, must lie in the closet bed."

"She must, certainly, be unwell then," replied Agnes, "or she would hardly leave me. Indeed I know that her spirits have not been so good of late as usual. Formerly we used to chat ourselves asleep, but for some weeks past she has been quite changed, and seldom spoke at all after going to bed. Neither did she sleep so well latterly as she used to."

"She is, indeed, a delicate flower," observed her father, "and a very slight blast, poor thing, will make her droop—droop perhaps into an early grave!"

"Do not speak so gloomily, my dear Henry," said her mother. "What is there in her particular case to justify any such apprehension?"

"Her health has been always good, too," observed Maria; "but the fact is, we love her so affectionately that many things disturb us about her which we would never feel if we loved her less."

"Mary," said her father, "you have in a few words expressed the true state of our feelings with respect to the dear child. We shall find her, I trust, in good health and spirits in the morning; and please the Divine Will, all will again be well—but what's the matter with you, Agnes?"

Mr. Sinclair had, a moment before, observed that an expression of thought, blended with sorrow, overshadowed the face of his second daughter. The girl, on hearing her father's enquiry, looked mournfully upon him, whilst the tears ran silently down her cheeks.

"I will go to her," said she, "and stay with her if she lets me. Oh, papa, why talk of an early grave for her? How could we lose her? I could not—and I cannot bear even to think of it."

She instantly rose and proceeded to Jane's room, but in a few minutes returned, saying, "I found her at prayers, papa."



“God bless her, God bless her! I knew she would not voluntarily neglect so sacred a duty. As she wishes to be alone, it is better not to disturb her; solitude and quiet will no doubt contribute to her composure, and it is probably for this purpose that she wishes to be left to herself.”

Page 26

After this the family soon retired to bed, with the exception of Mr. Sinclair himself, who, contrary to his practice, remained for a considerable time longer up than usual. It appeared, indeed, as if the shadow of some coming calamity had fallen upon their hearts, or that the affection they had entertained for her was so mysteriously deep as to produce that prophetic sympathy which is often known to operate in a presentiment of sorrow that never fails to be followed by disaster. It is difficult to account for this singular succession of cause to effect, as they act upon our emotions, except probably by supposing that it is an unconscious development of those latent faculties which are decreed to expand into a full growth in a future state of existence. Be this as it may, these loving relatives experienced upon that night a mood of mind such as they had never before known, even when the hand of death had taken a brother and sister from among them. It was not grief but a wild kind of dread, slight it is true, but distinct in its character, and not dissimilar to that fear which falls upon the spirits during one of those glooms that precede some dark and awful convulsion of nature. Her father remained up, as we have said, longer than the rest, and in the silence which succeeded their retirement for the night, his voice could be occasionally heard in deep and earnest supplication. It was evident that he had recourse to prayer; and by some of the expressions caught from time to time, they gathered that "his dear child," and "her peace of mind" were the object of the foreboding father's devotions.

Jane's distress, at concealing the cause of her absence from prayers, though acute at the moment of enquiry, was nevertheless more transient than one might suppose from the alarming effects it produced. Her mind was at the time in a state of tumult and excitement, such as she had never till then experienced, and the novel guilt of dissimulation, by superinducing her first impression of deliberate crime, opposed itself so powerfully to the exulting sense of her newborn happiness, that both produced a shock of conflicting emotions which a young mind, already so much exhausted, could not resist. She felt, therefore, that a strange darkness shrouded her intellect, in which all distinct traces of thought, and all memory of the past were momentarily lost. Her frame, too, at the best but slender and much enfeebled by the preceding interview with Osborne, and her present embarrassment, could not bear up against this chaotic struggle between delight and pain. It was, no doubt, impossible for her relatives to comprehend all this, and hence their alarm. She was too pure and artless to be suspected of concealing the truth; and they consequently entertained not the slightest suspicion of that kind; but still their affections were aroused, and what might have terminated in an ordinary manner, ended in that unusual mood we have described.

Page 27

With a scrupulous attention to her father's precept, as well as from a principle of early and sincere piety, she strove on reaching her bedroom to compose her mind in prayer, and to beg the pardon of Heaven for her wilful suppression of the truth. This was a task, however, to which she was altogether unequal. In vain she uttered words expressive of her sorrow, and gave language to sentiments of deep repentance; there was but one idea, but one image in her mind, *viz.*: her beautiful boy, and the certainty that she was the object of his love. Again and again she attempted to pray, but still with the same success. It was to no purpose that she resolved to banish him from her thoughts, until at least the solemn act of her evening-worship should be concluded; for ere she had uttered half a sentence the image would return, as if absolutely to mock her devotions. In this manner she continued for some time, striving to advance with a sincere heart in her address to heaven; again recommencing with a similar purpose, and as often losing herself in those visions that wrapped her spirit in their transports. At length she arose, and for a moment felt a deep awe fall upon her. The idea that she could not pray, seemed to her as a punishment annexed, by God to her crime of having tampered with the love of truth, and disregarded her father's injunctions not to violate it. But this, also, soon passed away: she lay down, and at once surrendered her heart and thought and fancy to the power of that passion, which, like the jealous tyrant of the East, seemed on this occasion resolved to bear no virtue near the heart in which it sat enthroned. Such, however, was not its character, as the reader will learn when he proceeds; true love being in our opinion rather the guardian of the other virtues than their foe.

The next morning, when Jane awoke, the event of yesterday flashed on her memory with a thrill of pleasure that made her start up in a recumbent posture in the bed. Her heart bounded, her pulse beat high, and a sudden sensation of hysterical delight rushed to her throat with a transport that would have been painful, did she not pass out of a state of such panting ecstasy and become dissolved in tears. She wept, but how far did she believe the cause of her emotion to be removed from sorrow? She wept, yet alas! alas! never did tears of such delight flow from a source that drew a young heart onward to greater darkness and desolation. Weep on, fair girl, in thy happiness; for the day will come when thou will not be able to find one tear in thy misery!

Her appearance the next morning exhibited to the family no symptoms of illness. On the contrary, she never looked better, indeed seldom so well. Her complexion was clearer than usual, her spirit more animated, and the dancing light of her eye plainly intimated by its sparkling that her young heart was going on the way of its love rejoicing. Her family were agreeably surprised at this, especially when they

Page 28

reflected upon their anxiety concerning her on the preceding night. To her distress on that occasion they made not the slightest allusion; they felt it sufficient that the beloved of their hearts was well, and that from the evident flow of her spirits there existed no rational ground for any apprehension respecting her. After breakfast she sat sewing for some time with her sisters, but it was evident that her mind was not yet sufficiently calm to permit her as formerly to sustain a proper part in their conversation. Ever and anon they could observe by the singular light which sparkled in her eyes, as with a sudden rush of joy, that her mind, was engaged on some other topic, and this at a moment when some appeal or interrogatory to herself rendered such abstracted enjoyment more obvious. Sensible, therefore, of her incompetency as yet to regulate her imagination so as to escape notice, she withdrew in about an hour to her own room, there once more to give loose to indulgence.

Our readers may perceive that the position of Jane Sinclair, in her own family, was not very favorable to the formation of a firm character. The regulation of a mind so imaginative, and of feelings so lively and susceptible, required a hand of uncommon skill and delicacy. Indeed her case was one of unusual difficulty. In the first place, her meekness and extreme sweetness of temper rendered it almost impossible in a family where her own qualities predominated, to find any deviation from duty which might be seized upon without harshness as a pretext for inculcating those precautionary principles that were calculated to strengthen the weak points which her character may have presented. Even those weak points, if at the time they could be so termed, were perceptible only in the exercise of her virtues, so that it was a matter of some risk, especially in the case of one so young, to reprove an excess on the right side, lest in doing so you checked the influence of the virtue that accompanied it. Such errors, if they can be called so, when occurring in the conduct of those whom we love, are likely to call forth any thing but censure. It is naturally supposed, and in general with too much truth, that time and experience will remove the excess, and leave the virtue not more than equal to the demands of life upon it. Her mother, however, was, as the reader may have found, by no means ignorant of those traits a the constitution of her mind from which danger or happiness might ultimately be apprehended; neither did he look on them With indifference. In truth, they troubled him much, and on more than one occasion he scrupled not fully to express his fears of, their result. It was he, the reader perceives, who on the evening of her first interview with Osborne, gave so gloomy a tone to the feelings of the family, and impressed them at all events more deeply than they otherwise would have felt with a vague presentiment of some unknown evil that was to befall her.

Page 29

She was, however, what is termed, the pet of the family, the centre to which all their affections turned; and as she herself felt conscious of this, there is little doubt that the extreme indulgence, and almost blameable tenderness which they exercised towards her, did by imperceptible degrees disqualify her from undergoing with firmness those conflicts of the heart, to which a susceptibility of the finer emotions rendered her peculiarly liable. Indeed among the various errors prevalent in domestic life, there is scarcely one that has occasioned more melancholy consequences than that of carrying indulgence towards a favorite child too far; and creating, under the slightest instances of self-denial, a sensitiveness or impatience, arising from a previous habit of being gratified in all the whims and caprices, of childhood or youth. The fate of favorite children in life is almost proverbially unhappy, and we doubt not that if the various lunatic receptacles were examined, the malady, in a majority of cases, might be traced to an excess of indulgence and want of proper discipline in early life. Had Mr. Sinclair insisted on knowing from his daughter's lips the cause of her absence from prayers, and given a high moral proof of the affection he bore her, it is probable that the consciousness on her part of his being cognizant of her passion, would have kept it so far within bounds as to submit to the control of reason instead of ultimately subverting it. This, however, he unhappily omitted to do, not because he was at all ignorant that a strict sense of duty, and a due regard for his daughter's welfare, demanded it; but because her distress, and the childlike simplicity with which she cast herself upon his bosom, touched his spirit, and drew forth all the affection of a parent who "loved not wisely but too well."

Let not my readers, however, condemn him too harshly for this, for alas, he paid, in the bitterness of a father's misery, a woeful and mysterious penalty of a father's weakness. His beloved one went before, and the old man could not remain behind her; but their sorrows have passed away, and both now enjoy that peace, which, for the last few years of their lives, the world did not give them.

From this time forth Jane's ear listened only to the music of a happy heart, and her eye saw nothing but the beauty of that vision which shone in her pure bosom like the star of evening in some limpid current that glides smoothly between rustic meadows, on whose green banks the heart is charmed into happiness by the distant hum of pastoral life.

Love however will not be long without its object, nor can the soul be happy in the absence of its counterpart. For some time after the interview in which the passion of our young lovers was revealed, Jane found solitude to be the same solace to her love, that human sympathy is to affliction. The certainty that she was now beloved, caused her heart to lapse into those alternations of repose and enjoyment which above all

Page 30

other states of feeling nourish its affections. Indeed the change was surprising which she felt within her and around her. On looking back, all that portion of her life that had passed before her attachment to Osborne, seemed dark and without any definite purpose. She wondered at it as at a mystery which she could not solve; it was only now that she lived; her existence commenced, she thought, with her passion, and with it only she was satisfied it could cease. Nature wore in her eyes a new aspect, was clothed with such beauty, and breathed such a spirit of love and harmony, as she only perceived now for the first time. Her parents were kinder and better she thought than they had before appeared to her, and her sisters and brother seemed endued with warmer affections and blighter virtues than they had ever possessed. Every thing near her and about her partook in a more especial manner of this delightful change; the servants were won by sweetness so irresistible—the dogs were more kindly caressed, and Ariel—her own Ariel was, if possible, more beloved.

Oh why—why is not love so pure and exalted as this, more characteristic of human attachments? And why is it that affection, as exhibited in general life, is so rarely seen unstained by the tint of some darker passion? Love on, fair girl—love on in thy purity and innocence! The beauty that thou seest in nature, and the music it sends forth, exist only in thy own heart, and the light which plays around thee like a glory, is only the reflection of that image whose lustre has taken away the shadows from thy spirit!

In the mean time the heart, as we said, will, after the repose which must follow excitement, necessarily move towards that object in which it seeks its ultimate enjoyment. A week had now elapsed, and Jane began to feel troubled by the absence of her lover. Her eye wished once more to feast upon his beauty, and her ear again to drink in the melody of his voice. It was true—it was surely true—and she put her long white fingers to her forehead while thinking of him—yes, yes—it was true that he loved her—but her heart called again for his presence, and longed to hear him once more repeat, in fervid accents of eloquence the enthusiasm of his passion.

Acknowledged love, however, in pure and honorable minds places the conduct under that refined sense of propriety, which is not only felt to be a restraint upon the freedom of virtuous principle itself, but is observed with that jealous circumspection which considers even suspicion as a stain upon its purity. No matter how intense affection in a virtuous bosom may be, yet no decorum of life is violated by it, no outwork even of the minor morals surrendered, nor is any act or expression suffered to appear that might take away from the exquisite feeling of what is morally essential to female modesty. For this reason, therefore, it was that our heroine, though anxious to meet Osborne again, could not bring herself to walk towards her accustomed haunts, lest he might suspect that she thus indelicately sought him out. He had frequently been there, and wondered that she never came; but however deep his disappointment at her absence, or it might

be, neglect, yet in consequence of their last interview, he could not summon courage to pay a visit, as he had sometimes before, to her family.

Page 31

Nearly a fortnight had now elapsed, when Jane, walking one day in a small shrubbery that skirted the little lawn before her father's door, received a note by a messenger whom she recognized as a servant of Mr. Osborne's.

The man, after putting it into her hands, added:

"I was desired, if possible, to bring back an answer."

She blushed deeply on receiving it, and shook so much that the tremor of her small white hands gave evident proof of the agitation which it produced in her bosom. She read as follows:—

"Oh why is it that I cannot see you! or what has become of you? This absence is painful to me beyond the power of endurance. Alas, if you loved with the deep and burning devotion that I do, you would not thus avoid me. Do you not know, and feel, that our hearts have poured into each other the secret of our mutual passion. Oh surely, surely, you cannot forget that moment—a moment for which I could willingly endure a century of pain. That moment has thrown a charm into my existence that will render my whole future life sweet. All that I may suffer will be, and already is softened in the consciousness that you love me. Oh let me see you—I cannot rest, I cannot live without you. I beseech you, I implore you, as you would not bring me down to despair and sorrow—as you would not wring my heart with the agony of disappointment, to meet me this evening at the same place and the same hour as before.

"Yours—yours for ever,

"H. O.

"N.B.—The bearer is trustworthy, and already acquainted with the secret of our attachment, so that you need not hesitate to send me a reply by him—and let it be a written one."

After pursuing this, she paused for a moment, and felt so much embarrassed by the fact of their love being known to a third person, that she could not look upon the messenger, while addressing him, without shame-facedness and confusion.

"Wait a little," she said at length, "I will return presently"—and with a singular conflict between joy, shame, and terror, she passed with downcast looks out of the shrubbery, sought her own room, and having placed writing materials before her, attempted to write. It was not, however, till after some minutes that she could collect herself sufficiently to use them. As she took the pen in her hand, something like guilt seemed to press upon her heart—the blood forsook her cheeks, and her strength absolutely left her.

“Is not this wrong,” she thought. “I have already been guilty of dissimulation, if not of direct-falsehood to my father, and now I am about to enter into a correspondence without his knowledge.”

The acuteness of her moral sense occasioned her, in fact, to feel much distress, and the impression of religious sanction early inculcated upon a mind naturally so gentle and innocent as hers, cast by its solemn influence a deep gloom over the brief history of their loves. She laid the pen down, and covering her face with both hands, burst into a flood of tears.

Page 32

"Why is it," she said to herself, "that a conviction as if of guilt mingles itself with my affection for him; and that snatches of pain and melancholy darken my mind, when I join in our morning and evening worship? I fear, I fear, that God's grace and protection have been withdrawn from me ever since I deceived my father. But these errors," she proceeded, "are my own, and not Henry's, and why should he suffer pain and distress because I have been uncandid to others?"

Upon this slender argument she proceeded to write the following reply, but still with an undercurrent of something like remorse stealing through a mind that felt with incredible delicacy the slightest deviation from what was right, yet possessed not the necessary firmness to resist what was wrong.

"I know that it is indelicate and very improper—yes, and sinful in me to write to you—and I would not do so, but that I cannot bear to think that you should suffer pain. Why should you be distressed, when you know that my affection for you will never change?—will, alas! I should add, can never change. Dear Henry, is it not sufficient for our happiness that our love is mutual? It ought at least to be so; and it would be so, provided we kept its character unstained by any deviation from moral feeling or duty in the sight of God. You must not continue to write to me, for I shall not, and I can not persist in a course of deliberate insincerity to those who love me with so much affection. I will, however, see you this day, two hours earlier than the time appointed in your note. I could not absent myself from the family then, without again risking an indirect breach of truth, and this I am resolved never to do. I hope you will not think less of me for writing to you, although it be very wrong on my part. I have already wept for it, and my eyes are even now filled with tears; but you surely will not be a harsh judge upon the conduct of your own

"Jane Sinclair."

Having sealed this letter, she hid it in her bosom, and after delaying a short time to compose her features, again proceeded to the shrubbery, where she found the servant waiting. Simple as was the act of handing him the note, yet so inexpressibly delicate was the whole tenor of her mind, that the slightest step irreconcilable with her standard of female propriety, left behind it a distinct and painful trace that disturbed the equilibrium of a character so finely balanced. With an abashed face and burning brow, she summoned courage, however, to give it, and was instantly proceeding home, when the messenger observed that she had given him the wrong letter. She then took the right one from her bosom, and placing it in his hands would again have hurried into the house."

"You do not mean, I suppose, to send him back his own note," observed the man, handing her Osborne's as he spoke.

“No, no,” she replied, “give it to me; I knew not—in fact, it was a mistake.” She then received Osborne’s letter, and hastily withdrew.

Page 33

The reader may have observed, that so long as Jane merely contemplated the affection that subsisted between Osborne and herself, as a matter unconnected with any relative association, and one on which the heart will dwell with delight while nothing intrudes to disturb its serenity, so long was the contemplation of perfect happiness. But the moment she approached her family, or found herself on the eve of taking another step in its progress, such was her almost morbid candor, and her timid shrinking from any violation of truth, that her affection for this very reason became darkened, as she herself said, by snatches of melancholy and pain.

It is indeed difficult to say whether such a tender perception of good and evil as characterized all her emotions, may not have predisposed her mind to the unhappy malady which eventually overcame it; or whether, on the other hand, the latent existence of the malady in her temperament may not have rendered such perceptions too delicate for the healthy discharge of human duties.

Be this as it may, our innocent and beautiful girl is equally to be pitied; and we trust that in either case the sneers of the coarse and heartless will be spared against a character they cannot understand. At all events, it is we think slightly, and but slightly evident, that even at the present stage of her affection, something prophetic of her calamity, in a faintly perceptible degree may, to an observing mind, be recognized in the vivid and impulsive power with which that affection has operated upon her. If anything could prove this, it is the fervency with which, previous to the hour of appointment, she bent in worship before God, to beseech His pardon for the secret interview she was about to give her lover. And in any other case, such an impression, full of religious feeling as it was, would have prevented the subject of it from acting contrary to its tendency; but here was the refined dread of error, lively even to acuteness, absolutely incapable of drawing back the mind from the transgression of moral duty which filled it with a feeling nearly akin to remorse.

Jane that day met the family at dinner, merely as a matter of course, for she could eat nothing. There was, independently of this, a timidity in her manner which they noticed, but could not understand.

“Why,” said her father, “you were never a great eater, Janie, but latterly you live, like the chameleon, on air. Surely your health cannot be good, with such a poor appetite;—your own Ariel eats more.”

“I feel my health to be very good, papa; but—” she hesitated a little, attempted to speak, and paused again; “Although my health is good,” she at last proceeded, “I am not, papa, —I mean my spirits are sometimes better than they ever were, and sometimes more depressed.”

“They are depressed now, Jane,” said her mother.



“I don’t know that, mamma. Indeed I could not describe my present state of feeling; but I think,—indeed I know I am not so good as I ought to be. I am not so good, mamma, and maybe one day you will all have to forgive me more than you think.”

Page 34

Her father laid his knife and fork down, and fixing his eyes affectionately upon her, said:

“My child, there is something wrong with you.”

Jane herself, who sat beside her mother, made no reply; but putting her arms about her neck, she laid her cheek against hers, and wept for many minutes. She then rose in a paroxysm of increasing sorrow, and throwing her arms about her father’s neck also, sobbed out as upon the occasion already mentioned:—

“Oh, papa, pity and forgive me;—your poor Jane, pity her and forgive her.”

The old man struggled with his grief, for he saw that the tears of the family rendered it a duty upon him to be firm: nay, he smiled after a manner, and said in a voice of forced good humor:

“You are a foolish slut, Jane, and play upon us, because you know we pet and love you too much. If you cannot eat your dinner go play, and get an appetite for to-morrow.”

She kissed him, and as was her habit of compliance with his slightest wish, left the room as he had desired her.

“Henry,” said his wife, “there is something wrong with her.”

For a time he could not speak; but after a deep silence he wiped away a few straggling-tears, and replied:

“Yes! yes! do you not see that there is a mystery upon my child!—a mystery which weighs down my heart with affliction.”

“Dear papa,” said Agnes, “don’t forbode evil for her.”

“It’s a mere nervous affection,” said William. “She ought to take more exercise. Of late she has been too much within.”

Maria and Agnes exchanged looks; and for the first time, a suspicion of the probable cause flashed simultaneously across their minds. They sat beside each other at dinner, and Maria said in a whisper:

“Agnes, you and I are thinking of the same thing.”

“I am thinking of Jane,” said her candid and affectionate sister.

“My opinion is,” rejoined Maria, “that she is attached to Charles Osborne.”

"I suspect it is so," whispered Agnes. "Indeed from many things that occur to me I am now certain of it."

"I don't see any particular harm in that," replied Maria.

"It may be a very unhappy attachment for Jane, though," said Agnes. "Only think, Maria, if Osborne should not return her affection: I know Jane,—she would sink under it."

"Not return her affection!" replied her sister. "Where would he find another so beautiful, and every way so worthy of him?"

"Very true, Maria; and I trust in heaven he may think so. But how, if he should never know or suspect her love for him?"

"I cannot answer that," said the other; "but we will talk more about it by-and-by."

Whilst this dialogue went on in a low tone, the other members of the family sat in silence and concern, each evidently anxious to develop the mystery of Jane's recent excitement at dinner. At length the old man's eye fell upon his two other daughters, and he said:

Page 35

"What is this, children—what is this whispering all about? Perhaps some of you can explain the conduct of that poor child."

"But, papa," said Agnes, "you are not to know all our secrets."

"Am I not, indeed, Aggy? That's pretty evident from the cautious tone in which you and Mary speak."

"Well, but Agnes is right, Henry," said her mother: "to know the daughters' secrets is my privilege—and yours to know William's—if he has any."

"Upon my word, mother, mine are easily carried, I assure you."

"Suppose, papa," observed Agnes, good-humoredly, "that I was to fall in love, now—as is not——"

"Impossible that you may—you baggage," replied her father, smiling, whilst he completed the sentence; "Well, and you would not tell me if you did?"

"No indeed, sir; I should not. Perhaps I ought,—but I could not, certainly, bring myself to do it. For instance, would it be either modest or delicate in me, to go and say to your face, 'Papa, I'm in love.' In that case the next step, I suppose, would be to make you the messenger between us. Now would you not expect as much, papa, if I told you?" said the arch and lively girl.

"Aggy, you are a presuming gipsy," replied the old man, joining in the laugh which she had caused. "Me your messenger!"

"Yes, and a steady one you would make, sir—I am sure you would not, at all events, overstep your instructions."

"That will be one quality essentially necessary to any messenger of yours, Agnes," replied her father, in the same spirit.

"Papa," said she, suddenly changing her manner, and laying aside her gayety, "what I said in jest of myself may be seriously true of another in this family. Suppose Jane——"

"Jane!" exclaimed the old man;—"impossible! She is but a girl!—but a child!" "Agnes, this is foolish of you," said her sister. "It is possible, after all, that you are doing poor Jane injustice. Papa, Agnes only speaks from suspicion. We are not certain of anything. It was I mentioned it first, but merely from suspicion."

"If Jane's affections are engaged," said her father, "I tremble to think of the consequences should she experience the slightest disappointment. But it cannot be, Maria,—the girl has too much sense, and her principles are too well established."

“What is it you mean, girls?” inquired their mother, in a tone of surprise and alarm.

“Indeed, Agnes,” said Maria, reprovingly, “it is neither fair nor friendly to poor Jane, to bring out a story founded only on a mere surmise. Agnes insists, mamma, that Jane is attached to Charles Osborne.”

“It certainly occurred to us only a few moments ago, I allow,” replied Agnes; “but if I am mistaken in this, I will give up my judgment in everything else. And I mentioned it solely to prevent our own distress, particularly papa’s, with respect to the change that is of late so visible in her conduct and manner.”

Page 36

Strange to say, however, that Mr. Sinclair and his wife both repudiated the idea of her attachment to Osborne, and insisted that Agnes' suspicion was rash and groundless.

It was impossible, they said, that such an attachment could exist; Jane and Osborne had seen too little of each other, and were both of a disposition too shy and diffident to rush so precipitately into a passion that is usually the result of far riper years than either of them had yet reached.

Mr. Sinclair admitted that Jane was a girl full of affection, and likely to be extremely susceptible, yet it was absurd, he added, to suppose for a moment, that she would suffer them to be engaged, or her peace of mind disturbed, by a foolish regard for a smooth-faced boy, and she herself not much beyond sixteen.

There is scarcely to be found, in the whole range of human life and character, any observation more true, and at the same time more difficult to be understood, than the singular infatuation of parents who have survived their own passions,—whenever the prudence of their children happens to be called in question.

We know not whether such a fact be necessary to the economy of life, and the free breathings of youthful liberty, but this at least is clear to any one capable of noting down its ordinary occurrences, that no matter how acutely and vividly parents themselves may have felt the passion of love when young, they appear as ignorant of the symptoms that mark its stages in the lives of their children, as if all memory of its existence had been obliterated out of their being. Perhaps this may be wisely designed, and no doubt it is, but, alas! its truth is a melancholy comment upon the fleeting character of the only passion that charms our early life, and fills the soul with sensations too ethereal to be retained by a heart which grosser associations have brought beneath the standard of purity necessary for their existence in it.

Jane, as she bent her way to the place of appointment, felt like one gradually emerging out of darkness into light. The scene at dinner had quickened her moral sense, which, as the reader already knows, was previous to that perhaps morbidly acute. Every step, however, towards the idol of her young devotion, removed the memory of what had occurred at home, and collected around her heart all the joys and terrors that in maidenly diffidence characterize the interview she was about to give her lover. Oh how little do we know of those rapid lights and shadows which shift and tremble across the spirits of the gentle sex, when approaching to hold this tender communion with those whom they love. Nothing that we remember resembles the busy working of the soul on such occasions, so much as those lucid streamers which flit in sweeps of delicate light along the northern sky, filling it at once with beauty and terror, and emitting at the same time a far and almost inaudible undertone of unbroken music.

Page 37

Trembling and fluttering like a newly-caught bird, Jane approached the place of meeting and found Osborne there awaiting her. The moment he saw the graceful young creature approach him, he felt that he had never until then loved her so intensely. The first declaration of their attachment was made during an accidental interview, but there is a feeling of buoyant confidence that flashes up from the heart, when, at the first concerted meeting of love we see the object of our affection advance towards us,—for that deliberate act of a faithful heart separates the beloved one, in imagination, to ourselves, and gives a fulness to our enjoyment which melts us in an exulting tenderness indescribable by language. Those who have doubted the punctuality of some beloved girl, and afterwards seen her come, will allow that our description of that rapturous moment is not overdrawn.

“My dear, dear Jane,” exclaimed Osborne, taking her hand and placing her beside him,

“I neither knew my own heart nor thee extent of its affection for you until this meeting. In what terms shall I express—but I will not attempt it—I cannot—but my soul burns with love for you, such as was ever felt by mortal.”

“It is my trust and confidence in your love that brings me here,” she replied; “and indeed, Charles, it is more than that—I know your health is, at the best, easily affected, and your spirits naturally prone to despondency; and I feared,” said the artless girl, “that—that—indeed I feared you might suffer pain, and that pain might bring on ill health again.”

“And I am so dear to you, Jane?”

Jane replied by a smile and looked inexpressibly tender.

“I am, I am!” he exclaimed with rapture; “and now the world—life—nothing—nothing can add to the fulness of my happiness. And your note, my beloved—the conclusion of it—your own Jane Sinclair! But you must be more my own yet—legally and forever mine! Mine! Shall I be able to bear it!—shall I? Jane?” said he, his enthusiastic temperament kindling as he spoke—“Oh what, my dearest, my own dearest, if this should not last, will it not consume me? Will it not destroy me? this overwhelming excess of rapture!”

“But you must restrain it, Charles; surely the suspense arising from the doubt of our being beloved is more painful than the certainty that we are so.”

“Yes; but the exulting sense, my dear Jane, to me almost oppressive,—but I rave, I rave; it is all delight—all happiness! Yes, it will prolong life,—for we know what we live for.”

“We do,” said Jane, in a low, sweet voice, whilst her eye fed upon his beauty. “Do I not live for you, Charles?”



His lip was near her cheek as she spoke; he then gently drew her to him, and in a voice lower, and if possible more melodious than her own, said, "Oh Jane, is there not something inexpressibly affectionate—some wild and melting charm in the word wife?"

Page 38

"That is a feeling," she replied, evidently softened by the tender spirit of his words, "of which you are a better judge than I can be."

"Oh say, my dearest, let me hear you say with your own lips, that you will be my wife."

"I will," she whispered—and as she spoke, he inhaled the fragrance of her breath.

"My wife!"

"Your wife!"

Sweet, and long, and rapturous was the kiss which sealed this sacred and entrancing promise. The pathetic sentiment that pervaded their attachment kept their passion pure, and seldom have two lovers so beautiful, sat cheek to cheek together, in an embrace guileless and innocent as theirs.

Jane, however, withdrew herself from his arms, and for a few moments felt not even conscious, so far was her heart removed from evil, that an embrace under such circumstances was questionable, much less improper. Following so naturally from the tenderness of their dialogue, it seemed to be rather the necessary action arising from the eloquence of their feeling, than an act which might incur censure or reproof. Her fine sense of propriety, however, could be scarcely said to have slumbered, for, with a burning cheek and a sobbing voice, she exclaimed,

"Charles, these secret meetings must cease. They have involved me in a course of dissimulation and falsehood towards my family, which I cannot bear. You say you love me, and I know you do, but surely you could not esteem, nor place full confidence in a girl, who, to gratify either her own affection or yours, would deceive her parents."

"But, my dearest girl, you reason too severely. Surely almost all who love must, in the earliest stages of affection, practice, to a certain extent, a harmless deception upon their friends, until at least their love is sanctioned. Marriages founded upon mutual attachment would be otherwise impracticable."

"No deception, dear Charles, can be harmless. I cannot forget the precepts of truth, and virtue, and obedience to a higher law even than his own will, which my dear papa taught me, and I will never more violate them, even for you."

"You are too pure, too full of truth, my beloved girl, for this world. Social life is carried on by so much dissimulation, hypocrisy, and falsehood, that you will be actually unfit to live in it."

"Then let me die in it sooner than be guilty of any one of them. No, dear Charles, I am not too full of truth. On the contrary, I cannot understand how it is that my love for you has plunged me into deceit. Nay more, Charles," she exclaimed, rising up, and placing

her hand on her heart, “I am wrong here—why is it, will you tell me, that our attachment has crossed and disturbed my devotions to God. I cannot worship God as I would, and as I used to do. What if His grace be withdrawn from me? Could you love me then? Could you love a cast-a-way? Charles, you love truth too well to cherish affection for a being, a reprobate perhaps, and full of treachery and falsehood. I am not such, but I fear sometimes that I am.”

Page 39

Her youthful lover gazed upon her as she stood with her sparkling eyes fixed upon vacancy. Never did she appear so beautiful, her features were kindled into an expression which was new to him—but an expression so full of high moral feeling, beaming like the very divinity of truth from her countenance, yet overshadowed by an unsettled gloom, which gave to her whole appearance the power of creating both awe and admiration in the spectator.

The boy was deeply affected, and in a voice scarcely firm, said in soothing and endearing accents, whilst he took her hand in his,

“Jane, my best beloved, and dearest—say, oh say in what manner I can compose your mind, or relieve you from the necessity of practising the deceit which troubles you so much.”

“Oh,” said she, bending her eye on him, “but it is sweet to be beloved by those that are dear to us. Your sympathy thrills through my whole frame with a soothing sensation inexpressibly delightful. It is sweet to me—for you, Charles, are my only confident. Dear, dear Charles, how I longed to see you, and to hear your voice.”

As she made this simple but touching admission of the power of her love, she laid her head on his bosom and wept. Charles pressed her to his heart, and strove to speak, but could not—she felt his tears raining fast upon her face.

At length he said, pressing his beautiful once more to his beating bosom—“the moment, the moment that I cease to love you, may it, O God, be my last.”

She rose, and quietly wiping her eyes, said—“I will go—we will meet no more—no more in secret.”

“Oh, Jane,” said her lover, “how shall I make myself worthy of you; but why,” he added, “should our love be a secret? Surely it will be sanctioned by our friends. You shall not be distressed by the necessity of insincerity, although it would be wrong to call the simple concealment of your love for me by so harsh a name.”

“But my papa,” she said, “he is so good to me; they are all so affectionate, they love me too much; but my dear papa, I cannot stand with a stain on my conscience in his presence. Not that I fear him; but it would be treacherous and ungrateful: I would tell him all, but I cannot.”

“My sweet girl, let not that distress you. Your father shall be made acquainted with it from other lips. I will disclose the secret to my father, and, with a proud heart, tell him of our affection.”

It never once occurred to a creature so utterly unacquainted with the ways of the world as Jane was that Mr. Osburne might disapprove of their attachment, and prevent a boy so youthful from following the bent of his own inclinations.

“Dear Charles,” said she, smiling, “what a load their approval will take off my heart. I can then have papa’s pardon for my past duplicity towards him; and my mind will be so much soothed and composed. We can also meet each other with their sanction.”

Page 40

"My wife! my wife!" said Osborne, looking on her with a rapturous gaze of love and admiration—and carrying her allusion to the consent of their families up to the period when he might legitimately give her that title—"My wife," he exclaimed, "my young, my beautiful, my pure and unspotted wife. Heavens! and is—is the day surely to come when I am to call you so!"

The beautiful girl hung her head a moment as if abashed, then gliding timidly towards him, leant upon his shoulder, and putting her lips up to his ear, with a blush as much of delight as of modesty, whispered—"My husband, my husband, why should not these words, dear Charles, be as sweet a charm to my heart, as those you've mentioned are to yours. I would, but I cannot add—no, I will not suffer it," she exclaimed, on his attempting, in the prostration of the moment, to embrace her. "You must not presume upon the sincerity of an affectionate and ingenuous heart. Farewell, dear Charles, until we can see each other without a consciousness that we are doing wrong." Saying which, she extended her hand to him, and in a moment was on her way home.

And was the day to come when he could call her his? Alas! that day was never registered in the records of time.

Oh! how deeply beloved was our heroine by her family, when her moods of mind and state of spirits fixed the tone of their domestic enjoyments and almost influenced the happiness of their lives. O gentle and pure spirit, what heart cannot love thee, when those who knew thee best gathered their affections so lovingly around thee, the star of their hearth—the idol of their inner shrine—the beautiful, the meek, the affectionate, and even then, in consequence of thy transcendent charms, the far-famed Fawn of Springvale!

In the early part of that evening, Jane's spirits, equable and calm, hushed in a great measure the little domestic debate which had been held at dinner, concerning the state of her affections. The whole family partook of her cheerfulness, and her parents in particular, cast several looks of triumphant sagacity, at Maria and Agnes, especially at the latter.

"Jane," said her father in the triumph of his heart, "you are not aware that Agnes is in love."

The good-humored tone in which this was spoken, added to the utterly unsuspecting character of the innocent being to whom the words were addressed, rendered it impossible for Jane to suppose that there was any latent meaning in his observation that could be levelled at herself. In truth, there was not, for any satire it contained was directed especially to Agnes. There are tones of voice, the drift of which no effort, however forced, or studied, can conceal, particularly from, those who, by intimacy and observation, are acquainted with them, and with the moods of mind and shades of feeling which prompt them. Jane knew intuitively by the tone in which her father spoke

—and by the expression of his countenance, that the words were not meant to apply by any direct analogy to herself. She consequently preserved her composure and replied to the question, with the same good humor in which the words were uttered.

Page 41

“Agnes in love! Well, papa, and surely that is not unnatural.”

“Thank you, Jane,” replied Agnes. “Papa, that’s a rebuff worth something; and Jane,” she proceeded, anxious still to vindicate her own sagacity with respect to her sister, “suppose I should be in love, surely I may carry on an innocent intercourse with my lover, without consulting papa.”

“No, Agnes, you should not,” replied her sister, vehemently; “no intercourse—no intercourse without papa’s knowledge, can be innocent. There is deceit and dissimulation in it—there is treachery in it. It is impossible to say how gloomily such an intercourse may end. Only think, my dear Agnes,” she proceeded, in a low, but vehement and condensed voice—“only think, dear Agnes, what the consequences might be to you if such an attachment, and such a clandestine mode of conducting it, should in consequence of your duplicity to papa, cause the Almighty God to withdraw His grace from you, and that, you should thereby become a cast-away—a castaway! I shudder to think of it! I shudder to think of it.”

“Jane, sit beside me,” said Mr. Sinclair; “you are rather too hard upon poor Agnes—but, still come, and sit beside me. You are my own sweet child—my own dutiful and candid girl.”

“I cannot, I cannot, papa, I dare not,” she exclaimed, and without uttering another word she arose, and rushed out of the room. In less than a minute, however, she returned again, and approaching him, said—“Papa, forgive me, I will, I trust, soon be a better girl than I am; bless me and bid me good-night. Mamma, bless me you too, I am your poor Jane, and I know you all love me more than you ought. Do not think that I am unhappy—don’t think it. I have not been for some time so happy as I am to-night.”

She then passed out of the room, and retired to her own apartment.

When she was gone, Agnes, who sat beside | her father, turned to him, and leaned her head upon his breast, burst into bitter tears. “Papa,” she exclaimed, “I believe you will now admit that I have gained the victory. My sister’s peace of mind or happiness is gone for ever. Unless Osborne either now is, or becomes in time attached to her, I know not what the consequences may be.”

“It will be well for Osborne, at all events, if he has not practised upon her affections,” said William; “that is, granting that the suspicion, be just. But the truth is, I don’t think Osborne has any thing to do with her feelings. It is merely some imaginary trifle that she has got into her foolish little head, poor girl. Don’t distress yourself, father—you know she was always over-scrupulous. Even the most harmless fib that ever was told, is a crime in her eyes. I wish, for my part, she had a little wholesome wickedness about—I don’t mean that sir, in a very unfavorable light,” he said in reply to a look of severity

from his father, “but I wish she had some leaning to error about her. She would, in one sense at least, be the better for it.”

Page 42

"We shall see," said his father, who evidently spoke in deep distress of mind, "we shall consider in the course of the evening what ought to be done."

"Better to take her gently," observed her mother, wiping away a tear, "gentleness and love will make her tell anything—and that there is something on her mind no one can doubt."

"I won't have her distressed, my dear," replied her father. "It cannot be of much importance I think after all—but whatever it may be, her own candid mind will give it forth spontaneously. I know my child, and will answer for her."

"Why then, papa, are you so much distressed, if you think it of no importance?" asked Maria.

"If her finger ached, it would distress me, child, and you know it."

"Why, she and Osborne have had no opportunity of being together, out of the eyes of the family," observed William.

"That's more than you know, William," said Agnes; "she has often walked out."

"But she always did so," replied her mother.

"She would never meet him privately," said her father firmly, "of that I am certain as my life."

"That, papa," returned Agnes, "I am afraid, is precisely what she has done, and what now distresses her. And I am sure that whatever is wrong with her, no explanation will be had from herself. Though kind and affectionate as ever, she has been very shy with me and Maria of late—and indeed, has made it a point to keep aloof from us! Three or four times I spoke to her in a tone of confidence, as if I was about to introduce some secret of my own, but she always under some pretense or other left me. I had not thought of Osborne at the time, nor could I guess what troubled her—but something I saw did." Her father sighed deeply, and, clasping his hands, uttered a silent ejaculation to heaven on her behalf. "That is true," said he, "it is now the hour of evening worship; let us kneel and remember her trouble, the poor child, whatever it may be." "Had I not better call her down, papa," said Agnes.

"Not this evening," he replied, "not this evening—she is too much disturbed, and will probably prefer praying alone."

The old man then knelt down, and after the usual form of evening worship, uttered a solemn and affecting appeal upon her behalf, to Him, who can pour balm upon the wounded spirit, and say unto the weary and heavy laden, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." But when he went on in words more particularly describing her state of mind,

to mention, and plead for “their youngest,” and “their dearest,” and “their best beloved,” his voice became tremulous, and for a moment he paused, but the pause was filled with the sobbings of those who loved her, and especially by the voice of that affectionate sister who loved her most—for of them all, Agnes only wept aloud. At length the prayer was concluded, and rising up with wet eyes, they perceived that the beloved object of their supplications had glided into the room, and joined their worship unperceived.

Page 43

"Dear Jane," said her father, "we did not know you were with us."

She made no immediate reply, but, after a moment's apparent struggle, went over, and laying her head upon his bosom, sobbed out—"Papa, your love has overcome me. I will tell you all."

"Soul of truth and candor," exclaimed the old man, clasping her to his bosom, "heroic child! I knew she would do it, and I said so. Go out now, and leave us to ourselves. Darling, don't be distressed. If you feel difficulty I will not ask to hear it. Or perhaps you would rather mention it to your mamma."

"No—to you papa—to you—and you will not be harsh upon me, I am a weak girl, and have done very wrong."

It was indeed a beautiful thing to see this fair and guiltless penitent leaning against her indulgent father's bosom, in which her blushing face was hid, and disclosing the history of an attachment as pure and innocent as ever warmed the heart of youth and beauty. Oh no wonder, thou sweetest and most artless of human beings, that when the heavy blight of reason came upon thee, and thou disappearedst from his eyes, that the old man's spirit became desolate and his heart broken, and that he said after thy dissolution to every word of comfort uttered to him—"It is vain, it is vain—I cannot stay. I hear her voice calling me—she calls me, my beautiful—my pride—my child—my child—she calls me, and I cannot stay." Nor did he long.

To none else did her father that night reveal the purport of this singular disclosure, except to Mrs. Sinclair herself—but the next morning before breakfast, the secret had been made known to the rest. All trouble and difficulty, as to the conduct they should pursue, were removed in consequence of Osborne's intention to ask his father to sanction their attachment, and until the consequence of that step should be known, nothing further on their part could be attempted. On this point, however, they were not permitted to remain long in suspense, for ere two o'clock that day, Mr. Osborne had, in the name of his son, proposed for the hand of our fair girl, which proposal we need scarcely say was instantly and joyfully accepted. It is true, their immediate union was not contemplated. Both were much too youthful and inexperienced to undertake the serious duties of married life, but it was arranged that Osborne, whose health, besides, was not sufficiently firm, should travel, see the world, and strengthen his constitution by the genial air of a warmer and more salubrious climate.

Alas! why is it that the sorrows of love are far sweeter than its joys? We do not mean to say that our young hero and heroine, if we may presume so to call them, were insensible to this lapse of serene delight which now opened upon them. No—the happiness they enjoyed was indeed such as few taste in such a world as this is. Their attachment was now sanctioned by all their mutual friends, and its progress was unimpeded by an scruple arising from clandestine intercourse, or a breach of duty. But,

with secrecy, passed away those trembling snatches of unimaginable transport which no state of permitted love has ever yet known. The stolen glance, the passing whisper, the guarded pressure of the soft white hand timidly returned, and the fearful rapture of the hurried kiss—alas! alas!—and alas! for the memory of Eloiza!

Page 44

Time passed, and the preparations necessary for Osborne's journey were in fact nearly completed. One day, about a fortnight before his departure, he and Jane were sitting in a little ozier summer-house in Mr. Sinclair's garden, engaged in a conversation more tender than usual, for each felt their love deeper and their hearts sink as the hour of separation approached them. Jane's features exhibited such a singular union of placid confidence and melancholy, as gave something Madonna-like and divine to her beauty. Osborne sat, and for a long time gazed upon her with a silent intensity of rapture for which he could find no words. At length he exclaimed in a reverie—

"I will swear it—I may swear it."

"Swear what, Charles?"

"That the moment I see a girl more beautiful, I will cease to write to you—I will cease to love you."

The blood instantly forsook her cheeks, and she gazed at him with wonder and dismay.

"What, dear Charles, do you mean?"

"Oh, my pride and my treasure!" he exclaimed, wildly clasping her to his bosom—"there is none so fair—none on earth or in heaven itself so beautiful—that, my own ever dearest, is my meaning."

The confidence of her timid and loving heart was instantly restored—and she said smiling, yet with a tear struggling through her eyelid, "I believe I am I think I am beautiful. I know they call me the Fawn of Springvale, because I am gentle."

"The angels are not so gentle, nor so pure, nor so innocent as you are, my un-wedded wife."

"I am glad I am," she replied; "and I am glad, too, that I am beautiful—but it is all on your account, and for your sake, dear Charles."

The fascination—the power of such innocence, and purity, and love, utterly overcame him, and he wept in transport upon her bosom.

The approach of her sisters, however, and the liveliness of Agnes, soon changed the character of their dialogue. For an hour they ran and chased each other, and played about, after which Charles took his leave of them for the evening. Jane, as usual, being the last he parted from, whispered to him, as he went—

"Charles, promise me, that in future you won't repeat—the—the words you used in, the summer-house."



“What words, love?” “You remember—about—about—what you said you might swear—and that, in that case, you would cease to love me.”

“Why dearest, should I promise you this?” “Because,” she said, in a low, sweet whisper, “they disturb me when I think of them—a slight thing makes my heart sink.”

“You are a foolish, sweet girl—but I promise you, I shall never again use them.”

She bestowed on him a look and smile that were more than a sufficient compensation for this; and after again bidding him farewell, she tripped lightly into the house.

Page 45

From this onward, until the day of their separation, the spirits of our young lovers were more and more overcast, and the mirthful intercourse of confident love altogether gone. Their communion was now marked by despondency and by tears, for the most part shed during their confidential interviews with each other. In company they were silent and dejected, and ever as their eyes met in long and loving glances, they could scarcely repress their grief. Sometimes, indeed, Jane on being spoken to, after a considerable silence, would attempt in vain to reply, her quivering voice and tearful eyes affording unequivocal proof of the subject which engaged her heart. Their friends, of course, endeavored to console and sustain them on both sides; and frequently succeeded in soothing them into a childlike resignation to the necessity that occasioned the dreary period of absence that lay before them. These intervals of patience, however, did not last long; the spirits of our young lovers were, indeed, disquieted within them, and the heart of each drooped under the severest of all its calamities—the pain of loss for that object which is dearest to its affections.

It was arranged that, on the day previous to Charles' departure, Osborne's family should dine at Mr. Sinclair's; for they knew that the affliction caused by their separation would render it necessary that Jane, on that occasion, should be under her own roof, and near the attention and aid of her friends. Mr. Osborne almost regretted the resolution to which he had come of sending his son to travel, for he feared that the effect of absence from the fair girl to whom he was so deeply attached, might possibly countervail the benefits arising from a more favorable climate; but as he had already engaged the services of an able and experienced tutor, who on two or three previous occasions had been over the Continent, he expected, reasonably enough, that novelty, his tutor's good sense, and the natural elasticity of youth would soon efface a sorrow in general so transient, and in due time restore him to his usual spirits. He consequently adhered to his resolution—the day of departure was fixed, and arrangements made for the lovers to separate, as we have already intimated.

Jane Sinclair, from the period when Osborne's attachment and hers was known and sanctioned by their friends, never slept a night from her beloved sister Agnes; nor had any other person living, not even Osborne himself, such an opportunity as Agnes had of registering in the record of a sisterly heart so faithful a transcript of her love.

On the night previous to their leave taking, Agnes was astonished at the coldness of her limbs, and begged her to allow additional covering to be put on the bed.

"No, dear Agnes, no; only grant me one favor—do not speak to me—leave my heart to its own sorrows—to its own misery—to its own despair; for, Agnes, I feel a presentiment that I shall never see him again."

Page 46

She pressed her lips against Agnes' cheek when she had concluded, and Agnes almost started, for that lip hitherto so glowing and warm, felt hard and cold as marble.

Osborne, who for some time past had spent almost every day at Mr. Sinclair's, arrived the next morning ere the family had concluded breakfast. Jane immediately left the table, for she had tasted nothing but a cup of tea, and placing herself beside him on the sofa, looked up mournfully into his face for more than a minute; she then caught his hand, and placing it between hers, gazed upon him again, and smiled. The boy saw at once that the smile was a smile of misery, and that the agony of separation was likely to be too much for her to bear. The contrast at that moment between them both was remarkable. She pale, cold, and almost abstracted from the perception of her immediate grief; he glowing in the deep carmine of youth and apparent health—his eye as well as hers sparkling with a light which the mere beauty of early life never gives. Alas, poor things! little did they, or those to whom they were so very dear, imagine that, as they then gazed upon each other, each bore in lineaments so beautiful the symptoms of the respective maladies that were to lay them low.

"I wish, Jane, you would try and get up your spirits, love, and see and be entertaining to poor Charles, as this is the last day he is to be with you."

She looked quickly at her mother, "The I last, mamma?"

"I mean for a while, dear, until after his I return from the Continent."

She seemed relieved by this. "Oh no, not the last, Charles," she said—"Yet I know not how it is—I know not; but sometimes, indeed, I think it is—and if it were, if it were—"

A paleness more deadly spread over her face; and with a gaze of mute and undying-devotion she clasped her hands, and repeated—"if it should be the last—the last!"

"I did not think you were so foolish or so weak a girl, Jane," said William, "as to be so cast down, merely because Charles is taking a skip to the Continent to get a mouthful of fresh air, and back again. Why, I know them that go to the Continent four times a year to transact business a young fellow, by the way, that has been paying his addresses to a lady for the last six or seven years. I wish you saw them part, as I did—merely a hearty shake of the hand—'good by, Molly, take care of yourself till I see you again;' and 'farewell, Simon, don't forget the shawl;' and the whole thing's over, and no more about it."

There was evidently something in these words that jarred upon a spirit of such natural tenderness as Jane's. While William was repeating them, her features expressed a feeling as if of much inward pain; and when he had concluded, she rose up, and seizing both his hands, said, in a tone of meek and earnest supplication:

“Oh! William dear, do not, do not—it is not consolation—it is distress.”

Page 47

"Dear Jane," said the good-natured brother, at once feeling his error, "pardon me, I was wrong; there is no resemblance in the cases—I only wanted to raise your spirits."

"True, William, true; I ought to thank you, and I do thank you."

Whilst this little incident took place, Mr. Sinclair came over and sat beside Charles.

"You see, my dear Charles," said he, "what a heavy task your separation from that poor girl is likely to prove. Let me beg that you will be as firm as possible, and sustain her by a cheerful play of spirits, if you can command them. Do violence to your own heart for this day for her sake."

"I will be firm, sir," said Osborne, "if I can: but if I fail—if I—look at her," he proceeded, in a choking voice, "look at her, and then ask yourself why I—I should be firm?"

Whilst he spoke, Jane came over, and seating herself between her father and him, said:

"Papa, you will stay with me and Charles this day, and support us. You know, papa, that I am but a weak, weak girl; but when I do a wrong thing, I feel very penitent—I cannot rest."

"You never did wrong, darling," said Osborne, pressing his lips to her cheek, "you never did wrong."

"Papa says I did not do much wrong; yet at one time I did not think so myself; but there is a thing presses upon me still. Papa," she added, turning abruptly to him, "are there not such things in this life as judgments from heaven?"

"Yes, my dear, upon the wicked who, by deep crimes, provoke the justice of the Almighty; but the ways of God are so mysterious, and the innocent so often suffer whilst the guilty escape, that we never almost hazard an opinion upon individual cases." "But there are cast-aways?" "Yes, darling; but here is Charles anxious to take you out to walk. With such a prospect of happiness and affection before you both, you ought surely to be in the best of spirits."

"Well, I can see why you evade my question," she replied; but she added abruptly, "bless us, papa, bless us." She knelt down, and pulled Charles gently upon his knees also, and joining both hands together, bent her head as if to receive the benediction.

Oh, mournful and heart-breaking was her loveliness, as she knelt down before the streaming eyes of her family—a Magdeline in beauty, without her guilt.

The old man, deeply moved by the distress of the interesting pair then bent before him, uttered a short prayer suitable to the occasion, after which he blessed them both, and

again recommended them to the care of heaven, in terms of touching and beautiful simplicity. His daughter seemed relieved by this, for, after rising, she went to her mother and said:

“We are going to walk, mamma. I must endeavor to keep my spirits up this day, for poor Charles’ sake.”

“Yes, love, do,” said her mother, “that’s a good girl. Let me see how cheerful and sprightly you’ll be; and think, dear, of the happy days that are before you and Charles yet, when you’ll live in love and affection, surrounded and cherished by both your families.”

Page 48

"Yes, yes," said she, "I often think of that—I'll try mamma—I'll try."

Saying which, she took Charles's arm, and the young persons all went out together.

Jane's place, that evening, was by Osborne's side, as it had been with something like a faint clinging of terror during the whole day. She spoke little, and might be said rather to respond to all he uttered, than to sustain a part in the dialogue. Her distress was assuredly deep, but they knew not then, nor by any means suspected how fearful was its character in the remote and hidden depths of her soul. She sat with Osborne's right hand between hers, and scarcely for a moment ever took her sparkling eyes off his countenance. Many times was she observed to mutter to herself, and her lips frequently moved as if she had been speaking, but no words were uttered, nor any sense of her distress expressed. Once, only, in the course of the evening, were they startled into a hush of terror and dismay, by a single short laugh, uttered so loud and wildly, that a pause followed it, and, as if with one consentaneous movement, they all assembled about her. Their appearance, however, seemed to bring her to herself, for with her left hand she wafted them away, saying, "Leave us—leave us—this is a day of sorrow to us—the day will end, but when, when, alas, will the sorrow? Papa, some of us will need your prayers now—the sunshine of Jane's life is over—I am the Fawn of Springvale no more—my time with the holy and affectionate flock of whom I was and am an unworthy one, will be short—I may be with you a day, as it were, the next is come and Jane is gone for ever."

"Father," said Osborne, "I shall not go;" and as he spoke he pressed her to his bosom—"I will never leave her."

The boy's tears fell rapidly upon her pale cheeks, and on feeling them she looked up and smiled.

The sobbings of the family were loud, and bitter were the tears which the tender position of the young and beautiful pair wrung from the eyes that looked upon them. "Your health, my boy," said his father, "my beautiful and only boy, render it necessary that you should go. It is but for a time, Jane dear, my daughter, my boy's beloved, it is only for a time—let him leave you for a little, and he will return confirmed in health and knowledge, and worthy my dear, dear girl, to be yours for ever."

"My daughter," said Mr. Sinclair, "was once good and obedient, and she will now do whatever is her own papa's wish."

"Name it, papa, name it," said she, still smiling.

"Suffer Charles to go, my darling—and do not—oh! do not take his departure so much to heart."



“Charles, you must go,” said she. “It is the wish of your own father and of mine—but above all, it is the wish of your own—you cannot, you must not gainsay him. What we can prosper which is founded on disobedience or deceit? You know the words you once loved so well to repeat—I will repeat them now—you must, you will not surely refuse the request of *your own Jane Sinclair*.”

Page 49

The boy seemed for some time irresolute but at length he clasped her in his arms, and, again, said, in a vehement burst of tenderness:

“No, father, my heart is resolved, I will never leave her. It will kill me, it will lay me in an early grave, and you will have no son to look upon.”

“But you will see the heroic example that Jane will set you,” said Mr. Sinclair, “she will shame you into firmness, for she will now take leave of you at once; and see then if you love her as you say you do, whether you will not respect her so far as to follow her example. Jane, bid Charles farewell.”

This was, perhaps, pressing her strength too far; at all events, the injunction came so unexpectedly, that a pause followed it, and they waited with painful expectation to see what she would do. For upwards of a minute she sat silent, and her lips moved as if she were communing with herself. At length she rose up, and stooping down kissed her lover’s cheek, then, taking his hand as before between hers, she said in a voice astonishingly calm.

“Charles, farewell—remember that I am your Jane Sinclair. Alas!” she added, “I am weak and feeble—help me out of the room.” Both her parents assisted her to leave it, but, on reaching the door, she drew back involuntarily, on hearing Osborne’s struggles to detain her.

“Papa,” she said, with a look inexpressibly woe-begone and suppliant—“Mamma!” “Sweet child, what is it?” said both. “Let me take one last look of him—it will be the last—but not—I—I trust, the last act of my duty to you both.”

She turned round and gazed upon him for some time—her features, as she looked, dilated into an expression of delight.

“Is he not,” said she, in a low placid whisper, while her smiling eye still rested upon him—“is he not beautiful? Oh! yes, he is beautiful—he is beautiful.”

“He is, darling—he is,” said both—“come away now—be only a good firm girl and all will soon be well.”

“Very, very beautiful,” said she, in a low contented voice, as without any further wish to remain, she accompanied her parents to another room.

Such was their leaving-taking—thus did they separate. Did they ever meet!

PART III.

In the history of the affections we know that circumstances sometimes occur, where duty and inclination maintain a conflict so nicely balanced so as to render it judicious not to exact a fulfillment of the former, lest by deranging the structure of our moral feelings, we render the mind either insensible to their existence, or incapable of regulating them. This observation applies only to those subordinate positions of life which involve no great principle of conduct, and violate no cardinal point of human duty. We ought neither to do evil nor suffer evil to be done, where our authority can prevent it, in order that good may follow. But in matters where our own will creates the offence,

Page 50

it is in some peculiar cases not only prudent but necessary to avoid straining a mind naturally delicate, beyond the powers which we know it to possess. We think, for instance, that it was wrong in Mr. Sinclair, at a moment when the act of separating from Osborne might have touched, the feelings of his daughter into that softness which lightens and relieves the heart, abruptly to suppress emotions so natural, by exacting a proof of obedience too severe and oppressive to the heart of one who loved as Jane did. She knew it was her duty to obey him the moment he expressed his wish; but he was bound by no duty to demand such an unnecessary proof of her obedience. The immediate consequences, however, made him sufficiently sensible of his error, and taught him that a knowledge of the human heart is the most difficult task which a parent has to learn.

Jane, conducted by her parents, having reached another apartment, sat down—her father taking a chair on one side, and her mother on the other.

“My darling,” said Mr. Sinclair, “I will never forget this proof of your obedience to me, on so trying an occasion. I knew I might rely upon my daughter.”

Jane made no reply to this, but sat apparently wrapped up in an ecstasy of calm and unbroken delight. The smile of happiness with which she contemplated Osborne, on taking her last look of him, was still upon her face, and contrasted so strongly with the agony which they knew she must have felt, that her parents, each from an apprehension of alarming the other, feared openly to allude to it, although they felt their hearts sink in dismay and terror.

“Jane, why do you not speak to your papa and me?” said her mother; “speak to us, love, speak to us—if it was only one word.”

She appeared not to hear this, nor to be at all affected by her mother’s voice or words. After the latter spoke she smiled again, and immediately putting up her long white fingers through the ringlets that shaded her cheek, she pulled them down as one would pressing them with slight convulsive energy as they passed through, her fingers.

“Henry, dear, what—what is the matter with her?” inquired her mother, whose face became pale with alarm. “Oh! what is wrong with my child!—she does not know us!—Gracious heaven, what is this!”

“Jane, my love, wont you speak to your papa?” said Mr. Sinclair. “Speak to me, my darling,—it is I,—it is your own papa that asks you?”

She looked up, and seemed for a moment struggling to recover a consciousness of her situation; but it passed away, and the scarcely perceptible meaning which began almost



to become visible in her eye, was again succeeded by that smile which they both so much dreaded to see.

The old man shook his head, and looked with a brow darkened by sorrow, first upon his daughter, and afterwards upon his wife. "My heart's delight," he exclaimed, "I fear I have demanded more from your obedience than you could perform without danger to yourself. I wish I had allowed her grief to flow, and not required such an abrupt and unseasonable proof of her duty. It was too severe an injunction to a creature so mild and affectionate,—and would to God that I had not sought it!"

Page 51

"Would to heaven that you had not, my dear Henry. Let us try, however, and move her heart,—if tears could come she would be relieved."

"Bring Agnes in," said her father, "bring in Agnes, she may succeed better with her than we can,—and if Charles be not already gone, there is no use in distressing him by at all alluding to her situation. She is only overpowered, I trust, and will soon recover." The mother, on her way to bring Agnes to her sister, met the rest of the family returning to the house after having taken leave of Osborne. The two girls were weeping, for they looked upon him as already a brother; whilst William, in a good-humored tone, bantered them for the want of firmness.

"I think, mother," said he, "they are all in love with him, if they would admit it. Why here's Maria and Agnes, and I dare say they're making as great a rout about him as Jane herself! But bless me! what's the matter, mother, that you look so pale and full of alarm?"

"It's Jane—it's Jane," said Agnes. "Mother, there's something wrong!" and as she spoke she stopped, with uplifted hands, apparently fastened to the earth.

"My poor child!" exclaimed her mother,—*"for heaven's sake come in, Agnes. Oh, heaven grant that it may soon pass away. Agnes, dear girl, you know her best—come in quick; her papa wants you to try what you can do with her."*

In a moment this loving family, with pale faces and beating hearts, stood in a circle about their affectionate and beautiful sister. Jane sat with her passive hand tenderly pressed between her father's,—smiling; but whether in unconscious happiness or unconscious misery, who alas! can say?

"You see she knows none of us," said her mother. "Neither her papa nor me. Speak to her each of you, in turn. Perhaps you may be more successful. Agnes,—"

"She will know me," replied Agnes; "I am certain she will know me;"—and the delightful girl spoke with an energy that was based upon the confidence of that love which subsisted between them. Maria and her brother both burst into tears; but Agnes's affection rose above the mood of ordinary grief. The confidence that her beloved sister's tenderness for her would enable her to touch a chord in a heart so utterly her own as Jane's was, assumed upon this occasion the character of a wild but mournful enthusiasm, that was much more expressive of her attachment than could be the loudest and most vehement sorrow.

"If she could but shed tears," said her mother, wringing her hands.

"She will," returned Agnes, "she will. Jane," she exclaimed, "Jane, don't you know your own Agnes?—your own Agnes, Jane?"

The family waited in silence for half a minute, but their beloved one smiled on, and gave not the slightest token of recognizing either Agnes's person or her voice. Sometimes her lips moved, and she appeared to be repeating certain words to herself, but in a voice so low and indistinct that no one could catch them.

Page 52

Agnes's enthusiasm abandoned her on seeing that that voice to which her own dearest sister ever sweetly and lovingly responded, fell upon her ear as an idle and unmeaning sound. Her face became deadly pale, and her lip quivered, as she again addressed the unconscious girl. Once more she took her hand in hers, and placing herself before her, put her fingers to her cheek in order to arrest her attention.

"Jane, look upon me; look upon me;—that's a sweet child,—look upon me. Sure I am Agnes—your own Agnes, who will break her heart if my sweet sister doesn't speak to her."

The stricken one raised her head, and looked into her face; but it was, alas! too apparent that she saw her not; for the eye, though smiling, was still vacant. Again her lips moved, and she spoke so as to be understood towards the door through which she had entered.

"Yes," she exclaimed, in the same low, placid voice, "yes, he is beautiful! Is he not beautiful? Fatal beauty!—fatal beauty! It is a fatal thing—it is a fatal thing!—but he is very, very beautiful!"

"Jane," said Maria, taking her hand from Agnes's, "Jane, speak to Maria, dear. Am not I, too, your own Maria? that loves you not less than—my darling, darling child—they do not live that love you better than your own Maria;—in pity, darling, in pity speak to me!"

The only reply was a smile, that rose into the murmuring music of a low laugh; but this soon ceased, her countenance became troubled, and her finely-pencilled brows knit, as if with an inward sense of physical pain. William, her father, her mother, each successively addressed her, but to no purpose. Though a slight change had taken place, they could not succeed in awakening her reason to a perception of the circumstances in which she was placed. They only saw that the unity of her thought, or of the image whose beauty veiled the faculties of her mind was broken, and that some other memory, painful in its nature, had come in to disturb the serenity of her unreal happiness; but this, which ought to have given them hope, only alarmed them the more. The father, while these tender and affecting experiments were tried, sat beside her, his eyes laboring under a weight of deep and indescribable calamity, and turning from her face to the faces of those who attempted to recall her reason, with a mute vehemence of sorrow which called up from the depths of their sister's misery a feeling of compassion for the old man whom she had so devotedly loved.

"My father's heart is breaking," said William, groaning aloud, and covering his face with his hands. "Father, your face frightens me more than Jane's;—don't, father, don't. She is young,—it will pass away—and father dear where is your reliance upon her—upon her aid!"

“Dear Henry,” said his wife, “you should be our support. It is the business of your life to comfort and sustain the afflicted.”

“Papa,” said Agnes, “come with me for a few minutes, until you recover the shock which —which——”

Page 53

She stopped, and dropping her head upon the knees of her smiling and apparently happy sister, wept aloud.

“Agnes—Agnes,” said William, (they were all in tears except her father) “Agnes, I am ashamed of you;”—yet his own cheeks were wet, and his voice faltered. “Father, come with me for awhile. You will when alone for a few minutes, bethink you of your duty—for it is your duty to bear this not only as becomes a Christian man, but a Christian minister, who is bound to give us example as well as precept.”

“I know it, William, I know it;—and you shall witness my fortitude, my patience, my resignation under this--this----- I will retire. But is she not—alas! I should say, was she not my youngest and my dearest! You admit yourselves she was the best.”

“Father, come,” said William.

“Dear father—dear papa, go with him,” said Agnes.

“My father,” said Maria, “as he said to *her*, will be himself.”

“I will go,” said the old man; “I know how to be firm; I will reflect; I will pray; I will weep. I must, I must——”

He pressed the beautiful creature to his bosom, kissed her lips, and as he hung over her, his tears fell in torrents upon her cheeks.

Oh! what a charm must be in sympathy, and in the tears which it sheds over the afflicted, when those of the grey-haired father could soothe his daughter’s soul into that sorrow which is so often a relief to the miserable and disconsolate!

When Jane first felt his tears upon her cheeks, she started slightly, and the smile departed from her countenance. As he pressed her to his heart she struggled a little, and putting her arms out, she turned up her eyes upon his face, and after a long struggle between memory and insanity, at length whispered out “papa!”

“You are with me, darling,” he exclaimed; “and I am with you, too: and here we are all about you,—your mother, and Agnes, and all.”

“Yes, yes,” she replied; “but papa,—and where is my mamma?”

“I am here, my own love; here I am. Jane, collect yourself, my treasure. You are overcome with sorrow. The parting from Charles Osborne has been too much for you.”

“Perhaps it was wrong to mention his name,” whispered William. “May it not occasion a relapse, mother?”

“No,” she replied. “I want to touch her heart, and get her to weep if possible.”

Her daughter’s fingers were again involved in the tangles of her beautiful ringlets, and once more was the sweet but vacant smile returning to her lips.

“May God relieve her and us,” said Maria; “the darling child is relapsing!”

Agnes felt so utterly overcome, that she stooped, and throwing her arms around her neck wept aloud, with her cheek laid to Jane’s.

Again the warmth of the tears upon the afflicted one’s face seemed to soothe or awaken her. She looked up, and with a troubled face exclaimed:—

Page 54

"I hope I am not!—Agnes, you are good, and never practised deceit,—am I? am I?"

"Are you what, love? are you what, Jane, darling?"

"Am I a cast-away? I thought I was. I believe I am—Agnes?"

"Well, dear girl!"

"I am afraid of my papa."

"Why, Jane, should you be afraid of papa. Sure you know how he loves you—dotes upon you?"

"Because I practised deceit upon him. I dissembled to him. I sinned, sinned deeply;—blackly, blackly. I shudder to think of it;" and she shuddered while speaking.

"Well, but Jane dear," said her mother, soothingly, "can you not weep for your fault. Tears of repentance can wipe out any crime. Weep, my child, weep, and it will relieve your heart."

"I would like to see my papa," she replied. "I should be glad to hear that he forgives me: how glad! how glad! That's all that troubles your poor Jane; all in the world that troubles her poor heart—I think."

These words were uttered in a tone of such deep and inexpressible misery, and with such an innocent and childlike unconsciousness of the calamity which weighed her down that no heart possessing common humanity could avoid being overcome.

"Look on me, love," exclaimed her father. "Your papa is here, ready to pity and forgive you."

"William," said Agnes, "a thought strikes me,—the air that Charles played when they first met has been her favorite ever since you know it—go get your flute and play it with as much feeling as you can."

Jane made no reply to her father's words. She sat musing, and once or twice put up her hand to her sidelocks, but immediately withdrew it, and again fell into a reverie. Sometimes her face brightened into the fatal smile, and again became overshadowed with a gloom that seemed to proceed from a feeling of natural grief. Indeed the play of meaning and insanity, as they chased each other over a countenance so beautiful, was an awful sight, even to an indifferent beholder, much less to those who then stood about her.

William in about a minute returned with his flute, and placing himself behind her, commenced the air in a spirit more mournful probably than any in which it had ever

before been played. For a long time she noticed it not: that is to say, she betrayed no external marks of attention to it. They could perceive, however, that although she neither moved nor looked around her, yet the awful play of her features ceased, and; their expression became more intelligent and natural. At length she sighed deeply several times, though without appearing to hear the music; and at length, without uttering a word to any one of them, she laid her head upon her father's bosom, and the tears fell; in placid torrents down her cheeks. By a signal from his hand, Mr. Sinclair intimated that for the present they should be silent; and by another addressed to William, that he should play on. He did so, and she wept copiously under the influence of that charmed melody for more than twenty minutes.

Page 55

"It would be well for me," she at length said, "that is, I fear it would, that I had never heard that air, or seen him who first sent its melancholy music to my heart. He is gone; but when—when will he return?"

"Do not take his departure so heavily, dear child," said her father. "If you were acquainted with life and the world you would know that a journey to the Continent is nothing. Two years to one as young as you are will soon pass."

"It would, papa, if I loved him less. But my love for him—my love for him—that now is my misery. I must, however, rely upon other strength than my own. Papa, kneel down and pray for me,—and you, mamma, and all of you; for I fear I am myself incapable of praying as I used to do, with an un-divided heart."

Her father knelt down, but knowing her weak state of mind, he made his supplication as short and simple as might be consistent with the discharge of a duty so solemn.

"Now," said she, when it was concluded, "will you, mamma, and Agnes, help me to bed; I am very much exhausted, and my heart is sunk as if it were never to beat lightly again. It may yet; I would hope it,—hope it if I could."

They allowed her her own way, and without any allusion whatsoever to Charles, or his departure, more than she had made herself, they embraced her; and in a few minutes she was in bed, and as was soon evident to Agnes, who watched her, in a sound sleep.

Why is it that those who are dear to us are more tenderly dear to us while asleep than while awake? It is indeed difficult to say but we know that there are many in life and nature, especially in the and affections, which we feel as distinct truths without being able to satisfy ourselves they are so. This is one of them. What parent does not love the offspring more glowingly while the features are composed in sleep? What young husband does not feel his heart melt with a warmer emotion, on contemplating the countenance of his youthful wife, when that countenance is overshadowed with the placid but somewhat mournful beauty of repose?

When the family understood from Agnes that Jane had fallen into a slumber, they stole up quietly, and standing about her, each looked upon her with a long gaze of relief and satisfaction; for they knew that sleep would repair the injury which the trial of that day had wrought upon a mind so delicately framed as her's. We question not but where there is beauty it is still more beautiful in sleep. The passions are then at rest, and the still harmony of the countenance unbroken by the jarring discords and vexations of waking life; every feature then falls into its natural place, and renders the symmetry of the face chaster, whilst its general expression breathes more of that tender and pensive character, which constitutes the highest order of beauty.

Page 56

Jane's countenance, in itself so exquisitely lovely, was now an object of deep and melancholy interest. Upon it might be observed faint traces of those contending emotions whose struggle had been on that day so nearly fatal to her mind for ever. The smile left behind it a faint and dying light, like the dim radiance of a spring evening when melting into dusk;—whilst the secret dread of becoming a cast-away, and the still abiding consciousness of having deceived her father, blended into the languid serenity of her face a slight expression of the pain they had occasioned her while awake.

“Unhappy girl! There she lay in her innocence and beauty like a summer lake whose clear waters have settled into stillness after a recent storm; reflecting, as they pass, the clouds now softened into milder forms, which had but a little time before so deeply agitated them.

“Oh, no wonder,” said her father, “that the boy who loves her should say he would not leave her, and that separation would break down the strength of his heart and spirit. A fairer thing—a purer being never closed her eyelids upon the cares and trials of life. Light may those cars be, oh! beloved of our hearts; and refreshing the slumbers that are upon you; and may the blessing and merciful providence of God guard and keep you from evil! Amen! Amen!”

Maria on this occasion was deeply affected Jane's arm lay outside the coverlid, and her sister observed that her white and beautiful fingers were affected from time to time with slight starting twitches, apparently nervous.

This, contrasted with the stillness of her face, impressed the girl with an apprehension that the young mourner, though asleep, was still suffering pain; but when her father spoke and blessed her, she felt her heart getting full, and bending over Jane she imprinted a kiss upon her cheek;—affectionate, indeed, was that kiss, but timid and light as the full of the thistle-down upon a leaf of the rose or the lily. When she withdrew her lips, a tear was visible on the cheek of the sleeper—a circumstance which, slight as it was, gave a character of inexpressible love and tenderness to the act. They then quietly left her, with the exertion of Agnes, and all were relieved and delighted at seeing her enjoy a slumber so sound and refreshing.

The next morning they arose earlier than usual, in order to watch the mood in which she might awake; and when Agnes, who had been her bed-fellow, came down stairs, every eye was turned upon her with an anxiety proportioned to the disastrous consequences that might result from any unfavorable turn in her state of feeling.

“Agnes,” said her father, “how is she?—in what state?—in what frame of mind?”

“She appears much distressed, papa—feels conscious that Charles is gone—but as yet has made no allusion to their parting yesterday. Indeed I do not think she remembers it. She is already up, and begged this moment of me to leave her to herself for a little.”

Page 57

“I want strength, Agnes,” said she, “and I know there is but one source from which I can obtain it. Advice, consolation, and sympathy, I may and will receive here; but strength—strength is what I most stand in need of, and that only can proceed from Him who gives rest to the heavy laden.”

“You feel too deeply, Jane,” I replied; “you should try to be firm.”

“I do try, Agnes; but tell me, have I not been unwell, very unwell?”

“Your feelings, dear Jane, overcame you yesterday, as was natural they should—but now that you are calm, of course you will not yield to despondency or melancholy. Your dejection, though at present deep, will soon pass away, and ere many days you will be as cheerful as ever.”

“I hope so; but Charles is gone, is he not?”

“But you know it was necessary that he should travel for his health; besides, have you not formed a plan of correspondence with each other?”

“Then,” proceeded Agnes, “she pulled out the locket which contained his hair, and after looking on it for about a minute, she kissed it, pressed it to her heart, and whilst in the act of doing so a few tears ran down her cheeks.

“I am glad of that,” observed her mother; “it is a sign that this heavy grief will not long-abide upon her.”

“She then desired me,” continued Agnes, “to leave her, and expressed a sense of her own weakness, and the necessity of spiritual support, as I have already told you. I am sure the worst is over.”

“Blessed be God, I trust it is,” said her father; “but whilst I live, I will never demand from her such a proof of her obedience as that which I imposed upon her yesterday. She will soon be down to breakfast, and we must treat the dear girl kindly, and gently, and affectionately; tenderly, tenderly must she be treated; and, children, much depends upon you—keep her mind engaged. You have music—play more than you do—read more—walk more—sing more. I myself will commence a short course of lectures upon the duties and character of women, in the single and married state of life; alternately with which I will also give you a short course upon *Belles-Lettres*. If this engages and relieves her mind, it will answer an important purpose; but at all events it will be time well spent, and that is something.”

When Jane appeared at breakfast, she was paler than usual; but then the expression of her countenance, though pensive, was natural. Mr. Sinclair placed her between himself and her mother, and each kissed her in silence ere she sat down.



"I have been very unwell yesterday, papa. I know I must have been; but I have made my mind up to bear his absence with fortitude—not that it is his mere absence which I feel so severely, but an impression that some calamity is to occur either to him or me."

"Impressions of that kind, my dear child, are the results of low spirits and a nervous habit. You should not suffer your mind to be disturbed by them; for, when it is weakened by suffering, they gather strength, and sometimes become formidable."

Page 58

"There is no bearing my calamity, papa, as it ought to be borne, without the grace of God, and you know we must pray to be made worthy of that. I dare say that if I am resigned and submissive that my usual cheerfulness will gradually return. I have confidence in heaven, papa, but none in my own strength, or I should rather say in my own weakness. My attachment to Charles resembles a disease more than a healthy and rational passion. I know it is excessive, and I indeed think its excess is a disease. Yet it is singular I do not fear my heart, papa, but I do my head; here is where the danger lies—here—here;" and as she spoke, she applied her hand to her forehead and gave a faint smile of melancholy apprehension.

"Wait, Jane," said her brother; "just wait for a week or ten days, and if you don't scold yourself for being now so childish, why never call me brother again. Sure I understand these things like a philosopher. I have been three times in love myself."

Jane looked at him, and a faint sparkle of her usual good nature lit up her countenance.

"Didn't I tell you," he proceeded, addressing them—"look; why I'll soon have her as merry as a kid."

"But who were you in love with, William," asked Agnes.

"I was smitten first with Kate Sharp, the Applewoman, in consideration of her charmin' method of giving me credit for fruit when I was a school-boy, and had no money. I thought her a very interesting woman, I assure you, and preferred my suit to her With signal success. I say signal, for you know she was then, as she is now, very hard of hearing, and I was forced to pay my suit to her by signs."

"Dear William," said she, "I see your motive, and love you for it; but it is too soon—my spirits are not yet in tone for mirth or pleasantry—but they will be—they will be. I know it is too bad to permit an affliction that is merely sentimental to bear me down in this manner; but I cannot help it, and you must all only look on me as a weak, foolish girl, and forgive me, and pity me. Mamma, I will lie down again, for I feel I am not, well; and oh, papa, if you ever prayed with fervor and sincerity, pray for strength to your own Jane, and happiness to her stricken heart."

She then retired, and for the remainder of that day confined herself partly to her bed, and altogether to her chamber; and it was observed, that from the innocent caprices of a sickly spirit, she called Agnes, and her mother, and Maria—sometimes one, and sometimes another—and had them always about her, each to hear a particular observation that occurred to her, or to ask some simple question, of no importance to any person except to one whose mind had become too sensitive upon the subject which altogether engrossed it. Towards evening she had a long fit of weeping, after which she appeared more calm and resigned. She made her mother read her a chapter in the

Bible, and expressed a resolution to bear every thing she said as became one she hoped not yet beyond the reach of Divine grace and Christian consolation.

Page 59

After a second night's sleep she arose considerably relieved from the gloomy grief which had nearly wrought such a dreadful change in her intellect. Her father's plan of imperceptibly engaging her attention by instruction and amusement was carried into effect by him and her sisters, with such singular success, that at the lapse of a month she was almost restored to her wonted spirits. We say almost, because it was observed that, notwithstanding her apparent serenity, she never afterwards reached the same degree of cheerfulness, nor so richly exhibited in her complexion that purple glow, the hue of which lies like a visible charm upon the cheek of youthful beauty.

Time, however, is the best philosopher, and our heroine found that ere many weeks she could, with the exception of slight intervals, look back upon the day of separation from Osborne, and forward to the expectation of his return, with a calmness of spirit by no means displeasing to one who had placed such unlimited confidence in his affection. His first letter soothed, relieved, transported her. Indeed, so completely was she overcome on receiving it, that the moment it was placed in her hands, her eyes seemed to have been changed into light, her limbs trembled with the agitation of a happiness so intense; and she at length sank into an ecstasy of joy, which was only relieved by a copious flood of tears.

For two years after this their correspondence was as regular as the uncertain motions of a tourist could permit it. Jane appeared to be happy, and she was so within the limits of an enjoyment, narrowed in its character by the contingency arising from time and distance, and the other probabilities of disappointment which a timid heart and a pensive fancy will too often shape into certainty. Fits of musing and melancholy she often had without any apparent cause, and when gently taken to task, or remonstrated with concerning them, she had only replied by weeping, or admitted that she could by no means account for her depression, except by saying that she believed it to be a defect in the habit and temper of her mind.

His tutor's letters, both to Charles's father and hers, were nearly as welcome to Jane as his own. He, in fact, could say that for his pupil, which his pupil's modesty would not permit him to say for himself. Oh! how her heart glowed, and conscious pride sparkled in her eye, when that worthy man described, the character of manly beauty which time and travel had gradually given to his person! And when his progress in knowledge and accomplishments, and the development of his taste and judgment became the theme of his tutor's panegyric, she could not listen without betraying the vehement enthusiasm of a passion, which absence and time had only strengthened in her bosom.

Page 60

These letters induced a series of sensations at once novel and delightful, and such as were calculated to give zest to an attachment thus left, to support itself, not from the presence of its object, but from the memory of tenderness that had already gone by. She knew Charles Osborne only as a boy—a beautiful boy it is true—and he knew her only as a graceful creature, whose extremely youthful appearance made it difficult whether to consider her merely as an advanced girl, or as a young female who had just passed into the first stage of womanhood. But now her fancy and affection had both room to indulge in that vivacious play which delights to paint a lover absent under such circumstances in the richest hues of imaginary beauty.

“How will he look,” she would say to her sister Agnes, “when he returns a young man, settled into the fulness of his growth? Taller he will be, and much more manly in his deportment. But is there no danger, Agnes, of his losing in grace, in delicacy of complexion, in short, of losing in beauty what he may gain otherwise?”

“No, my dear, not in the least; you will be ten times prouder of him after his return than you ever were. There is something much more noble and dignified in the love of a man than in that of a boy, and you will feel this on seeing him.”

“In that case, Agnes, I shall have to fall in love with him over again, and to fall in love with the same individual twice, will certainly be rather a novel case—a double passion, at least, you will grant, Agnes.”

“But he will experience sensations quite as singular on seeing you, when he returns. You are as much changed—improved I mean—in your person, as he can be for his life. If he is now a fine, full-grown young man, you are a tall, elegant—I don’t, want to flatter you, Jane,—I need not say graceful, for that you always were, but I may add with truth, a majestic young woman. Why, you will scarcely know each other.”

“You do flatter me, Agnes; but am I so much improved?”

“Indeed you are quite a different girl from what you were when he saw you.”

“I am glad of it; but as I told him once, it is on his account that I am so glad; do you know, Agnes, I never was vain of my beauty until I saw Charles?”

“Did you ever feel proud in being beautiful in the eyes of another, Jane?”

“No, I never did—why should I?”

“Well, that is not vanity—it is only love visible in a different aspect, and not the least amiable either, my dear.”

“Well, I should be much more melancholy than I am, were not my fancy so often engaged in picturing to myself the change which may be on him when he returns. The

feeling it occasions is novel and agreeable, sometimes, indeed, delightful, and so far sustains me when I am inclined to be gloomy. But believe me, Agnes, I could love Charles Osborne even if he were not handsome. I could love him for his mind, his principles, and especially for his faithful and constant heart."

Page 61

“And for all these he would deserve your love; but you remember what you told me once: it seems he has not yet seen a girl that he thinks more handsome than you are. Did you not mention to me that he said when he did, he would cease to write to you and cease to love you? You see he is constant.”

“Yes; but did I not tell you the sense in which he meant it?”

“Yes; and now you throw a glance at yourself in the glass! Oh Jane, Jane, the best of us and the freest from imperfection is not without a little pride and vanity; but don’t be too confident, my saucy beauty; consider that you complained to William yesterday, about the unusual length of time that has elapsed since you received his last letter, and yet he could, write to his fa—— What, what, dear girl, what’s the matter? you are as pale as death.”

“Because, Agnes, I never think of that but my heart and spirits sink. It has been one of the secret causes of my occasional depressions ever since he went. I cannot tell why, but from the moment the words were spoken, I have not been without a presentiment of evil.”

“Even upon your own showing, Jane, that is an idle and groundless impression, and unworthy the affection which you know, and which we all know he bears you; dismiss it, dear Jane, dismiss it, and do not give yourself the habit of creating imaginary evils.”

“I know I am prone to such a habit, and am probably too much of a visionary for my own happiness; but setting that gloomy presentiment aside, have you not, Agnes, been struck with several hints in his letters, both to me and his father, unfavorable to the state of his health.”

“That you will allow, could not be very ill, when he was able to continue his travels.”

“True, but according to his own admission his arrangements were frequently broken up, by the fact of his being ‘unwell,’ and ‘not in a condition to travel,’ and so did not reach the places in time to which he had requested me to direct many of my letters. I fear, Agnes, that his health has not been so much improved by the air of the continent as we hoped it would.”

“I have only to say this, Jane, that if he does not appreciate your affection as he ought to do, then God forgive him. He will be guilty of a crime against the purest attachment of the best of hearts, as well as against truth and honor. I hope he may be worthy of you, and I am sure he will. He is now in Bath, however, and will soon be with us.”

“I am divided, Agnes, by two principles—if they may be called such—or if you will, by two moods of mind, or states of feeling; one of them is faith and trust in his affection—how can I doubt it?—the other is malady, I believe, a gloom, an occasional

despondency for which I cannot account, and which I am not able to shake off. My faith and trust, however, will last, and his return will dispel the other.”

Page 62

This, in fact, was the true state of the faithful girl's heart. From the moment Osborne went to travel, her affection, though full of the tenderest enthusiasm, lay under the deep shadow of that gloom, which was occasioned by the first, and we may say the only act of insincerity she was ever guilty of towards her father. The reader knows that even this act was not a deliberate one, but merely the hurried evasion of a young and bashful girl, who, had her sense of moral delicacy been less acute, might have never bestowed a moment's subsequent consideration upon it. Let our fair young readers, however, be warned even by this very slight deviation from truth, and let them also remember that one act of dissimulation may, in the little world of their own moral sentiments and affections, lay the foundation for calamities under which their hopes and their happiness in consequence of that act may absolutely perish. Still are we bound to say that Jane's deportment during the period, stipulated upon for Osborne's absence was admirably decorous, and replete with moral beauty. Her moments of enjoyment derived from his letters, were fraught with an innocent simplicity of delight in fine keeping with a heart so full of youthful fervor and attachment. And when her imagination became occasionally darkened by that gloom which she termed her malady, nothing could be more impressive than the tone of deep and touching piety which mingled with and elevated her melancholy into a cheerful solemnity of spirit, that swayed by its pensive dignity the habits and affections of her whole family.

'Tis true she was one of a class rarely to be found among even the highest of her own sex, and her attachment was consequently that of a heart utterly incapable of loving twice. Her first affection was too steadfast and decisive ever to be changed, and at the same time too full and unreserved to maintain the materials for a second passion. The impression she received was too deep ever to be erased. She might weep—she might mourn—she might sink—her soul might be bowed down to the dust—her heart might break—she might die—but she never, never, could love again. That heart was his palace, where the monarch of her affections reigned—but remove his throne, and it became the sepulchre of her own hopes—the ruin, haunted by the moping brood of her own sorrows. Often, indeed, did her family wonder at the freshness of memory manifested in the character of her love for Osborne. There was nothing transient, nothing forgotten, nothing perishable in her devotion to him. In truth, it had something of divinity in it. Every thing past, and much also of the future was present to her. Osborne breathed and lived at the expiration of two years, just as he had done the day before he set out on his travels. In her heart he existed as an undying principle, and the duration of her love for him seemed likely to be limited only by those laws of nature, which, in the course of time, carry the heart beyond the memory of all human affections.

Page 63

It would, indeed, be almost impossible to see a creature so lovely and angelic as was our heroine, about the period when Osborne was expected to return. Retaining all the graceful elasticity of motion that characterized her when first introduced to our readers, she was now taller and more majestic in her person, rounder and with more symmetry in her figure, and also more conspicuous for the singular ease and harmony of her general deportment. Her hair, too, now grown to greater luxuriance, had become several shades deeper, and, of course, was much more rich than when Charles saw it last. But if there was any thing that, more than another, gave an expression of tenderness to her beauty, it was the under-tone of color—the slightly perceptible paleness which marked her complexion as that of a person whose heart though young had already been made acquainted with some early sorrow.

Had her lover then seen her, and witnessed the growth of charms that had taken place during his absence, he and she might both, alas, have experienced another and a kinder destiny.

The time at length arrived when Charles, as had been settled upon by both their parents, was expected to return. During the three months previous he had been at Bath, accompanied of course by his friend and tutor. Up until a short time previous to his arrival there, his communications to his parents and to Jane were not only punctual and regular, but remarkable for the earnest spirit of dutiful affection and fervid attachment which they breathed to both. It is true that his father had, during the whole period of his absence, been cognizant of that which the vigilance of Jane's love for him only suspected—I allude to the state of his health, which it seems occasionally betrayed symptoms of his hereditary complaint.

This gave Mr. Osborne deep concern, for he had hoped that so long a residence in more genial climates would have gradually removed from his son's constitution that tendency to decline which was so much dreaded by them all. Still he was gratified to hear, that with the exception of those slight recurrences, the boy grew fast and otherwise with a healthy energy into manhood. The principles he had set out with were unimpaired by the influence of continental profligacy. His mind was enlarged, his knowledge greatly extended, and his taste and manners polished to a degree so unusual, that he soon became the ornament of every circle in which he moved. His talents, now ripe and cultivated, were not only of a high, but also of a striking and brilliant character—much too commanding and powerful, as every one said, to be permitted to sink into the obscurity of private life.

This language was not without its due impression on young Osborne's mind; for his tutor could observe that soon after his return to England he began to have fits of musing, and was often abstracted, if not absolutely gloomy. He could also perceive a disinclination to write home, for which he felt it impossible to account. At first he attributed this to ill health, or to those natural depressions which frequently precede or accompany it; but at length on seeing his habitual absences increase, he inquired in a

tone of friendly sympathy, too sincere to be doubted, why it was that a change so unusual had become so remarkably visible in his spirits.

Page 64

"I knew not," replied Osborne, "that it was so; I myself have not observed what you speak of."

"Your manner, indeed, is much changed," said his friend; "you appear to me, and I dare say to others, very like a man whose mind is engaged upon the consideration of some subject that is deeply painful to him, and of which he knows not how to dispose. If it be so, my dear Osborne, command my advice, my sympathy, my friendship."

"I assure you, my dear friend, I was perfectly unconscious of this. But that I *have* for some time past been thinking—more seriously than usual of the position in society which I ought to select, I grant you. You are pleased to flatter me with the possession of talents that you say might enable any man to reach a commanding station in public life. Now, for what purpose are talents given? or am I justified in sinking away into obscurity when I might create my own fortune, perhaps my own rank, by rendering some of the noblest services to my country. That wish to leave behind one a name that cannot die, is indeed a splendid ambition!"

"I thought," replied the other, "that you had already embraced views of a different character, entered into by your father to promote your-own happiness."

Osborne started, blushed, and for more than half a minute returned no answer. "True," said he at last, "true, I had forgotten that."

His tutor immediately perceived that an ambition not unnatural, indeed, to a young man possessing such fine talents, had strongly seized upon his heart, and knowing as he did his attachment to Jane, he would have advised his immediate return home, had it not been already determined on, in consequence of medical advice, that he himself should visit Bath for the benefit of his health, and his pupil could by no arguments be dissuaded from accompanying him.

This brief view of Osborne's intentions, at the close of the period agreed on for his return, was necessary to explain an observation made by Agnes in the last dialogue which we have given between herself and her younger sister. We allude to the complaint which she playfully charged Jane with having made to her brother concerning the length of time which had elapsed since she last heard from her lover. The truth is, that with the exception of Jane herself, both families were even then deeply troubled in consequence of a letter directed by Charles's tutor to Mr. Osborne. That letter was the last which the amiable gentleman ever wrote, for he had not been in Bath above a week when he sank suddenly under a disease of the heart, to which he had for some years been subject. His death, which distressed young Osborne very much, enabled him, however, to plead the necessity of attending to his friend's obsequies, in reply to his father's call on him to return to his family. The next letter stated that he would not lose a moment in complying with his wishes, as no motive existed to detain him

Page 65

from home, and the third expressed the uncommon benefit which he had, during his brief residence there, experienced from the use of the waters. Against this last argument the father had nothing to urge. His son's health was to him a consideration paramount to every other, and when he found himself improved either by the air or waters of Bath, he should not hurry his return as he had intended. "Only write to your friends," said he, "they are as anxious for the perfect establishment of your health as I am."

This latter correspondence between Mr. Osborne and his son, was submitted to Mr. Sinclair, that it might be mentioned to serve as an apology for Charles's delay in replying to her last letter. This step was suggested by Mr. Sinclair himself, who dreaded the consequences which any appearance of neglect might have upon a heart so liable to droop as that of his gentle daughter. Jane, who was easily depressed, but not suspicious, smiled at the simplicity of her papa, as she said, in deeming it necessary to make any apology for Charles Osborne's not writing to her by return of post.

"It will be time enough," she added, "when his letters get cool, and come but seldom, to make excuses for him. Surely, my dear papa, if any one blamed him, I myself would be, and ought to be the first to defend him."

"Yet," observed William, "you could complain to me about his letting a letter of yours stand over a fortnight before he answered it. Jane—Jane—there's no knowing you girls; particularly when you're in love; but, indeed, then you don't know yourselves, so how should we?"

"But, papa," she added, looking earnestly upon him; "it is rather strange that you are so anxious to apologize for Charles. I cannot question my papa, and I shall not; but yet upon second thoughts, it is very strange."

"No, my love, but I would not have you a day uneasy."

"Well," she replied, musing—but with a keen eye bent alternately upon him and William; "it is a simple case, I myself have a very ready solution for his want of punctuality, if it can be called such, or if it continue such."

"And pray what is it, Jane," asked William.

"Excuse me, dear William—if I told you it might reach him, and then he might shape his conduct to meet it—I may mention it some day, though; but I hope there will never be occasion. Papa, don't you ask me, because if you do, I shall feel it my duty to tell you; and I would rather not, sir, except you press me. But why after all should I make a secret of it. It is, papa, the test of all things, as well as of Charles's punctuality—for, of

his affection I will never doubt. It is time—time; but indeed I wish you had not spoken to me about it; I was not uneasy.”

Page 66

The poor girl judged Osborne through a misapprehension which, had she known more of life, or even reflected upon his neglect in writing to her, would have probably caused her to contemplate his conduct in a different light. She thought because his letters were nearly as frequent since his return to England, as they had been during his tour on the continent, that the test of his respect and attachment was sustained. In fact, she was ignorant that he had written several letters of late to his own family, without having addressed to her a single line; or even mentioned her name, and this circumstance was known to them all, with the exception of herself, as was the tutor's previous letter, of which she had never heard.

It was no wonder, therefore, that her father, who was acquainted with this, and entertained such serious apprehensions for his daughter's state of mind, should feel anxious, that until Osborne's conduct were better understood, no doubt of his sincerity should reach the confiding girl's heart. The old man, however, unconsciously acted upon his own impressions rather than on Jane's knowledge of what had occurred. In truth, he forgot that the actual state of the matter was unknown to her, and the consequence was, that in attempting to efface an impression that did not exist, he alarmed her suspicion by his mysterious earnestness of manner, and thereby created the very uneasiness he wished to remove.

From this day forward, Jane's eye became studiously vigilant of the looks and motions of the family. Her melancholy returned, but it was softer and serener than it had ever been before; so did the mild but pensive spirit of devotion which had uniformly accompanied it. The sweetness of her manner was irresistible, if not affecting, for there breathed through the composure of her countenance an air of mingled sorrow and patience, so finely blended, that it was difficult to determine, on looking at her, whether she secretly rejoiced or mourned.

A few days more brought another letter from Osborne to his father, which contained a proposal for which the latter, in consequence of the tutor's letter, was not altogether unprepared. It was a case put to the father for the purpose of ascertaining whether, if he, Charles, were offered an opportunity of appearing in public life, he would recommend him to accept it. He did not say that such an opening had really presented itself, but he strongly urged his father's permission to embrace it if it should.

This communication was immediately laid before Mr. Sinclair, who advised his friend, ere he took any other step, or hazarded an opinion upon it, to require from Charles an explicit statement of the motives which induced him to solicit such a sanction. "Until we know what he means," said he, "it is impossible for us to know how to advise him. That he has some ambitious project in view, is certain. Mr. Harvey's (his tutor) letter and this both prove it."

Page 67

"But in the meantime, we must endeavor to put such silly projects out of his head, my dear friend. I am more troubled about that sweet girl than about any thing else. I cannot understand his neglect of her."

"Few, indeed, are worthy of that angel," replied her father, sighing; "I hope he may. If Charles, after what has passed, sports with her happiness, he will one day have a fearful reckoning of it, unless he permits his conscience to become altogether seared."

"It cannot, happen," replied the other; "I know my boy, his heart is noble; no, no, he is incapable of dishonor, much less of perfidy so black as that would be. In my next letter, however, I shall call upon him to explain himself upon that subject, as well as the other, and if he replies by an evasion, I shall instantly command him home."

They then separated, with a feeling of deep but fatherly concern, one anxious for the honor of his son, and the other trembling for the happiness of his daughter.

Mr. Sinclair was a man in whose countenance could be read all the various emotions that either exalted or disturbed his heart. If he felt joy his eye became irradiated with benignant lustre, that spoke at once of happiness; and, when depressed by care or sorrow, it was easy to see by the serious composure of his face, that something troubled or disturbed him. Indeed, this candor of countenance is peculiar to those only who have not schooled their faces into hypocrisy. After his return from the last interview with Mr. Osborne, his family perceived at a glance that something more than usually painful lay upon his mind; and such was the affectionate sympathy by which they caught each other's feelings, that every countenance, save! one, became partially overshadowed. Jane, although her eye was the first and quickest! to notice this anxiety of her father, exhibited no visible proof of a penetration so acute and lively. The serene light that beamed so mournfully from her placid but melancholy brow, was not darkened by what she saw; on the contrary, that brow became, if possible, more serene; for in truth, the gentle enthusiast had already formed a settled plan of exalted resignation that was designed to sustain her under an apprehension far different from that which Osborne's ambitious speculations in life would have occasioned her to feel had she known them.

"I see," said she with a smile, "that my papa has no good news to tell. A letter has come to his father, but none to me; but you need not fear for my firmness, papa. I know from whence to expect support; indeed, from the beginning I knew that I would require it. You often affectionately chide me for entertaining apprehensions too gloomy; but now they are not gloomy, because, if what I surmise be true, Charles and I will not be so long separated as you imagine. The hope of this, papa, is my consolation."

"Why, what do you surmise, my love, asked her father.

Page 68

"That Charles is gone, perhaps irretrievably gone in decline; you know it is the hereditary complaint of his family. What else could, or would—yes, papa, or ought to keep him so long from home—from his friends—from me. Yes, indeed," she added with a smile, "from me, papa—from his own Jane Sinclair, and he so near us, in England, and the time determined on for his return expired."

"But you know, Jane," said her father, gratified to find that her suspicion took a wrong direction, "the air of Bath, he writes, is agreeing with him."

"I hope it may, papa; I hope it may; but you may rest assured, that whatever happens, the lesson you have taught me, will, aided by divine support, sustain my soul, so long as the frail tenement in which it is lodged may last. That will not be long."

"True religion, my love, is always cheerful, and loves to contemplate the brighter side of every human event. I do not like to see my dear child so calm, nor her countenance shaded by melancholy so fixed as that I have witnessed on it of late."

"Eternity, papa—a happy eternity, what is it, but the brighter side of human life—here we see only as in a glass darkly; there, in our final destiny, we reach the fulness of our happiness. I am not melancholy, but resigned; and resignation has a peace peculiar to itself; a repose which draws us gently, for a little time, out of the memory of our sorrows; but without refreshing the heart—without refreshing the heart. No, papa, I am not melancholy—I am not melancholy; I could bear Charles's death, and look up to my God for strength and support under it; but," she added, shaking her head, with a smile marked by something of a wild meaning, "if he could forget me for another,—no I will not say for another, but if he could only forget me, and his vows of undying affection, then indeed—then—then—papa—ha!—no—no—he could not—he could not."

This conversation, when repeated to the family, deeply distressed them, involved in doubt and uncertainty as they were with respect to Osborne's ultimate intentions. Until a reply, however, should be received to his father's letter, which was written expressly to demand an explanation on that point, they could only soothe the unhappy girl in the patient sorrow which they saw gathering in her heart. That, however, which alarmed them most, was her insuperable disrelish to any thing in the shape of consolation or sympathy. This, to them, was indeed a new trait in the character of one who had heretofore been so anxious to repose the weight of her sufferings upon the bosoms of those who loved her. Her chief companion now was Ariel, her dove, to which she was seen to address herself with a calm, smiling aspect, not dissimilar to the languid cheerfulness of an invalid, who might be supposed as yet incapable from physical weakness to indulge in a greater display of animal spirits. Her walks, too, were now all solitary, with the exception of her mute companion, and it was observed that she never, in a single instance, was known to traverse any spot over which she and Osborne had not walked together. Here she would linger, and pause, and muse, and address Ariel, as if the beautiful creature were capable of comprehending the tenor of her language.

Page 69

"Ariel," said she one day, speaking to the bird; "there is the yew tree, under which your preserver and I first disclosed our love. The yew tree, sweet bird, is the emblem of death, and so it will happen; for Charles is dying, I know—I feel that he will die; and I will die, early; we will both die early; for I would not be able to live here after him, Ariel, and how could I? Yet I should like to see him once—once before he dies; to see him, Ariel, in the fulness of his beauty; my eye to rest upon him once more; and then I could die smiling."

She then sat down under the tree, and in a voice replete with exquisite pathos and melody sang the plaintive air which Osborne had played on the evening when the first rapturous declaration of their passion was made. This incident with the bird also occurred much about the same hour of the day, a remembrance which an association, uniformly painful to her moral sense, now revived with peculiar power, for she started and became pale. "My sweet bird," she exclaimed, "what is this; I shall be absent from evening worship again—but I will not prevaricate now; why—why is this spot to be fatal to me? Come, Ariel, come: perhaps I may not be late."

She hastened home with a palpitating heart, and unhappily arrived only in time to find the family rising from prayer.

As she stood and looked upon them, she smiled, but a sudden paleness at the same instant overspread her face, which gave to her smile an expression we are utterly incompetent to describe.

"I am late," she exclaimed, "and have neglected a solemn and a necessary duty. To me, to me, papa, how necessary is that duty."

"It is equally so to us all, my child," replied her father; "but," he added, in order to reconcile her to an omission which had occasioned her to suffer so much pain before, "we did not forget to pray for you, Jane. With respect to your absence, we know it was unintentional. Your mind is troubled, my love, and do not, let me beg of you, dwell upon minor points of that kind, so as to interrupt the singleness of heart with which you ought to address God. You know, darling, you can pray in your own room."

She mused for some minutes, and at length said, "I would be glad to preserve that singleness of heart, but I fear I will not be able to do so long."

"If you would stay more with us, darling," observed her mamma, "and talk and chat more with Maria and Agnes, as you used to do, you would find your spirits improved. You are not so cheerful as we would wish to see you."

"Perhaps I ought to do that, mamma; indeed I know I ought, because you wish it."



“We all wish it,” said Agnes, “Jane dear, why keep aloof from us? Who in the world loves you as we do; and why would you not, as you used to do, allow us to cheer you, to support you, or to mourn and weep with you; anything—anything,” said the admirable girl, “rather than keep your heart from ours;” and as she spoke, the tears fell fast down her cheeks.

Page 70

"Dear Agnes," said Jane, putting her arm about her sister's neck, and looking up mournfully into her face; "I cannot weep for myself—I cannot weep even with you; you know I love you—how I love you—oh, how I love you all; but I cannot tell why it is—society, even the society of them I love best, disturbs me, and you know not the pleasure—melancholy I grant it to be, but you know not the pleasure that comes to me from solitude. To me—to me there is a charm in it ten times more soothing to my heart than all the power of human consolation."

"But why so melancholy at all, Jane," said Maria, "surely there is no just cause for it."

She smiled as she replied, "Why am I melancholy, Maria?—why? why should I not? Do I not read the approaching death of Charles Osborne in the gloom of every countenance about me? Why do you whisper to each other that which you will not let me hear? Why is there a secret and anxious, and a mysterious intercourse between this family and his, of the purport of which I am kept ignorant—and I alone?"

"But suppose Charles Osborne is not sick," said William; "suppose he was never in better health than he is at this moment—" he saw his father's hand raised, and paused, then added, carelessly, "for supposition's sake I say merely."

"But you must not suppose that, William," she replied, starting, "unless you wish to blight your sister. On what an alternative then, would you force a breaking heart. If not sick, if not dying, where is he? I require him—I demand him. My heart," she proceeded, rising up and speaking with vehemence—"my heart calls for him—shouts aloud in its agony—shouts aloud—shouts aloud for him. He is, he is sick; the malady of his family is upon him; he is ill—he is dying; it must be so; ay, and it shall be so; I can bear that, I can bear him to die, but never to become faithless to a heart like mine. But I am foolish," she added, after a pause, occasioned by exhaustion; "Oh, my dear William, why, by idle talk, thus tamper with your poor affectionate sister's happiness? I know you meant no harm, but oh, William, William, do it no more."

"I only put it, dear Jane, I only put it as a mere case,"—the young man was evidently cut to the heart, and could not for some moments speak.

She saw his distress, and going over to him, took his hand and. said, "Don't, William, don't; it is nothing but merely one of your good-humored attempts to make your sister cheerful. There," she added, kissing his cheek; "there is a kiss for you; the kiss of peace let it be, and forgiveness; but I have nothing to forgive you for, except too much affection for an unhappy sister, who, I believe, is likely to be troublesome enough to you all; but, perhaps not long—not long."

There were few dry eyes in the room, as she uttered the last words.



“I do not like to see you weep,” she added, “when I could have wept myself, and partaken of your tears, it was rather a relief to me than otherwise. It seems, however, that my weeping days are past; do not, oh do not—you trouble me, and I want to compose my mind for a performance of the solemn act which I have this evening neglected. Mamma, kiss me, and pray for me; I love you well and tenderly, mamma; I am sure you know I do.”

Page 71

The sorrowing mother caught her to her bosom, and, after kissing her passive lips, burst out into a sobbing fit of grief.

“Oh, my daughter, my daughter,” she exclaimed, still clasping her to her heart, “and is it come to this! Oh, that we had never seen him!”

“This, my dear,” said Mr. Sinclair to his wife, “is wrong; indeed, it is weakness; you know she wants to compose her mind for prayer.”

“I do, papa; they must be more firm; I need to pray. I know my frailties, you know them too, sir; I concealed them from you as long as I could, but their burden was too heavy for my heart; bless me now, before I go; I will kneel.”

The sweet girl knelt beside him, and he placed his hand upon her stooping head, and blessed her. She then raised herself, and looking up to him with a singular expression of wild sweetness beaming in her eyes, she said, leaning her head again upon his breast,

“There are two bosoms, on which, I trust, I and my frailties can repose with hope; I know I shall soon pass from the one to the other—

“The bosom of my *father* and my *God*, will not they be sweet, papa?”

She spoke thus with a smile of such unutterable sweetness, her beautiful eyes gazing innocently up into her father’s countenance, that the heart of the old man was shaken through every fibre. He saw, however, what must be encountered, and was resolved to act a part worthy of the religion he professed. He arose, and taking her hand in his, said, “You wish to pray, dearest love; that is right; your head has been upon my bosom, and I blessed you; go now, and, with a fervent heart, address yourself to the throne of grace; in doing this, my sweet child, piously and earnestly, you will pass from my bosom to the bosom of your God. Cast yourself upon Him, my love; above all things, cast yourself with humble hope and earnest supplication upon His. This, my child, indeed is sweet; and you will find it so; come, darling, come.”

He led her out of the room, and after a few words more of affectionate advice, left her to that solitude for which he hoped the frame of mind in which she then appeared was suitable.

“Her sense of religion,” he said, after returning to the family, “is not only delicate, but deep; her piety is fervent and profound. I do not therefore despair but religion will carry her through whatever disappointment Charles’s flighty enthusiasm may occasion her.”

“I wish, papa,” said Agnes, “I could think so. As she herself said, she might bear his death, for that would involve no act of treachery, of falsehood on his part; but to find that

he is capable of forgetting their betrothed vows, sanctioned as they were by the parents of both—indeed, papa, if such a thing happen——”

“I should think it will not,” observed her mother; “Charles has, as you have just said, enthusiasm; now, will not that give an impulse to his love, as well as to his ambition?”

Page 72

“But if ambition, my dear, has become the predominant principle in his character, it will draw to its own support all that nourished his other passions. Love is never strong where ambition exists—nor ambition where there is love.”

“I cannot entertain the thought of Charles Osborne being false to her,” said Maria; “his passion for her was more like idolatry than love.”

“He is neglecting her, though,” said William; “and did she not suppose that that is caused by illness, I fear she would not bear it even as she does.”

“I agree with you, William,” observed Agnes; “but after all, it is better to have patience until Mr. Osborne hears from him. His reply will surely be decisive as to his intentions. All may end better than we think.”

Until this reply should arrive, however, they were compelled to remain in that state of suspense which is frequently more painful than the certainty of evil itself. Jane’s mind and health were tended with all the care and affection which her disinclination to society would permit them to show. They forced themselves to be cheerful in order that she might unconsciously partake of a spirit less gloomy than that which every day darkened more deeply about her path; Any attempt to give her direct consolation, however, was found to produce the very consequences which they wished so anxiously to prevent. If for this purpose they entered into conversation with her, no matter in what tone of affectionate sweetness they addressed her, such was the irresistible pathos of her language, that their hearts became melted, and, instead of being able to comfort the beloved mourner, they absolutely required sympathy themselves. Since their last dialogue, too, it was evident from her manner that some fresh source of pain had been on that occasion opened in her heart. For nearly a Week afterwards her eye was fixed from time to time upon her brother William, with a long gaze of hesitation and enquiry—not unmingled with a character of suspicion that appeared still further, to sink her spirits by a superadded weight of misery.

Nearly a fortnight had now elapsed since Charles Osborne ought to have received his father’s letter, and yet no communication had reached either of the families. Indeed the gradual falling off of his correspondence with Jane, and the commonplace character of his few last letters left little room to hope that his affection for her stood the severe test of time and absence. One morning about this period she brought William into the garden, and after a turn or too, laid her hand, gently upon his arm, saying,

“William, I have a secret to entrust you with.”

“A secret, Jane—well, I will keep it honorably—what is it, dear?”

“I am very unhappy.”

“Surely that’s no secret to me, my pool girl.”

She shook her head.

“No, no; that’s not it; but this is—I strongly suspect that you all know more about Charles than I do.”

Page 73

She fixed her eyes with an earnest penetration on him as she spoke.

“He is expected home soon, Jane.”

“He is not ill, William; and you have all permitted me to deceive myself into a belief that he is; because you felt that I would rather ten thousand times that he were dead than false—than false.”

“He could not, he dare not be false to you, my dear, after having been solemnly betrothed to you, I may say with the consent of your father and his.”

“Dare not—ha—there is meaning in that, William; your complexion is heightened, too; and so I have found out your secret, my brother. Sunk as is my heart, you see I have greater penetration than you dream of. So he is not sick, but false; and his love for me is gone like a dream. Well, well; but yet I have laid down my own plan of resignation. You would not guess what it is? Come, guess; I will hear nothing further till you guess.”

He thought it was better to humor her, and replied in accordance with the hope of I his father.

“Religion, my dear Jane, and reliance on God.”

“That was my first plan; that was my plan in case the malady I suspected had taken him from me—but what is my plan for his falsehood?”

“I cannot guess, dear Jane.”

“Death, William. What consoler like death? what peace so calm as that of the grave? Let the storm of life howl ever so loudly, go but six inches beneath the clay of the church-yard and how still is all there!”

“Indeed, Jane, you distress yourself without cause; never trust me again if Charles will not soon come home, and you and he be happy. Why, my dear Jane, I thought you had more fortitude than to sink under a calamity that has not yet reached you. Surely it will be time enough when you find that Charles is false to take it so much to heart as you do.”

“That is a good and excellent advice, my dear William; but listen, and I will give a far better one: never deceive your father; never prevaricate with papa, and then you may rest satisfied that your heart will not be crushed by such a calamity as that which has fallen upon me. I deceived papa; and I am now the poor hopeless cast-away that you see me. Remember that advice, William—keep it, and God will bless you.”

William would have remonstrated with her at greater length, but he saw that she was resolved to have no further conversation on the subject. When it was closed she



walked slowly and composedly out of the garden, and immediately took her way to those favorite places among which she was latterly in the habit of wandering. One of her expressions, however, sunk upon his affectionate heart too deeply to permit him to rest under the fearful apprehension which it generated. After musing for a little he followed her with a pale face and a tearful eye, resolved to draw from her, with as much tenderness as possible, the exact meaning which, in her allusion to Osborne's falsehood, she had applied to death.

Page 74

He found her sitting upon the bank of the river which we have already described, and exactly opposite to the precise spot in the stream from which Osborne had rescued Ariel. The bird sat on her shoulder, and he saw by her gesture that she was engaged in an earnest address to it. He came on gently behind her, actuated by that kind curiosity which knows that in such unguarded moments a key may possibly be obtained to the abrupt and capricious impulse by which persons laboring under impressions so variable may be managed.

[Illustration: *Page 44— Spot which would have been fatal to you*]

“I will beat you, Ariel,” said she, “I will beat you—fie upon you. You an angel of light—no, no—have I not often pointed you out the spot which would have been fatal to you, were it not for him—for him! Stupid bird! there it is! do you not see it? No, as I live, your eye is turned up sideways towards me, instead of looking at it, as if you asked why, dear mistress, do you scold me so? And indeed I do not know, Ariel. I scarcely know—but oh, my dear creature, if you knew—if you knew—it is well you don’t. I am here—so are you—but where is he?”

She was then silent for a considerable time, and sat with her head on her hand. William could perceive that she sighed deeply.

He advanced; and on hearing his foot she started, looked about, and on seeing him, smiled.

“I am amusing myself, William,” said she.

“How, my dear Jane—how?”

“Why, by the remembrance of my former misery. You know that the recollection of all past happiness is misery to the miserable—is it not? but of that you are no judge, William—you were never miserable.”

“Nor shall you be so, Jane, longer than until Charles returns; but touching your second plan of resignation, love. I don’t understand how death could be resignation.”

“Do you not? then I will tell you. Should Charles prove false to me—that would break my heart. I should die, and then—then—do you not see—comes Death, the consoler.”

“I see, dear sister; but there will be no necessity for that. Charles will be, and is, faithful and true to you. Will you come home with me, dear Jane?”

“At present I cannot, William; I have places to see and things to think of that are pleasant to me. I may almost say so; because as I told you they amuse me. Let misery have its mirth, William; the remembrance of past happiness is mine.”

“Jane, if you love me come home with me now?”

“If I do. Ah, William, that’s ungenerous. You are well aware that I do, and so you use an argument which you know I won’t resist. Come,” addressing the dove, “we must go; we are put upon our generosity; for of course we do love poor William. Yes, we will go, William; it is better, I believe.”

She then took his arm, and both walked home without speaking another word; Jane having relapsed into a pettish silence which her brother felt it impossible to break without creating unnecessary excitement in a mind already too much disturbed.

Page 75

From this day forward Jane's mind, fragile as it naturally was, appeared to bend at once under the double burden of Osborne's approaching death, and his apprehended treachery; for wherever the heart is found to choose between two contingent evils, it is also by the very constitution of our nature compelled to bear the penalty of both, until its gloomy choice is made. At present Jane was not certain whether Osborne's absence and neglect were occasioned by ill health or faithlessness; and until she knew this the double dread fell, as we said, with proportionate misery upon her spirit.

Bitterly, indeed, did William regret the words in which he desired her "to suppose that Charles Osborne was not sick." Mr. Sinclair himself saw the error, but unhappily too late to prevent the suspicion from entering into an imagination already overwrought and disordered.

Hitherto, however, it was difficult, if not impossible, out of her own family, to notice in her manner or conversation the workings of a mind partially unsettled by a passion which her constitutional melancholy darkened by its own gloomy creations. To strangers she talked rationally, and with her usual grace and perspicuity, but every one observed that her cheerfulness was gone, and the current report went, by whatever means it got abroad, that Jane Sinclair's heart was broken—that Charles Osborne proved faithless—and that the beautiful Fawn of Springvale was subject to occasional derangement.

In the meantime Osborne was silent both to his father and to her, and as time advanced the mood of her mind became too seriously unhappy and alarming to justify any further patience on the part either of his family or Mr. Sinclair's. It was consequently settled that Mr. Osborne should set out for Bath, and compel his son's return, under the hope that a timely interview might restore the deserted girl to a better state of mind, and reproduce in his heart that affection which appeared to have either slumbered or died. With a brow of care the excellent man departed, for in addition to the concern which he felt for the calamity of Jane Sinclair and Charles's honor, he also experienced all the anxiety natural to an affectionate father, ignorant of the situation in which he might find an only son, who up to that period had been, and justly too, inexpressibly dear to him.

His absence, however, was soon discovered by Jane, who now began to give many proofs of that address with which unsettled persons can manage to gain a point or extract a secret, when either in their own opinion is considered essential to their gratification. Every member of her own family now became subjected to her vigilance; every word they spoke was heard with suspicion, and received as if it possessed a double meaning. On more than one occasion she was caught in the attitude of a listener, and frequently placed herself in such a position when sitting with her relations at home, as enabled her to watch their motions in the glass, when they supposed her engaged in some melancholy abstraction.

Page 76

Yet bitter, bitter as all this must have been to their hearts, it was singular to mark, that as the light of her reason receded, a new and solemn feeling of reverence was added to all of love, and sorrow, and pity, that they had hitherto experienced towards her. Now, too, was her sway over them more commanding, though exercised only in the woeful meekness of a broken heart; for, indeed, there is in the darkness of unmerited affliction, a spirit which elevates its object, and makes unsuffering nature humble in its presence. Who is there that has a heart, and few, alas, have, that does not feel himself constrained to bend his head with reverence before those who move in the majesty of undeserved sorrow?

Mr. Osborne had not been many days gone, when Jane, one morning after breakfast, desired the family not to separate for about an hour, or if they did, to certainly reassemble within that period. "And in the meantime," she said, addressing Agnes, "I want you, my dear Agnes, to assist me at my toilette, as they say. I am about to dress in my very best, and it cannot, you know, be from vanity, for I have no one now to gratify but yourselves—come."

Mr. Sinclair beckoned with his hand to Agnes to attend her, and they accordingly left the room together.

"What is the reason, Agnes," she said, "that there is so much mystery in this family? I do not like these nods, and beckonings, and gestures, all so full of meaning. It grieves me to see my papa, who is the very soul of truth and candor, have recourse to them. But, alas, why should I blame any of you, when I know that it is from an excess of indulgence to poor Jane, and to avoid giving her pain that you do it?"

"Well, we will not do it any more, love, if it pains or is disagreeable to you."

"It confounds me, Agnes, it injures my head, and sometimes makes me scarcely know where I am, or who are about me. I begin to think that there's some dreadful secret among you; and I think of coffins, and deaths, or of marriages, and wedding favors, and all that. Now, I can't bear to think of marriages, but death has something consoling in it; give me death the consoler: yet," she added, musing, "we shall not die, but we shall all be changed."

"Jane, love, may I ask you why you are dressing with such care?"

"When we go down stairs I shall tell you. It's wonderful, wonderful!"

"What is, dear?"

"My fortitude. But those words were prophetic. I remember well what I felt when I heard them; to be sure he placed them in a different light from what I at first understood them

in; but I am handsomer now, I think. You will be a witness for me below, Agnes, will you not?"

"To be sure, darling."

"Agnes, where are my tears gone of late? I think I ought to advertise for them, or advertise for others, 'Wanted for unhappy Jane Sinclair'"—

Agnes could bear no more. "Jane," she exclaimed, clasping her in her arms, and kissing her smiling lips, for she smiled while uttering the last words, "oh, Jane, don't, don't, my darling, or you will break my heart—your own Agnes's heart, whom you loved so well, and whose happiness or misery is bound I up in yours."

Page 77

"For unhappy Jane Sinclair!—no I won't distress you, dear Agnes; let the advertisement go; here, I will kiss you, love, and dry your tears, and then when I am dressed you shall know all."

She took up her own handkerchief as she spoke, and after having again kissed her sister, wiped her cheeks and dried her eyes with childlike tenderness and affection. She then, looked sorrowfully upon Agnes, and said—"Oh, Agnes, Agnes, but my heart is heavy—heavy!"

Agnes's tears were again beginning to flow, but Jane once more kissed her, and hastily wiping her eyes, exclaimed in that sweet, low voice with which we address children, "Hush, hush, Agnes, do not cry, I will not make you sorry any more."

She then went on to dress herself, but uttered not another word until she and Agnes met the family below stairs.

"I am now come, papa and mamma, and William, and my darling Maria—but, Maria, listen,—I won't have a tear, and you, Agnes,—I am come now to tell you a secret."

"And, dearest life," said her mother, "what is it?"

"What made them call me the Fawn of Springvale?"

"For your gentleness, love," said Mr. Sinclair.

"And for your beauty, darling," added her mother.

"Papa has it," she replied quickly; "for my gentleness, for my gentleness. My beauty, mamma, I am not beautiful."

While uttering these words, she approached the looking-glass, and surveyed herself with a smile of irony that seemed to disclaim her own assertion. But it was easy to perceive that the irony was directed to some one not then present, and that it was also associated with the memory of something painful to her in an extreme degree.

Not beautiful! Never did mortal form gifted with beauty approaching nearer to our conception of the divine or angelic, stand smiling in the consciousness of its own charms before a mirror.

"Now," she proceeded, "I am going to make everything quite plain. I never told you this before, but it is time I should now. Listen—Charles Osborne bound himself by a curse, that if he met, during his absence, a girl more beautiful than I am—or than I was then, I should say,—he would cease to write to me—he would cease to love me. Now, here's my secret,—he has found a girl more beautiful than I am,—than I was then, I, mean,—for he has ceased to write to me—and of course he has ceased to love me. So

mamma, I am not beautiful, and the Fawn of Springvale—his own Jane Sinclair is forgotten.”

She sat down and hung her head for some minutes, and the family, thinking that she either wept or was about to weep, did not think it right to address her. She rose up, however, and said:

“Agnes is my witness: Did not you, Agnes, say that I am now much handsomer than when Charles saw me last?”

“I did, darling, and I do.”

“Very well, mamma—perhaps you will find me beautiful yet. Now the case is this, and I will be guided by my papa. Let me see—Charles may have seen a girl more beautiful than I was then,—but how does he know whether she is more beautiful than I am now?”

Page 78

It was—it was woful to see a creature of such unparalleled grace and loveliness working out the calculations of insanity, in order to sustain a broken heart.

“But then,” she added, still smiling in conscious beauty, “why does he not come to see me now? Why does he not come?” After musing again for some time, she dropped on her knees in one of those rapid transitions of feeling peculiar to persons of her unhappy class; and joining her hands, looked up to Agnes with a countenance utterly and indescribably mournful, exclaiming as she did it, in the same words as before:—

“Oh Agnes, Agnes, but my heart is heavy!”

She then laid down her head on her sister’s knees, and for a long time mused and murmured to herself, as if her mind was busily engaged on some topic full of grief and misery. This was evident by the depth of her sighs, which shook her whole frame, and heaved with convulsive quiverings through her bosom. Having remained in this posture about ten minutes, she arose, and without speaking, or noticing any of the family, went out and sauntered with slow and melancholy steps about the place where she loved to walk.

Mr. Sinclair’s family at this period, and indeed, for a considerable time past were placed, with reference to their unhappy daughter in circumstances of peculiar distress. Their utter ignorance of Osborne’s designs put it out of their power to adopt any particular mode of treatment in Jane’s case. They could neither give her hope, nor prepare her mind for disappointment; but were forced to look passively on, though with hearts wrung into agony, whilst her miserable malady every day gained new strength in its progress of desolation. The crisis was near at hand, however, that was to terminate their suspense. A letter from Mr. Osborne arrived, in which he informed them that Charles had left Bath, for London, in company with a family of rank, a few days before he reached it. He mentioned the name of the baronet, whose beautiful daughter, possessing an ample fortune, at her own disposal, fame reported to have been smitten with his son’s singular beauty and accomplishments. It was also said, he added, that the lady had prevailed on her father to sanction young Osborne’s addresses to her, and that the baronet, who was a strong political partizan, calculating upon his preeminent talents, intended to bring him into parliament, in order to strengthen his party. He added that he himself was then starting for London, to pursue his son, and rescue him from an act which would stamp his name with utter baseness and dishonor.

This communication, so terrible in its import to a family of such worth and virtue, was read to them by Mr. Sinclair, during one of those solitary rambles which Jane was in the habit of taking every day.

Page 79

"Now, my children," said the white-haired father, summoning all the fortitude of a Christian man to his aid,—“now must we show ourselves not ignorant of those resources which the religion of Christ opens to all who are for His wise purposes grievously and heavily afflicted. Let us act as becomes the dignity of our faith. We must suffer: let it be with patience, and a will resigned to that which laid the calamity upon us,—and principally upon the beloved mourner who is dear, dear—and oh! how justly is she dear to all our hearts! Be firm, my children—and neither speak, nor look, nor act as if these heavy tidings had reached us. This is not only our duty, but our wisest course under circumstances so distressing as ours. Another letter from Mr. Osborne will decide all and until then we must suffer in silent reliance upon the mercy of God. It may, however, be a consolation to you all to know, that if this young man’s heart be detached from that of our innocent and loving child, I would rather—the disposing will of God being still allowed—see her wrapped in the ceremonies of death than united to one, who with so little scruple can trample upon the sanctions of religion, or tamper with the happiness of a fellow-creature. Oh, may God of His mercy sustain our child, and bear her in His own right hand through this heavy woe!”

This affecting admonition did not fall upon them in vain,—for until the receipt of Mr. Osborne’s letter from London, not even Jane, with all her vigilance, was able to detect in their looks or manner any change or expression beyond what she had usually noticed. That letter at length arrived, and, as they had expected, filled up the measure of Osborne’s dishonor and their affliction. The contents were brief but fearful. Mr. Osborne stated that he arrived in London on the second day after his son’s marriage, and found, to his unutterable distress, that he and his fashionable wife had departed for the continent on the very day the ceremony took place.

“I could not,” proceeded his father, “wrench my heart so suddenly out of the strong affection it felt for the hope of my past life, as to curse him; but, from this day forward I disown him as my son. You know not, my friend, what I feel, and what I suffer; for he who was the pride of my declining years has, by this act of unprincipled ambition, set his seal to the unhappiness of his father. I am told, indeed, that the lady is very beautiful—and amiable as she is beautiful—and that their passion for each other amounts to idolatry;—but neither her beauty, nor her wealth, nor her goodness could justify my son in an act of such cruel and abandoned perfidy to a creature who seems to be more nearly related to the angelic nature than the human.”

“You see, my children,” observed Mr. Sinclair, “that the worst, as far as relates to Osborne, is before us. I have nothing now to add to what I have already said on the receipt of the letter from Bath. You know your duty, and with God’s assistance I trust you will act up to it. At present it might be fatal to our child were she to know what has happened; nor, indeed, are we qualified to break the matter to her, without the advice of some medical man, eminent in cases similar to that which afflicts her.”

Page 80

These observations were scarcely concluded when Jane entered the room, and as usual, cast a calm but searching glance around her. She saw that they had been in tears, and that they tried in vain to force their faces into a hurried composure, that seemed strangely at variance with what they felt.

After a slight pause she sat down, and putting her hand to her temple, mused for some minutes. They observed that a sorrow more deep and settled than usual, was expressed on her countenance. Her eyes were filled, although tears did not come, and the muscles of her lips quivered excessively; yet she did not speak; and such was the solemnity of the moment to them, who knew all, that none of them could find voice sufficiently firm to address her.

“Papa,” said she, at length, “this has been a day of busy thought with me. I think I see, and I am sure I feel my own situation. The only danger is, that I may feel it too much. I fear I have felt it—(she put her hand to her forehead as she spoke)—I fear I have felt it too deeply already. Pauses—lapses, or perhaps want of memory for a certain space, occasioned by--by-----” she hesitated. “Bear with me, papa, and mamma; bear with me; for this is a great effort; let me recollect myself, and do not question me or--speak to me until I-----. It is, it is woeful to see me reduced to this; but nothing is seriously wrong with me yet—nothing. Let me see; yes, yes, papa, here it is. Let us not be reduced to the miserable necessity of watching each other, as we have been. Let me know the worst. You have nearly broken me down by suspense. Let me know the purport of the letter you received to-day.”

“To-day, love!” exclaimed her mother. “Yes, mamma, to-day. I made John show it me on his way from the post-office. The superscription was Mr. Osborne’s hand. Let me, O let me,” she exclaimed, dropping down upon her knees, “as you value my happiness here and hereafter, let me at once know the worst—the very worst. Am I not the daughter of a pious minister of the Gospel, and do you think I shall or can forget the instructions I received from his lips? Treat me as a rational being, if you wish me to remain rational. But O, as you love my happiness here, and my soul’s salvation, do not, papa, do not, mamma, do not, Maria, do not, Agnes, William,—do not one or all of you keep your unhappy sister hanging in the agony of suspense! It will kill me!—it will kill me!”

Suppressed sobs there were, which no firmness could restrain. But in a few moments those precepts of the Christian pastor, which we have before mentioned, came forth among this sorrowing family, in the same elevated spirit which dictated them. When Jane had concluded this appeal to her father, there was a dead, silence in the room, and every eye glanced from, him to her, full of uncertainty as to what course of conduct he would pursue. He turned his eyes upwards for a few moments, and said:

Page 81

"Can truth, my children, under any circumstances, be injurious to——"

"Oh no, no, papa," exclaimed Jane; "I know—I feel the penalty paid for even the indirect violation of it."

"In the name of God, then," exclaimed the well-meaning man, "we will rely upon the good sense and religious principle of our dear Jane, and tell her the whole truth."

"Henry, dear!" said Mrs. Sinclair in a tone of expostulation.

"Oh papa," said Agnes, "remember your own words!"

"The truth, my papa, the truth!" said Jane. "You are its accredited messenger."

"Jane," said he, "is your trust strong in the support of the Almighty?"

"I have no other dependence, papa."

"Then," said he, "this is the truth: Charles Osborne has been false to you. He has broken his vows;—he is married to another woman. And now, my child, may the God of truth, and peace, and mercy, sustain and console you!"

"And He will, too, my papa!—He will!" she exclaimed, rising up;—"He will! He will!—I—I know—I think I know something. I violated truth, and now truth is my punishment. I violated it to my papa, and now my papa is the medium of that punishment. Well, then, there's a Providence proved. But, in the mean time, mamma, what has become of my beauty? It is gone—it is gone—and now for humility and repentance—now for sackcloth and ashes. I am now no longer beautiful!—so off, off go the trappings of vanity!"

She put her hands up to her bosom, and began to tear down her dress with a violence so powerful, that it took William and Maria's strength to prevent her. She became furious. "Let me go," she exclaimed, "let me go; I am bound to a curse; but Charles, Charles—don't you see he will be poisoned: he will kiss her lips and be poisoned; poisoned lips for Charles, and I too see it!—and mine here with balm upon them, and peace and love! My boy's lost, and I am lost, and the world has destroyed us."

She wrought with incredible strength, and attempted still, while speaking, to tear her garments off; put finding herself overpowered, she at length sat down and passed from this state of violence into a mood so helplessly calm, that the family, now in an outcry of grief, with the exception of her father who appeared cool, felt their very hearts shiver at the vacant serenity of her countenance.

Her mother went over, and, seizing her husband firmly by the arms, pulled him towards her, and with an ashy face and parched lips, exclaimed, "There, Charles—all is now over—our child is an idiot!"

"Oh do not blame me," said the brokenhearted father; "I did it for the best. Had I thought—had I thought—but I will speak to her, for I think my voice will reach her heart—you know how she loved me."

"Jane," said he, approaching her, "Jane, my dearest life, will you not speak to your papa?"

She became uneasy again, and, much to their relief, broke silence.

Page 82

"I am not," said she, calmly; "it is gone; I was once though—indeed, indeed I was; and it was said so; I was called the Fawn of—of—but it seems beauty passes like the flower of the field."

"Darling, speak to me, to your papa."

"I believe I am old now; an old woman, I suppose. My hair is gray, and I am wrinkled; that's the reason why they scorn me; well I was once both young and beautiful; but that is past. Charles," said she, catching her father's hand and looking into it, "you are old, too, I believe. Why—why—why, how is this? Your hair is long and white. Oh, what a change since I knew you last. White hair! long, white, venerable, hair—that's old age—

"Pity old age within whose silver hairs
Honor and reverence evermore do lie."

"Thank God, dear Henry," said her mother, "she is not at all events an idiot. Children," said she, "I trust you will remember your father's advice, and bear this—this——." But here the heart and strength of the mother herself were overcome, and she was sinking down when her son caught her ere she fell, and carried her out in his arms, accompanied by Maria and Agnes.

It would be difficult for any pen to paint the distraction of her father, thus placed in a state of divided apprehension between his daughter and his wife.

"Oh, my child, my child," he exclaimed, "Perhaps in the midst of this misery, your mother may be dying! May the God of all consolation support you and her! What, oh what will become of us!"

"Well, well," his daughter went on; "life's a fearful thing that can work such changes; but why may we not as well pass at once from youth to old age as from happiness to misery? Here we are both old; ay, and if we are gray it is less with age than affliction—that's one comfort—I am young enough to be beautiful yet; but age, when it comes prematurely on the youthful, as it often does—thanks to treachery and disappointment, ay, and thanks to a thousand causes which we all know but don't wish to think of; age, I say, when it comes prematurely on the youthful, is just like a new and unfinished house that is suffered to fall into ruin—desolation, naked, and fresh, and glaring—without the reverence and grandeur of antiquity. Yes—yes—yes; but there is another cause; and that must be whispered only to the uttermost depths of silence—of silence; for silence is the voice of God. That word—that word! Oh, how I shudder to think of it! And who will pity me when I acknowledge it—there is one—one only—who will mourn for my despair and the fate, foreordained and predestined, of one whom he loved—that is my papa—my papa only—my papa only; for he knows that I am a *castaway*—A *cast-away*!"

Page 83

These words were uttered with an energy of manner and a fluency of utterance which medical men know to be strongly characteristic of insanity, unless indeed where the malady is silent and moping. The afflicted old man now discovered that his daughter's mind had, in addition to her disappointment, sunk under the frightful and merciless dogma, which we trust will soon cease to darken and distort the beneficent character of God. Indeed it might have been evident to him before that in looking upon herself as a castaway, Jane's sensitive spirit was gradually lapsing into the gloomy horrors of predestination. But this blindness of the father to such a tendency was very natural in a man to whose eye familiarity with the doctrine had removed its deformity. The old man looked upon her countenance with an expression of mute affliction almost verging on despair; for a moment he forgot the situation of his wife and everything but the consequences of a discovery so full of terror and dismay.

"Alas, my unhappy child," he exclaimed, "and is this, too, to be added to your misery and ours? Now, indeed, is the cup of our affliction full even to overflowing. O God! who art good and full of mercy," he added, dropping on his knees under the bitter impulse of the moment, "and who wilt not the death of a sinner, oh lay not upon her or us a weight of sorrow greater than we can bear. We do not, O Lord! for we dare not, desire Thee to stay Thy hand; but oh, chastise us in mercy, especially her—her—Our hearts' dearest—she was ever the child, of our loves; but now she is also the unhappy child of all our sorrows; the broken idol of affections which we cannot change. Enable us, O God, to acquiesce under this mysterious manifestation of Thy will, and to receive from Thy hand with patience and resignation whatsoever of affliction it pleaseth Thee to lay upon us. And touching this stricken one—if it were Thy blessed will to—to—but no—oh no—not our will, oh Lord, but Thine be done!"

It was indeed a beautiful thing to see the sorrow-bound father bowing down his gray locks with humility before the footstool of his God, and forbearing even to murmur under a dispensation so fearfully calamitous to him and his. Religion, however, at which the fool and knave may sneer in the moments of convivial riot, is after all the only stay on which the human heart can rest in those severe trials of life which almost every one sooner or later is destined to undergo. The sceptic may indeed triumph in the pride of his intellect or in the hour of his passion; but no matter on what arguments his hollow creed is based, let but the footstep of disease or death approach, and he himself is the first to abandon it and take refuge in those truths which he had hitherto laughed at or maligned. When Mr. Sinclair arose, his countenance, through all the traces of sorrow which were upon it, beamed with a light which no principle, merely human, could communicate to it. A dim but gentle and holy radiance suffused his whole face, and his heart, for a moment, received the assurance it wanted so much. He experienced a feeling for which language has no terms, or at least none adequate to express its character. It was "that peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Page 84

In a few minutes after he had concluded his short but earnest prayer, Agnes returned to let him know that her mamma was better and would presently come in to sit with Jane, whom she could not permit, she said, to regain out of her sight. Jane had been silent for some time, but the extreme brilliancy of her eyes and the energy of her excitement were too obvious to permit any expectation of immediate improvement.

When her mother and Maria returned, accompanied also by William, she took no note whatsoever of them, nor indeed did she appear to have an eye for anything external to her own deep but unsettled misery. Time after time they spoke to her as before, each earnestly hoping that some favorite expression or familiar tone of voice might impinge, however slightly, upon her reason, or touch some chord of her affections. These tender devices of their love, however, all failed; no corresponding emotion was awakened, and they resolved, without loss of time, to see what course of treatment medical advice recommend them to pursue on her behalf. Accordingly William proceeded with a heavy heart to call in the aid of a gentleman who can bear full testimony to the accuracy of our narrative—we allude to that able and eminent practitioner, Doctor M'Cormick of Belfast, whose powers, of philosophical analysis, and patient investigation are surpassed only by the success of the masterly skill with which he applies them. The moment he left the room for this purpose, Jane spoke.

"It will be hard," she said, "and I need not conceal it, for my very thought has a voice at the footstool of the Almighty; the intelligences of other worlds know it; all; the invisible spirits of the universe know it; those that are evil rejoice, and the good would murmur if the fulness of their own happiness permitted them. No—no—I need not conceal it—hearken, therefore—hearken;" and she lowered her voice to a whisper—"the Fawn of Springvale—Jane Sinclair—is predestined to eternal misery. She is a *cast-away*. I may therefore speak and raise my voice to warn; who shall dare," she added, "who shall dare ever to part from the truth! Those—those only who have been foredoomed—like me. Oh misery, misery, is there no hope? nothing but despair for one so young, and as they said, so gentle, and so beautiful, Alas! alas! Death to me now is no consoler!"

She clasped her beautiful hands together as she spoke, and looked with a countenance so full of unutterable woe that no heart could avoid participating in her misery.

"Jane, oh darling of all our hearts," said her weeping mother, "will you not come over and sit beside your mamma—your mamma, my treasure, who feels that she cannot long live to witness what you suffer."

"The Fawn of Springvale," she proceeded, "the gentle Fawn of Springvale, for it was on the account of my gentleness I was so called, is stricken—the arrow is here—in her poor broken heart; and what did she do, what did the gentle creature do to suffer or to deserve all this misery?"

Page 85

"True, my sister—too true, too true," said Maria, bursting into an agony of bitter sorrow; "what strange mystery is in the gentle one's affliction? Surely, if there was ever a spotless or a sinless creature on earth, she was and is that creature."

"Beware of murmuring, Maria," said her father; "the purpose, though at present concealed, may yet become sufficiently apparent for us to recognize in it the benignant dispensation of a merciful God. Our duty, my dear child, is now to bear, and be resigned. The issues of this sad calamity are with the Almighty, and with Him let us patiently leave them."

"Had I never disclosed my love," proceeded Jane, "I might have stolen quietly away from them all and laid my cheek on that hardest pillow which giveth the soundest sleep; but would not concealment," she added, starting; "would not that too have been dissimulation? Oh God help me!—it is, it is clear that in any event I was foredoomed!"

Agnes, who had watched her sister with an interest too profound to suffer even the grief necessary on such an occasion to take place, now went over, and taking her hand in one of hers, placed the fingers of the other upon her sister's cheek, thus attempting to fix Jane's eyes upon her own countenance—

"Do you not know who it is," said she, "that is now speaking to you?—Look upon me, and tell me do you forget me so soon?"

"Who can tell yet," she proceeded, "who can tell yet—time may retrieve all, and he may return: but the yew tree—I fear—I fear—why, it is an emblem of death; and perhaps death may unite us—yes, and I say he will—he will—he will. Does he not feel pity? Oh yes, in a thousand, thousand cases he is the friend of the miserable. Death the Consoler! Oh from how many an aching brow does he take away the pain for ever? How many sorrows does he soothe into rest that is never broken!—from how many hearts like mine, does he pluck the arrows that fester in them, and bids them feel pain no more! In his house, that house appointed for all living—what calmness and peace is there? How sweet and tranquil is the bed which he smoothes down for the unhappy; there the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Then give me Death the Consoler?—Death the Consoler!"

A sense of relief and wild exultation beamed from her countenance, on uttering the last words, and she rose up and walked about the room wringing her hands, yet smiling at the idea of being relieved by Death the Consoler! It is not indeed unusual to witness in deranged persons, an unconscious impression of pain and misery, accompanied at the same time by a vague sense of unreal happiness—that is, a happiness which, whilst it balances the latent conviction of their misery does not, however, ultimately remove it. This probably constitutes that pleasure in madness, which, it is said, none but mad persons know.

At length she stood, and, for a long time seemed musing upon various and apparently contrasted topics, for she sometimes smiled as a girl at play, and sometimes relapsed into darkness of mood and pain, and incoherency. But after passing through these rapid changes for many minutes, she suddenly exclaimed in a low but earnest voice, "Where is he?"

Page 86

"Where is who, love?" said her mother.

"Where is he?—why does he not come?—something more than usual must prevent him, or he would not stay away so long from 'his own Jane Sinclair.' But I forgot; bless me, how feeble my memory is growing! Why this is the hour of our appointment, and I will be late unless I hurry—for who could give so gentle and affectionate a being as Charles pain?"

She immediately put on her bonnet, and was about to go abroad, when her father, gently laying his hand upon her arm, said, in a kind but admonitory voice, in which was blended a slightly perceptible degree of parental authority—

"My daughter, surely you will not go out—you are unwell."

She started slightly, paused, and looked as if trying to remember something that she had forgotten. The struggle, however, was vain—her recollection proved too weak for the task it had undertaken. After a moment's effort, she smiled sweetly in her father's face, and said—

"You would not have me break my appointment, nor give poor Charles pain, and his health, moreover, so delicate. You know he would die rather than give me a moment's anxiety. Die!—see that again—I know not what puts death into my head so often."

"Henry," said her mother, "it is probably better to let her have her own way for the present—at least until Dr. M'Cormick arrives. You and Agnes can accompany her, perhaps she may be the better for it."

"I cannot refuse her," said the old man; "at all events, I agree with you; there can, I think, be no possible harm in allowing her to go. Come, Agnes, we must, alas! take care of her."

She then went out, they walking a few paces behind her, and proceeded down the valley which we have already described in the opening of this story, until she came to the spot at the river, where she first met Osborne. Here she involuntarily stood a moment, and putting her hand to her right shoulder, seemed to miss some object, that was obviously restored to her recollection by an association connected with the place. She shook her head, and sighed several times, and then exclaimed—

"Ungrateful bird, does it neglect me too?"

Her father pressed Agnes's arm with a sensation of joy, but spoke not lest his voice might disturb her, or break the apparent continuity of her reviving memory. She seemed to think, however, that she delayed here too long, for without taking further notice of anything she hurried on to the spot where the first disclosure of their loves had taken



place. On reaching it she looked anxiously and earnestly around the copse or dell in which the yew tree, with its turf seat stood.

[Illustration: *Page 52*— How is this?—how is this?—he is not here!]

“How is this?—how is this?”—she murmured to herself, “he is not here!”

Both her father and Agnes observed that during the whole course of the unhappy but faithful girl’s love, they never had witnessed such a concentrated expression of utter woe and sorrow as now impressed themselves upon her features.

Page 87

"He has not come," said she; "but I can wait—I can wait—it will teach my heart to be patient."

She then clasped her hands, and sitting down under the shade of the yew tree, mused and murmured to herself alternately, but in such an evident spirit of desolation and despair, as made her father fear that her heart would literally break down under the heavy burden of her misery. When she had sat here nearly an hour, he approached her and gently taking her hand, which felt as cold as marble, said—

"Will you not come home, darling? Your mamma is anxious you should return to her. Come," and he attempted gently to draw her with him.

"I can wait, I can wait," she replied, "if he should come and find me gone, he would break his heart—I can wait."

"Oh do not droop, my sweet sister; do not droop so much; all will yet be well," said Agnes, weeping.

"I care for none but him—to me there is only one being in life—all else is a blank; but he will not come, and is it not too much, to try the patience of a heart so fond and faithful."

"It is not likely he will come to-day," replied Agnes; "something has prevented him; but to-morrow—"

"I will seek him elsewhere," said Jane, rising suddenly; "but is it not singular, and indeed to what strange passes things may come? A young lady seeking her lover!—not over-modest certainly—nay, positively indelicate—fie upon me! Why should I thus expose myself? It is unworthy of my father's daughter, and Jane Sinclair will not do it."

She then walked a few paces homewards, but again stopped and earnestly looked in every direction, as if expecting to see the object of her love. Long indeed did she linger about a spot so dear to her; and often did she sit down again and rise to go—sometimes wringing her hands in the muteness of sorrow, and sometimes exhibiting a sense of her neglect in terms of pettish and indirect censure against Osborne for his delay. It was in one of those capricious moments that she bent her steps homewards; and as she had again to pass that part of the river where the accident occurred to the dove, Agnes and her father observed that she instinctively put her hand to her shoulder, and appeared as if disappointed. On this occasion, however, she made no observation whatever, but, much to their satisfaction, mechanically proceeded towards Springvale House, which she reached without uttering another word.

Until a short time before the arrival of Dr. M'Cormick, this silence remained unbroken. She sat nearly in the same attitude, evidently pondering on something that excited great pain, as was observable by her frequent startings, and a disposition to look wildly about

her, as if with an intention of suddenly speaking. These, however, passed quickly away, and she generally relapsed into her wild and unsettled reveries.

When the doctor arrived, he sat with her in silence for a considerable time—listening to her incoherencies from an anxiety to ascertain, as far as possible, by what she might utter, whether her insanity was likely to be transient or otherwise. The cause of it he had already heard from report generally, and a more exact and circumstantial account on that day from her brother William.

Page 88

"It is difficult," he at length said, "to form anything like an exact opinion upon the first attack of insanity, arising from a disappointment of the heart. Much depends upon the firmness of the general character, and the natural force of their common sense. If I were to judge, not only by what I have heard from this most beautiful and interesting creature, as well as from the history of her heart, which her brother gave me so fully, I would say that I think this attack will not be a long one. I am of opinion that her mind is in a state of transition not from reason but to it; and that this transition will not be complete without much physical suffering. The state of her pulse assures me of this, as does the coldness of her hands. I should not be surprised if, in the course of this very night she were attacked with strong fits. These, if they take place, will either restore her to reason or confirm her insanity. Poor girl," said the amiable man, looking on her whilst his eyes filled with tears, "he must have been a heartless wretch to abandon such a creature. My dear Jane," he added, addressing her, for he had been, and still is, familiar with the family; "I am sorry to find you are so unwell, but you will soon be better. Do you not know me."

"It was sworn," said the unhappy mourner; "it was sworn and I felt this here—here"—and she placed her hand upon her heart; "I felt this little tenant of my poor bosom sink—sink, and my blood going from my cheeks when the words were uttered. More beautiful! more beautiful! why, and what is love if it is borne away merely by beauty? I loved him not for his beauty alone. I loved him because he—he—because he loved me—but at first I did love him for his beauty; well, he has found another more beautiful; and his own Jane Sinclair, his Fawn of Springvale, as he used to call me, is forgotten. But mark me—let none dare to blame him—he only fulfilled his destined part—the thing was foredoomed, and I knew that by my suppression of the truth to my papa, the seal of reprobation was set to my soul. Then—then it was that I felt myself a cast-away! And indeed," she added, rising up and laying the forefinger of her right hand, on the palm of her left, "I would at any time sacrifice myself for his happiness; I would; yet alas," she added, sitting down and hanging her head in sorrow; "why—why is it that I am so miserable, when he is happy? Why is that, Miss Jane Sinclair—why is that?" She then sighed deeply, and added in a tone of pathos almost irresistible—"Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest."

She had scarcely spoken, when, by a beautiful and affecting coincidence, Ariel entered the room, and immediately flew into her bosom. She put her hand up and patted it for some time rather unconsciously than otherwise.

"Ah, you foolish bird," she at length said; "have you no better place of rest, no calmer spot to repose upon, than a troubled and a broken heart?"

Page 89

This incident of the dove, together with the mournful truth of this melancholy observation, filled every eye with tears, except those of her father, who now exhibited a spirit of calm obedience to what he considered an affliction that called upon him to act as one whose faith was not the theory of a historic Christian.

“But how,” added Jane, “can I be unhappy with the Paraclete in my bosom? The Paraclete—oh that I were not reprobate and foredoomed—then indeed, he might be there—all, all by one suppression of truth—but surely my papa pities his poor girl for that, there is, I know, one that loves me, and one that pities me. My papa knows that I am foredoomed, and cannot but pity me: but where is he, and why does he delay so long. Hush! I will sing—

The dawning of morn, the daylight's sinking,
The night's long hours still find me thinking
Of thee, thee—only thee!”

She poured a spirit into these words so full of the wild sorrow of insanity, as to produce an effect that was thrilling and fearful upon those who were forced to listen to her. Nay, her voice seemed, in some degree, to awaken her own emotions, or to revive her memory to a confused perception of her situation. And in mercy it would appear that Providence unveiled only half her memory to reason; for from the effect which even that passing glimpse had upon her, it is not wrong to infer that had she seen it in its full extent, she would have immediately sunk under it.

After singing the words of Moore with all the unregulated pathos of a maniac, she wrung her hands, and was for a considerable time silent. During this interval she sighed deeply, and after a pause of half an hour arose suddenly, and seizing her father by the breast of the coat, brought him over, and placed him on the sofa beside her. She then looked earnestly into his face, and was about to speak, but her thoughts were too weak for the task, and after putting her hand to her forehead, as if to assist her recollection, she let it fall passively beside her, and hung her head in a mood, partaking at once of childish pique and deep dejection.

The doctor, who watched her closely, observed, that in his opinion the consequences of the unhappy intelligence that day communicated to her, had not yet fully developed themselves. “The storm has not yet burst,” he added, “but it is quite evident that the elements for it are fast gathering. She will certainly have a glimpse of reason before the paroxysms appear, because, in point of fact, that is what will induce them.”

“How soon, doctor,” asked her mother, “do you think she will have to encounter this fresh and woeful trial?”

“I should be disposed to think within the lapse of twenty-four hours; certainly within forty-eight.”

Page 90

The amiable doctor's opinion, however, was much more quickly verified than he imagined; for Jane, whose heart yearned towards her father with the beautiful instinct of an affection which scarcely insanity itself could overcome, once more looked earnestly into his face, with an eye in which meaning and madness seemed to struggle for the mastery. She gazed at him for a long time, put her hands upon his white hair, into which she gently twined her long white fingers; once or twice she smiled, and said something in a voice too low to be heard: but all at once she gave a convulsive start, clasped her hands wofully, and throwing herself on his bosom, exclaimed:

"Oh papa, papa—your child is lost: pray for me—pray for me."

Her sobs became too thick and violent for further utterance; she panted and wrought strongly, until at length she lay with locked teeth and clenched hands struggling in a fit which eventually, by leaving her, terminated in a state of lethargic insensibility.

For upwards of three days she suffered more than any person unacquainted with her delicacy of constitution could deem her capable of enduring. And, indeed, were it not that the aid rendered by Dr. M'Cormick was so prompt and so skilful, it is possible that the sorrows of the faithful Jane Sinclair might have here closed. On the fourth day, however, she experienced a change; but, alas, such a change as left the loving and beloved group who had hung over her couch with anxious hopes of her restoration to reason, now utterly hopeless and miserable. She arose from her paroxysms a beautiful, happy, and smiling maniac, from whose soul in mercy had been removed that susceptibility of mental pain, which constitutes the burthen and bitterness of ordinary calamity.

The first person who discovered this was her mother, who, on the fourth morning of her illness, had stolen to her bedside to see how her beloved one felt. Agnes, who would permit no other person to nurse her darling sister, lay asleep with her head reclining on the foot of the bed, having been overcome by her grief and the fatigue of incessant watching. As her mother stooped down to look into the sufferer's face, her heart bounded with delight oh seeing Jane's eyes smiling upon her with all the symptoms of recognition.

"Jane, my heart's dearest," she said, in a soothing, low inquiry, "don't you know me?"

"Yes, very well," she replied; "you are my mamma, and this is Agnes sleeping on the foot of the bed. Why does she sleep there?"

The happy mother scarcely heard her child's question, for ere the words were well uttered she laid her head down upon the mourner's bosom, in a burst of melancholy joy, and wept so loudly that her voice awakened Agnes, who, starting up, exclaimed:



“Oh, mother, mother—what is this? Is—?” she said, “No, no—she must not—she would not leave her Agnes. Oh mother—mother, is it so?”

“No, no, Agnes love; no—but may the mercy of God be exalted for ever, Jane knows her mamma this morning, and she knows you too, Agnes.”

Page 91

That ever faithful sister no sooner heard the words, than a smile of indescribable happiness overspread her face, which, however, became instantly pale, and the next moment she sunk down, and in a long swoon forgot both the love and sorrow of her favorite sister. In little more than a minute the family were assembled in the sickroom, and heard from Mrs. Sinclair's lips the history, as she thought, of their beloved one's recovery. Agnes was soon restored, and indeed it would be impossible to witness a scene of such unexpected delight, as that presented by the rejoicing group which surrounded the bed of the happy—alas, too happy, Jane Sinclair.

"Is it possible, my dear," said her father, "that our darling is restored to her sense and recollection?"

"Try her, Henry," said the proud mother.

"Jane, my love, do you not know me?" he asked.

"To be sure, papa; to be sure," she replied smiling.

"And you know all of us, my heart's treasure?"

"Help me up a little," she replied; "now I will show you: you are my papa—there is my mamma—that is William—and Maria there will kiss me."

Maria, from whose eyes gushed tears of delight, flew to the sweet girl's bosom.

"But," added Jane, "there is another—another that must come to my bosom and stay there—Agnes!"

"I am here, my own darling," replied Agnes, stooping and folding her arms about the beautiful creature's snow-white neck, whilst she kissed her lips with a fervor of affection equal to the delight experienced at her supposed recovery.

"There now, Agnes, you are to sleep with mo to-night: but I want my papa. Papa, I want you."

Her father stood forward, his mild eyes beaming with an expression of delight and happiness.

"I am here, my sweet child."

"You ought to be a proud man, papa; a proud man: although I say it, that ought *not* to say it, you are father to the most beautiful girl in Europe. Charles Osborne has traveled Europe, and can find none at all so beautiful as the Fawn of Springvale, and so he is coming home one of these days to marry me, because, you know, because he could find none else so beautiful. If he had—if he had—you know—you may be assured, I

would not be the girl of his choice. Yet I would marry him still, if it were not for one thing; and that is—that I am foredoomed; a reprobate and a cast-away; predestined—predestined—and so I would not wish to drag him to hell along with me; I shall therefore act the heroic part, and refuse him. Still it is something—oh it is much—and I am proud of it, not only on my own account, but on his, to be the most beautiful girl in Europe! I am proud of it, because he would not marry if I were not.”

Oh unhappy, but affectionate mourners, what—what was all you had yet suffered, when contrasted with the sudden and unexpected misery of this bitter moment Your hearts had gathered in joy and happiness around the bed of that sweet girl, the gleams of whose insanity you had mistaken for the light of reason; and now has hope disappeared, and the darkness of utter despair fallen upon you all for ever.

Page 92

"I wish to rise," she proceeded, "and to join the morning prayer; until then I shall only dress in my wrapper: after that I shall dress as becomes me. I know I have nothing to hope either in this world or the next, consequently pride in me is not a sin: the measure of my misery has been filled up; and the only interval, of happiness left me, is that between this and death. Dress me, Agnes."

The pause arising from the revulsion of feeling, occasioned by the discovery of her settled insanity, was indeed an exemplification of that grief which lies too deep for tears. Some of them could weep, but they looked upon her and each other, with a silent agony, which far transcended the power of clamorous sorrow.

"Children," said her father, whose fortitude, considering the nature of this his great affliction, was worthy of better days; "let us neither look upon our beloved one, nor upon each other. There," said he, pointing upwards, "let us look there. You all know how I loved—how I love her. You all know how she loved me; but I cast—or I strive to cast the burthen, of my affliction upon Him who has borne all for our salvation, and you see I am tearless. Dress the dear child, Agnes, and as she desires it, let her join us at prayer, and may the Lord who has afflicted us, hearken to our supplications!"

Tenderly and with trembling hands did Agnes dress the beloved girl, and when the fair creature, supported by her two sisters, entered the parlor, never was a more divine picture of beauty seen to shine out of that cloud, with which the mysterious hand of God had enveloped her.

At prayer she knelt as meekly, and with as much apparent devotion as she had ever done in the days of her most rational and earnest piety. But it was woful to see the blighted girl go through all the forms of worship, when it was known that the very habit which actuated her resulted from those virtues, which even insanity could not altogether repress.

When they had arisen from their knees, she again addressed Agnes in a tone of cheerful sweetness, such as she had exhibited in her happier days.

"Agnes, now for our task; and indeed you must perform it with care. Remember that you are about to dress the most beautiful girl in Europe. What a fair cast-away am I, Agnes?"

"I hope not a cast-away, Jane; but I shall dress you with care and tenderness, notwithstanding."

"Every day I must dress in my best, because when Charles returns, you know it will be necessary that I should justify his choice, by appearing as beautiful as possible."

“Give the innocent her own way,” said her father; “give her, in all that may gratify the child, her own way, where it is not directly wrong to do so.”

Agnes and she then went up to her room, that she might indulge in that harmless happiness, which the fiction of hope had, under the mercy of God, extracted, from the reality of despair.

Page 93

When the ceremony of the toilette was over, she and her sister returned to the parlor, and they could notice a slight tinge of color added to her pale cheek, by the proud consciousness of her beauty. The exertion, however, she had undergone, considering her extremely weak and exhausted state of health was more than she could bear long. But a few minutes had elapsed after her reappearance in the parlor, when she said—

“Mamma, I am unwell; I want to be undressed, and to go to bed; I am very faint; help me to bed, mamma—and if you come and stay with me, I shall tell you every thing about my prospects in life—yes, and in death, too; because I have prospects in death—but ah,” she added, shuddering, “they are dark—dark!”

Seldom, indeed, was a family tried like this family; and never was the endurance of domestic love, and its triumph over the chilling habit of affliction, more signally manifested than in the undying tenderness of their hearts and hands, in all that was necessary to her comfort, or demanded by the childish caprices of her malady.

On going upstairs, she kissed them all as usual, but they then discovered, for the first time, in all its bitterness, what a dark and melancholy enjoyment it is to kiss the lips of a maniac, who has loved us, and whom we still must love.

“Jane,” said William, struggling to be firm, “kiss me, too, before you go.”

“Come to me, William,” said she, “for I am not able to go to you. Oh, my brother, if I did not love you, I would be very wicked.”

The affectionate young man kissed her, and, as he did, the big tears rolled down his cheeks. He wept aloud.

“I never, never gave her up till now,” he exclaimed; “but”—and his face darkened into deep indignation as he spoke, “we shall see about it yet, Jane dear. I shall allow a month or two—she may recover; but if I suffer this to go unav—” he paused; “I meant nothing,” he added, “except that I will not despair of her yet.”

About ten days restored her to something like health, but it was obvious that her constitution had sustained a shock which it could not long survive. Of this Dr. M'Cormick assured them.

“In so delicate a subject as she is,” he added, “we usually find that when reason goes, the physical powers soon follow it. But if my opinion be correct, I think you will have the consolation of seeing her mind clear before she dies. There comes often in such cases what the common people properly, and indeed beautifully, term a light before death, and I think she will have it. As you are unanimous against putting her into a private asylum, you must only watch the sweet girl quietly, and without any appearance of vigilance,

allowing her in all that is harmless and indifferent to have her own way. Religious feeling you perceive constitutes a strong feature in her case, the rest is obviously the result of the faithless conduct of Osborne. Poor girl, here she comes, apparently quite happy." Jane entered as he spoke, after having been dressed as usual for the day, in her best apparel. She glanced for a moment at the glass, and readjusted her hair which had, she thought, got a little out of order; after which she said, smiling,

Page 94

"Why should I fear comparisons? He may come as soon as he pleases. I am ready to receive him, but do you know I think that my papa and mamma are not so fond of me as they ought to be. Is it not an honor to have for their daughter a girl whose beauty is unsurpassed in Europe? I am not proud of it for my own sake, but for his."

"Jane, do you know this gentleman, dear?" said her mother.

"Oh yes; that is Dr. M'Cormick."

"I am glad to see that your health is so much improved, my dear," said the doctor.

"Oh yes," she replied, "I am quite well—that is so far as this world is concerned; but for all so happy as I look, you would never guess that I am reprobate. Now could you tell me, doctor, why it is that I look so happy knowing as I do that I am foredoomed to misery?"

"No," he replied, "but you will tell us yourself."

"Why it is because I do know it. Knowing the worst is often a great consolation, I assure you. I, at least, have felt it so."

"Oh what a noble mind is lost in that sweet girl!" exclaimed the worthy physician.

"But it seems, mamma," she proceeded, "there is a report gone abroad that I am mad. I met yesterday—was it not yesterday, Agnes?—I met a young woman down on the river side, and she asked me if it were true that I was crazed with love, and how do you think I replied, mamma? I said to her, 'If you would avoid misery—misery, mark—never violate truth even indirectly.' I said that solemnly, and would have said more but that Agnes rebuked her for speaking, and then wept. Did you not weep, Agnes?"

"Oh no wonder I should," replied her sister, deeply moved; "the interview she alludes to, doctor, was one that occurred the day before yesterday between her and another poor girl in the neighborhood who is also unsettled, owing to a desertion of a still baser kind. It was becoming too affecting to listen to, and I chid the poor thing off."

"Yes, indeed, she chid her off, and the poor thing as she told me, about to be a bride to-morrow. She said she was in quest of William that they might be married, and asked me if I had seen him. If you do, she added, tell him that Fanny is waiting for him, and that as everything is ready she expects he'll come and marry her to-morrow as he promised. Now, mamma, Agnes said, that although she chid her, she wept for her, but why should you weep, Agnes, for a girl who is about to become a bride to-morrow? Surely you did not weep because she was going to be made happy? Did you?"

"All who are going to become brides are not about to experience happiness, my dear," replied her sister.

“Oh, I should think so certainly, Agnes,” replied Jane. “Fie, fie, dear sister Agnes, do not lay down such doctrine. Did you not see the happy girl we met yesterday—was it yesterday? But no matter, Agnes, we shall not quarrel about it. Come and walk. Good-by, my mamma; doctor, I wish you a good morning,” and with a grace that was inimitable, she made him a distant, but most respectful curtsy.

Page 95

“Oh!” said she, turning back, “if any stranger should arrive during my absence, mamma, send for me immediately; or stay do not—let him meet me at the place appointed; I will be there.”

She then took Agnes’s arm, for Agnes it was who attended her in all her ramblings, and both proceeded on their every-day saunter through the adjoining fields.

A little time, indeed, proved how very accurate had been the opinion of Dr. M’Cormick; for although Jane was affected by no particular bodily complaint, yet it appeared by every day’s observation that she was gradually sinking. In the meantime, three or four months elapsed without bringing about any symptom whatsoever of improvement. Her derangement flashed out into no extraordinary paroxysm, but on the contrary assumed a wild and graceful character, sometimes light and unsettled as the glancing of sunbeams on a disturbed current, and occasionally pensive and beautiful as the beams of an autumnal moon. In all the habits of the family she was most exact. Her devotional composure at prayer appeared to be fraught with the humblest piety; her attendance at Meeting was remarkably punctual, and her deportment edifying to an extreme degree. The history, too, of her insanity and its cause had gone far and wide, as did the sympathy which it excited. In all her innocent ramblings with Agnes around her father’s house, and through the adjoining fields, no rude observation or unmannered gaze ever offended the gentle creature; but on the contrary, the delicate-minded peasant of the north would often turn aside from an apprehension of disturbing her, as well perhaps as out of reverence for the calamity of a creature so very young and beautiful.

Indeed, many affecting observations were made, which, could her friends have heard them, would have fallen like balm upon their broken spirits. Full of compassion they were for her sore misfortune, and of profound sympathy for the sorrows of her family.

“Alas the day, my bonnie lady! My Heart is sair to see sae lovely a thing gliding about sae unhappy. Black be his gate that had the heart to leave you, for rank and wealth, my winsome lassie. Weary on him, and little good may his wealth and rank do him! Oh wha would a thocht that the peerless young blossom wad hae been withered so soon, or that the Fawn o’ Springvale wad hae ever come to the like o’ this. Alas! the day, too, for the friends that nurst you, Ay bonnie bairn!” and then the kind-hearted matron would wipe her eyes on seeing the far-loved Fawn of Springvale passing by, unconscious that the fatal arrow which had first struck her was still quivering in her side. The fourth month had now elapsed, and Jane’s malady neither exhibited any change nor the slightest symptom of improvement. William, who had watched her closely all along, saw that no hope of any such consummation existed. He remarked, too, with a bitter sense of the unprincipled injury inflicted on the confiding

Page 96

girl, that every week drew her perceptibly nearer and nearer to the grave. His blood had in fact long been boiling in his veins with an indignation which he could scarcely stifle. He entertained, however, a strong reverence for religion, and had Jane, after a reasonable period, recovered, he intended to leave Osborne to be punished only by his own remorse. There was no prospect, however, of her being restored to reason, and now his determination was finally taken. Nay, so deeply resolved had he been on this as an ultimate step in the event of her not recovering, that soon after Mr. Osborne's return from London, he waited on that gentleman, and declared his indignation at the treachery of his son to be so deep and implacable that he requested of him as a personal favor, to suspend all communication with the unhappy girl's family, lest he might be tempted even by the sight of any person connected with so base a man, to go and pistol him on whatever spot he might be able to find him. This, which was rather harsh to the amiable gentleman, excited in his breast more of sorrow than resentment. But it happened fortunately enough for both parties that a day or two before this angry communication, Dr. M'Cormick had waited upon the latter, and gave it as his opinion that any intercourse between the two families would be highly dangerous to Jane's state of mind, by exciting associations that might bring back to her memory the conduct of his son. The consequence was, that they saw each other only by accident, although Mr. Osborne often sent to inquire privately after Jane's health.

William having now understood that Osborne and his wife resided in Paris, engaged a friend to accompany him thither, for the purpose of demanding satisfaction for the injuries inflicted on his sister. All the necessary arrangements were accordingly made; the very day for their departure was appointed, and a letter addressed to Agnes actually written, to relieve the family from the alarm occasioned by his disappearance, when a communication from Osborne to his father, at once satisfied the indignant young man that his enemy was no longer an object for human resentment.

This requires but brief explanation. Osborne, possessing as he did, ambition, talent, and enthusiasm in a high degree, was yet deficient in that firmness of purpose which is essential to distinction in public or private life. His wife was undoubtedly both beautiful and accomplished, and it is undeniable that his marriage with her opened to him brilliant prospects as a public man. Notwithstanding her beauty, however, their union took place not to gratify his love, but his ambition. Jane Sinclair, in point of fact, had never been displaced from his affection, for as she was in his eye the most beautiful, so was she in the moments of self-examination, the best beloved. This, however, availed the unhappy girl but little, with a man in whose character ambition was the predominant impulse. To find himself beloved by a young and

Page 97

beautiful woman of wealth and fashion was too much for one who possessed but little firmness and an insatiable thirst after distinction. To jostle men of rank and property out of his path, and to jostle them successfully, when approaching the heart of an heiress, was too much for the vanity of an obscure young man, with only a handsome person and good talents to recommend him. The glare of fashionable life, and the unexpected success of his addresses made him giddy, and despite an ineffaceable conviction of dishonor and treachery, he found himself husband to a rich heiress, and son-in-law to a baronet. And now was he launched in full career upon the current of fashionable dissipation, otherwise called high life. This he might have borne as well as the other votaries of polished profligacy, were it not for one simple consideration—he had neither health nor constitution, nor, to do the early lover of Jane Sinclair justice, heart for the modes and habits of that society, through the vortices of which he now found himself compelled to whirl. He was not, in fact, able to keep pace with the rapid motions of his fashionable wife, and the result in a very short time was, that their hearts were discovered to be anything but congenial—in fact anything but united. The absence of domestic happiness joined to that remorse which his conduct towards the unassuming but beautiful object of his first affection entailed upon a heart that, notwithstanding its errors, was incapable of foregoing its own convictions, soon broke down the remaining stamina of his constitution, and before the expiration of three months, he found himself hopelessly smitten by the same disease which had been so fatal to his family. His physicians told him that if there were any chance of his recovery, it must be in the efficacy of his native air; and his wife, with fashionable apathy, expressed the same opinion, and hoped that he might, after a proper sojourn at home, be enabled to join her early in the following season at Naples. Up to this period he had heard nothing of the mournful consequences which his perfidy had produced upon the intellect of our unhappy Jane. His father, who in fact still entertained hopes of her ultimate sanity, now that his son was married, deemed it unnecessary to embitter his peace by a detail of the evils he had occasioned her. But when, like her brother William, he despaired of her recovery, he considered it only an act of justice towards her and her family to lay before Charles the hideousness of his guilt together with its woful consequences. This melancholy communication was received by him the day after his physicians had given him over, for in fact the prescription of his native air was only a polite method of telling him that there was no hope. His conscience, which recent circumstances had already awakened, was not prepared for intelligence so dreadful. Remorse, or rather repentance seized him, and he wrote to beg that his father would suffer a penitent son to come home to die.

Page 98

This letter, the brief contents of which we have given, his father submitted to Mr. Sinclair, whose reply was indeed characteristic of the exalted Christian, who can forget his own injury in the distress of his enemy.

“Let him come,” said the old man; “our resentments have long since passed away, and why should not yours? He has now a higher interest to look to than any arising from either love or ambition. His immortal soul is at stake, and if we can reconcile him to heaven, the great object of existence will after all be secured. God forbid that our injuries should stand in the way of his salvation. Allow me,” he added, “to bring this letter home, that I may read it to my family, with one exception of course. Alas! it contains an instructive lesson.”

This was at once acceded to by the other, and they separated.

When William heard the particulars of Osborne’s melancholy position, he of course gave up the hostility of his purpose, and laid before his friend a history of the circumstances connected with his brief and unhappy career.

“He is now a dying man,” said William, “to whom this life, its idle forms and unmeaning usages, are as nothing, or worse than nothing. A higher tribunal than the guilty spirit of this world’s honor will demand satisfaction from him for his baseness towards unhappy Jane. To that tribunal I leave him; but whether he live or die, I will never look upon my insane sister, without thinking of him as a villain, and detesting his very name and memory.”

If these sentiments be considered ungenerous, let it be remembered that they manifested less his resentment to Osborne, than the deep and elevated affection which he bore his sister, for whose injuries he felt much more indignantly than he would have done for his own.

Jane, however, from this period forth began gradually to break down, and her derangement, though still inoffensive and harmless, assumed a more anxious and melancholy expression. This might arise, to be sure, from the depression of spirits occasioned by a decline of health. But from whatever cause it proceeded, one thing was evident, that an air of deep dejection settled upon her countenance and whole deportment. She would not, for instance, permit Agnes in their desultory rambles to walk by her side, but besought her to attend at a distance behind her.

“I wish to be alone, dear Agnes,” she said, “but notwithstanding that, I do not wish to be without you. I might have been some time ago the Queen of beauty, but now, Agnes, I am the Queen of Sorrow.”

“You have had your share of sorrow, my poor stricken creature,” replied Agnes, heavily.

“But there is, Agnes, a melancholy beauty in sorrow—it is so sweet to be sad. Did. you ever see a single star in the sky, Agnes?”

“Yes, love, often.”

“Well, that is like sorrow, or rather that is like me. Does it not always seem to mourn, and to mourn alone, but the moment that another star arises then the spell is broken, and it seems no more to mourn in the solitude of heaven.”

Page 99

“Agnes looked at her with sad but earnest admiration, and exclaimed in a quivering-voice as she pressed her to her bosom,

“Oh Jane, Jane, how my heart loves you!—the day is coming, my sister—our sweetest, our youngest, our dearest—the day is coming when we will see you no more—when your sorrows and your joys, whether real or imaginary—when all the unsettled evidences of goodness, which nothing could destroy, will be gone; and you with all you’ve suffered—with all your hopes and fears, will be no longer present for our hearts to gather about. Oh my sister, my sister! how will the old man live! He will not—he will not. We see already that he suffers, and what it costs him to be silent. His gait is feeble and infirm is and head bent since the’ hand of affliction has come upon you. Yet, Jane, Jane, we could bear all, provided you were permitted to remain with us! Your voice—your voice—and is the day so soon to come when we will not hear it? when our eyes will no more rest upon you? And”—added the affectionate girl, now overcome by her feelings, laying her calm sister’s head at the same time upon her bosom, “and when those locks so brown and rich that your Agnes’s hands have so often dressed, will be mouldering in the grave, and that face—oh, the seal of death is upon your pale, pale cheek, my sister!—my sister!” She could say no more, but kissed Jane’s lips, and pressing her to her heart, she wept in a long fit of irrepressible grief.

Jane looked up with a pensive gaze into Agnes’s face, and as she calmly dried her sister’s tears, said:—

“Is it not strange, Agnes, that I who am the Queen of Sorrow cannot weep. I resemble some generous princess, who though rich, gives away her wealth to the needy in such abundance that she is always poor herself. I who weep not, supply you all with tears, and cannot find one for myself when I want it. Indeed so it seems, my sister.”

“It is true, indeed, Jane—too true, too true, my darling.”

“Agnes, I could tell you a secret. It is not without reason that I am the Queen of Sorrow.”

“Alas, it is not, my sweet innocent.”

“I have the secret here,” said she, putting her hand to her bosom, “and no one suspects that I have. The cause why I am the Queen of Sorrow is indeed here—here. But come, I do not much like this arbor somehow. There is, I think, a reason for it, but I forget it. Let us walk elsewhere.”

This was the arbor of osiers in which Osborne in the enthusiasm of his passion, said that if during his travels he found a girl more beautiful, he would cease to love Jane, and to write to her—an expression which, as the reader knows, exercised afterwards a melancholy power upon her intellect.

Agnes and she proceeded as she desired, to saunter about, which they did for the most part in silence, except when she wished to stop and make an observation of her own free will. Her step was slow, her face pale, and her gait, alas, quite feeble, and evidently that of a worn frame and a broken heart.

Page 100

For some time past, she seemed to have forgotten that she was a foredoomed creature, and a cast-away, at least her allusions to this were less frequent than before—a circumstance which Dr. M'Cormick said he looked upon as the most favorable symptom he had yet seen in her case.

Upon this day, however, she sauntered about in silence, and passed from place to place, followed by Agnes; like the waning moon, accompanied by her faithful and attendant star.

After having passed a green field, she came upon the road with an intention of crossing it, and going down by the river to the yew tree, which during all her walks she never failed to visit. Here it was that, for the second time, she met poor Fanny Morgan, the unsettled victim of treachery more criminal still than that which had been practised upon herself.

"You are the bonnie Fawn of Springvale that's gone mad with love," said the unhappy creature.

"No, no," replied Jane, "you are mistaken. I am the Queen of Sorrow."

"I am to be married to-morrow," said the other. "Everything's ready, but I can't find William. Did you see him? But maybe you may, and if you do—oh speak a word for me, but one word, and tell him that all's ready, and that Fanny's waiting, and that he must not break his promise."

"You are very happy to be married tomorrow."

"Yes," replied the other smiling—"I am happy enough now; but when we are married—when William makes me his wife, people won't look down on me any longer. I wish I could find him, for oh, my heart is sick, and will be sick, until I see him. If he knew how I was treated, he would not suffer it. If you see him, will you promise to tell him that all's ready, and that I am waiting for him?—Will you, my bonnie lady?"

"I could tell you a secret," said Jane—"they don't know at home that I got the letter at all—but I did, and have read it—he is coming home—coming home to die—that's what makes me the Queen of Sorrow. Do you ever weep?"

"No, but they took the baby from me, and beat me—my brother John did; but William was not near to take my part?"

"Who will you have at the wedding?"

"I have no bride's maid yet—but may be you would be that for me, my bonnie lady. John said I disgraced them; but surely I only loved William. I wish to-morrow was past, and that he would remove my shame—I could then be proud, but now I cannot."

“And what are you ashamed of? It is no shame to love him.”

“No, no, and all would be well enough, but that they beat me and took away the baby—my brother John did.”

“But did William ever swear to you, that if he met a girl more beautiful, he would cease to love you, and to write to you?”

“No, he promised to marry me.”

“And do you know why he does not?”

“If I could, find him he would. Oh, if you see him, will you tell him that I’m waiting, and that all’s ready?”



Page 101

"You," said Jane, "have been guilty of a great sin."

"So they said, and that I brought myself to shame too. But William will take away that if I could find him."

"You told an indirect falsehood to your father—you concealed the truth—and now the hand of God is upon you. There is nothing for you now but death."

"I don't like death—it took away my baby—if they would give me back my baby I would not care—except John—I would hide from him."

"William's married to another and dying, so that you may become a queen of sorrow too—would you like that—sorrow is a sweet thing."

"How could he marry another, and be promised to me?"

"Is your heart cold?" inquired Jane.

"No," replied the other smiling, "indeed I am to be married to-morrow?"

"Let me see you early in the morning," said Jane—"if you do, perhaps I may give you this," showing the letter. "Your heart cannot be cold if you keep it—I carry it here," said she, putting her hand to her bosom—"but I need not, for mine will be warm enough soon."

"Mine's warm enough too," said the other.

"If William comes, you will find poison on his lips," said Jane, "and that will kill you—the poison of polluted lips would kill a thousand faithful hearts—it, would—and there is nothing for treachery but sorrow. Be sorrowful—be sorrowful—it is the only thing to ease a deserted heart—it eases mine."

"But then they say you're crazed with love."

"No, no—with sorrow; but listen, never violate truth—never be guilty of falsehood; if you do, you will become unhappy; and if you do not, the light of God's countenance will shine upon you."

"Indeed it is no lie, for as sure as you stand there to-morrow is the day."

"I think I love you," said the gentle and affectionate Jane. "Will you kiss me? my sister Agnes does when I ask her."

“Why shouldn’t I, my bonnie, bonnie lady? Why shouldn’t I? Oh! indeed, but you are bonnie, and yet be crazed with love! Well, well, he will never comb a gray head that deserted the bonnie Fawn of Spring-vale.”

Jane, who was much the taller, stooped, and with a smile of melancholy, but unconscious sympathy, kissed the forlorn creature’s lips, and after beckoning Agnes to follow her, passed on.

That embrace! Who could describe its character? Oh! man, man, and woman, woman, think of this!

Agnes, after Jane and she had returned home, found that a search had been instigated during their absence for the letter which Charles had written to his father. Mr. Sinclair, anxious to return it, had missed it from among his papers, and felt seriously concerned at its disappearance.

“I only got it to read to the family,” said he, “and what am I to say, or what can I say, when Mr. Osborne asks me, as he will, to return it? Agnes, do you know anything of it?”

Page 102

Agnes, who, from the interview between Jane and the unsettled Fanny Morgan, saw at once that it had got, by some means unknown to the family, into her sister's hands, knew not exactly in what terms to reply. She saw too, that Jane looked upon the possession of the letter as a secret, and in her presence she felt that considering her sister's view of the matter, and her state of mind, she could not, without pressing too severely on the gentle creature's sorrow, inform her father of the truth.

"Papa," said the admirable and considerate girl, "the letter I have no doubt will be found. I beg of you papa, I beg of you not to be uneasy about it; it will be found."

This she said in a tone as significant as possible, with a hope that her father might infer from her manner that Jane had the letter in question.

The old man looked at Agnes, and appeared as if striving to collect the meaning of what she said, but he was not long permitted to remain in any doubt upon the subject.

Jane approached him slowly, and putting her hand to her bosom, took out the letter and placed it upon the table before him.

"It came from him," said she, "and that was the reason why I put it next my heart. You know, papa, he is dying, and this letter is a message of death. I thought that such a message was more proper from him to me than to any one else. I have carried it next my heart, and you may take it now, papa. The message has been delivered, and I feel that death is here—for that is all that he and it have left me. I am the star of sorrow—Pale and mournful in the lonely sky; yet," she added as she did on another occasion, "we shall not all die, but we shall be changed."

"My sweet child," said Mr. Sinclair, "I am not angry with, you about the letter; I only wish you to keep your spirits up, and not be depressed so much as you are." She appeared quite exhausted, and replied not for some time; at length she said:

"Papa, mamma, have I done anything wrong? If I have tell me. Oh, Agnes, Agnes, but my heart is heavy."

"As sure as heaven is above us, Henry," whispered her mother to Mr. Sinclair, "she is upon the point of being restored to her senses."

"Alas, my dear," he replied, "who can tell? It may happen as you say. Oh how I shall bless God if it does! but still, what, what will it be but, as Dr. M'Cormick said, the light before death? The child is dying, and she will be taken from us for ever, for ever!"

Jane, whilst they spoke, looked earnestly and with a struggling eye into the countenances of those who were about her; but again she smiled pensively, and said:



“I am—I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky. Jane Sinclair is no more—the Fawn of Springvale is no more—I am now nothing but sorrow. I was the queen, but now I am the star of sorrow. Oh! how I long to set in heaven!”

Page 103

She was then removed to bed, where with her mother and her two sisters beside her, she lay quiet as a child, repeating to herself—"I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky; but now I know that I will soon set in heaven. Jane Sinclair is no more—the Fawn of Springvale is no more. No—I am now the star of sorrow!" The melancholy beauty of the sentiment seemed to soothe her, for she continued to repeat these words, sometimes aloud and sometimes in a sweet voice, until she fell gently asleep.

"She is asleep," said Agnes, looking upon her still beautiful but mournful features, now, indeed composed into an expression of rooted sorrow. They all stood over the bed, and looked upon her for many minutes. At length Agnes clasped her hands, and with a suffocating voice, as if her heart would break, exclaimed, "Oh mother, mother," and rushed from the room that she might weep aloud without awakening the afflicted one who slept.

Another week made a rapid change upon her for the worse, and it was considered necessary to send for Dr. M'Cormick, as from her feebleness and depression they feared that her dissolution was by no means distant, especially as she had for the last three days been confined to her bed. The moment he saw her, his opinion confirmed their suspicions.

"Deal gently with her now," said he; "a fit or a paroxysm of any kind would be fatal to her. The dear girl's unhappy race is run—her sands are all but numbered. This moment her thread of life is not stronger than a gossamer." Ere his departure on that occasion, he brought Mr. Sinclair aside and thus addressed him:

"Are you aware, sir, that Mr. Osborne's son has returned."

"Not that he has actually returned," replied Mr. Sinclair, "but I know that he is daily expected."

"He reached his father's house," continued the doctor, "early yesterday; and such a pitiable instance of remorse as he is I have never seen, and I hope never shall. His cry is to see your daughter, that he may hear his forgiveness from her own lips. He says he cannot die in hope or in happiness, unless she pardons him. This, however, must not be—I mean an interview between them—for it would most assuredly prove fatal to himself; and should she see him only for a moment, that moment were her last."

"I will visit the unhappy young man myself," said her father; "as for an interview it cannot be thought of—even if they could bear it, Charles forgets that he is the husband of another woman, and that, consequently, Jane is nothing to him—and that such a meeting would be highly—grossly improper."



“Your motives, though perfectly just, are different from mine,” said the doctor—“I speak merely as a medical man. He wants not this to hurry him into the grave—he will be there soon enough.”

“Let him feel repentance towards God,” said the old man heavily—“towards my child it is now unavailing. It is my duty, as it shall be my endeavor, to fix this principle in his heart.”

Page 104

The Doctor then departed, having promised to see Jane on the next day but one. This gentleman's opinion, however, with respect to his beautiful patient, was not literally correct; still, although she lingered longer than could naturally be anticipated from her excessive weakness, yet he was right in saying that her thread of life resembled, that of the gossamer.

In the course of the same evening, she gave the first symptom of a lucid interval; still in point of fact her mind was never wholly restored to sanity. She had slept long and soundly, and after awaking rang the bell for some one to come to her. This was unusual, and in a moment she was attended by Agnes and her mother.

"I am very weak, my dear mamma," said she, "and although I cannot say that I feel any particular complaint—I speak of a bodily one—yet I feel that my strength is gone, and that you will not be troubled with your poor Jane much longer."

"Do not think so, dear love, do not think so," replied her mother; "bear up, my darling, bear up, and all may yet be well."

"Agnes," said she, "come to me. I know not—perhaps—dear Agnes——"

She could utter no more. Agnes flew to her, and they wept in each other's arms for many minutes.

"I would be glad to see my papa," she said, "and my dear Maria and William. Oh mamma, mamma, I suspect that I have occasioned you all much sorrow."

"No, no, no—but more joy now, my heart's own treasure, a thousand times more joy than you ever occasioned us of sorrow. Do not think it, oh, do not think it."

Her father, who had just returned from visiting Charles Osborne, now entered her bedroom, accompanied by William and his two daughters—for Agnes had flown to inform them of the happy turn which had taken place in Jane's malady. When he entered, she put her white but wasted hand out, and raised her head to kiss him.

"My dear papa," said she, "it is so long, I think, since I have seen you; and Maria, too. Oh, dear Maria, come to me—but you must not weep, dear sister. Alas, Maria,"—for the poor girl wept bitterly—"Oh, my I sister, but your heart is good and loving. William"—she kissed him, and looking tenderly into his face, said,

"Why, oh, why are you all in tears? Imitate my papa, dear William. I am so glad to see you! Papa, I have been—I fear I have been—but, indeed, I remember when I dreaded as much. My heart, my heart is heavy when I think of all the grief and affliction I must have occasioned you; but you will all forgive your poor Jane, for you know she would not do so if she could avoid it. Papa, how pale and careworn you look! as, indeed, you

all do. Oh, God help me. I see, I see—I read on your sorrowful faces the history of all you have suffered on my account.”

They all cherished, and petted, and soothed the sweet creature; and, indeed, rejoiced over her as if she had been restored to them from the dead.

Page 105

"Papa, would you get me the Bible," she continued. "I wish if possible to console you and the rest; and mamma, you will think when I am gone of that which I am about to show you; think of it all of you, for indeed an early death is sometimes a great blessing to those who are taken away. Alas! who can say when it is not?"

They assisted her to sit up in the bed, and after turning over the leaves of the Bible, she read in a voice of low impressive melody the first verse of the fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah.

"The righteous perisheth, and no man taketh it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He SHALL ENTER INTO PEACE."

"Oh! many a death," she continued, "is wept for and lamented by friends and relatives, who consider not that those for whom they weep may be taken away from the evil to come. I feel that I am unable to speak much, but it is your Jane's request, that the consolation to be found, not only in this passage, but in this book, may be applied to your hearts when I am gone."

This effort, slight as it was, enfeebled her much, and she lay silent for some time; and such was their anxiety, neither to excite nor disturb her, that although their hearts were overflowing they restrained themselves, so far as to permit no startling symptoms of grief to be either seen or heard. After a little time, however, she spoke again:—

"My poor bird," said she, "I fear I have neglected it. Dear Agnes would you let me see it—I long to see it." Agnes in a few minutes returned and placed the bird in her bosom. She caressed it for a short time, and then looking at it earnestly said—

"Is it possible, that you too, my Ariel, are drooping?"

This indeed was true. The bird had been for some time past as feeble and delicate as if its fate were bound up with that of its unhappy mistress—whether it was that the sight of it revived some recollection that disturbed her, or whether this brief interval of reason was as much as exhausted nature could afford on one occasion, it is difficult to say; but the fact is, that after looking on it for some time, she put her hand to her bosom and asked, "Where, where is the letter?"

"What letter, my darling?" said her father.

"Is not Charles unhappy and dying?" she said.

"He is ill, my love," said her father, "but not dying, we trust."

"It is not here," she said, searching her bosom, "it is not here—but it matters nothing now—it was a message of death, and the message has been delivered. Sorrow—



sorrow—sorrow—how beautiful is that word—there is but one other in the language that surpasses it, and that is mourn. Oh! how beautiful is that too—how delicately expressive. Weep is violent; but mourn, the graduated tearless grief that wastes gently—that disappoints death, for we die not but only cease to be. I am the star of sorrow, pale and mournful in the lonely sky—well, that is one consolation—when I set I shall set in heaven.”

Page 106

They knew by experience that any attempt at comfort would then produce more evil than good. For near two hours she uttered to herself in a low chant, "I am the star of sorrow, *etc.*," after which she sank as before into a profound slumber.

Her intervals of reason, as death approached, were mercifully extended. Whilst they lasted, nothing could surpass the noble standard of Christian duty by which her feelings and moral sentiments were regulated. For a fortnight after this, she sank with such a certain but imperceptible approximation towards death that the eyes even of affection could, scarcely notice the gradations of its approach.

During this melancholy period, her father was summoned upon an occasion which was strongly calculated to try the sincerity of his Christian professions. Not a day passed that he did not forget his own sorrows, and the reader knows how heavily they pressed upon him—in order to prepare the mind of his daughter's destroyer for the awful change which death was about to open upon his soul. He reasoned—he prayed—he wept—he triumphed—yes, he triumphed, nor did he ever leave the death-bed of Charles Osborne, until he had succeeded in fixing his heart upon that God "who willeth not the death of a sinner."

A far heavier trial upon the Christian's fortitude, however, was soon to come upon him. Jane, as the reader knows, was now at the very portals of heaven. For hours in the day—she was perfectly rational; but again she would wander into her chant of sorrow,—as much from weakness as from the original cause of her malady; for upon this it is difficult if not impossible to determine.

On the last evening, however, that her father ever attended Charles Osborne, he came home as usual, and was about to inquire how Jane felt, when Maria come to him with eyes which weeping had made red, and said—

"Oh papa—I fear—we all fear, that—I cannot utter it—I cannot—I cannot—Oh papa, at last the hour we fear is come."

"Remember, my child, that you are speaking," said this heroic Christian, "remember that you are speaking to a Christian father, who will not set up his affections, nor his weaknesses, nor his passions against the will of God."

"Oh! but papa—Jane, Jane"—she burst into bitter tears for more than a minute, and then added—"Jane, papa, is dying—leaving us at last!"

"Maria," said he, calmly, "leave me for some minutes. You know not, dear child, what my struggles have been. Leave me now—this is the trial I fear—and now must I, and so must you all—but now must I—Oh, leave me, leave me."

He knelt down and prayed; but in less than three, minutes, Agnes, armed with affection—commanding and absolute it was from that loving sister—came to him.

She laid her hand upon his arm, and pressed it. “Papa!”—

“I know it,” said he, “she is going; but, Agnes, we must be Christians.”

Page 107

"We must be sisters, papa; and ah, papa, surely, surely this is a moment in which the father may forget the Christian. Jesus wept for a stranger; what would He not have done for a brother or a sister?"

"Agnes, Agnes," said he, in a tone of sorrow, inexpressibly deep, "is this taxing me with want of affection for—for—"

She flung herself upon his breast. "Oh, papa, forgive me, forgive me—I am not capable of appreciating the high and holy principles from which you act. Forgive me; and surely if you ever forgave me on any occasion, you will on this."

"Dear Agnes," said he, "you scarcely ever required my forgiveness, and less now than! ever—even if you had. Come—I will go; and may the Lord support and strengthen us all! Your mother—our poor mother!"

On entering the room of the dying girl, they found her pale cheek laid against that of her other parent, whose arms were about her, as if she would hold them in love and tenderness for ever. When she saw them approach, she raised her head feebly, and said—"Is that my papa? my beloved papa?" The old man raised his eyes once more to heaven for support—but for upwards of half a minute the muscles of his face worked with power that evinced the full force of what he suffered—

"I am here, I am here," he at length said, with difficulty.

"And that is Agnes?" she inquired. "Agnes, come near me; and do not be angry, dear Agnes that I die on mamma's bosom and not on yours."

Agnes could only seize her pale hand and bathe it in tears. "Angry with you—you living angel—oh, who ever was, or could be, my sister!"

"You all love me too much," she said. "Maria, it grieves me to see your grief so excessive—William, oh why, why will you weep so? Is it because I am about to leave the pains and sorrows of this unhappy life, and; to enter into peace, that you all grieve thus bitterly. Believe me—and I know this will relieve my papa's heart—and all your hearts—will it not yours, my mamma?—it is this—your Jane, your own Jane is not afraid to die. Her hopes are fixed on the Rock of Ages—the Rock of her salvation. I know, indeed, that my brief existence has been marked at its close with care and sorrow; but these cares and sorrows have brought me the sooner to that place where all tears shall be wiped from my eyes. Let my fate, too, be a warning to young creatures like myself, never to suffer their affection for any object to overmaster their sense and their reason. I cherished the passion of my heart too much, when I ought to have checked and restrained it—and now, what is the consequence? Why, that I go down in the very flower of my youth to an early grave."

Agnes caught the dear girl's hands when she had concluded, and looking with a breaking heart into her face, said—

“And oh, my sister, my sister, are you leaving us—are you leaving us for ever, my sister? Life will be nothing to me, my Jane, without you—how, how will your Agnes live?”

Page 108

"I doubt we are only disturbing—our cherished one," said her father. "Let our child's last moments be calm—and her soul—oh let it not be drawn back from its hopes, to this earth and its affections."

"Papa, pray for me, and they will join with you—pray for your poor Jane while it is yet time—the prayer of the righteous availeth much."

Earnest, indeed, and melancholy, was that last prayer offered up on behalf of the departing girl. When it was concluded there was a short silence, as if they wished not to break in upon what they considered the aspirations of the dying sufferer. At length the mother thought she felt her child's cheek press against her own with a passive weight that alarmed her.

"Jane, my love," said she, "do you not feel your soul refreshed by your father's prayer?"

No answer was returned to this, and on looking more closely at her countenance of sorrow, they found that her gentle spirit had risen on the incense of her father's prayer to heaven. The mother clasped her hands, whilst the head of her departed daughter still lay upon her bosom.

"Oh God! oh God!" said she, "our idol is gone—is gone!"

"Gone!" exclaimed the old man; "now, oh Lord, surely—surely the father's grief may be allowed," and he burst, as he spoke, into a paroxysm of uncontrollable sorrow.

"And what am I to do—who am—oh woe—woe—who was her mother?"

To the scene that ensued, what pen could do justice—we cannot, and consequently leave it to the imagination of our readers, whose indulgence we crave for our many failures and errors in the conduct of this melancholy story.

Thus passed the latter days of the unhappy Jane Sinclair, of whose life nothing more appropriate need be said, than that which she herself uttered immediately before her death:

"Let my fate be a warning to young creatures like myself, never to suffer their affection for any object to overmaster their sense and their reason. I cherished the passion of my heart too much, when I ought to have checked and restrained it—and now, what is the consequence? Why, that I go down in the very flower of my youth to an early grave."

On the day after her dissolution, an incident occurred, which threw the whole family into renewed sorrow:—Early that morning, Ariel, her dove, was found dead upon her bosom, as she lay out in the composure of death.

“Remove it not,” said her father; “it shall be buried with her;” and it was accordingly placed upon her bosom in the coffin.

Seldom was a larger funeral train seen, than that which attended her remains to the grave-yard; and rarely was sorrow so deeply felt for any being so young and so unhappy, as that which moved all hearts for the fate of the beautiful but unfortunate Jane Sinclair—the far-famed Fawn of Springvale.

One other fact we have to record: Jane’s funeral had arrived but a few minutes at the grave, when another funeral train appeared slowly approaching the place of death. It was that of Charles Osborne!

Page 109

The last our readers may have anticipated. From the day of Jane's death the heart of the old man gradually declined. He looked about him in vain for his beloved one. Night and day her name was never out of his mouth. It is true he prayed, he read, he availed himself of all that the pious exercises of a Christian man could contribute to the alleviation of his sorrow. But it was in vain. In vain did his wife, son, and daughters strive to soothe and console him. The old man's heart was broken. His beloved one was gone, and he felt that he could not remain behind her. A gradual decay of bodily strength, and an utter breaking down of his spirits, brought about the consummation which they all dreaded. At the expiration of four months and a half, the old man was laid in the same grave that contained his beloved one—and he was happy.