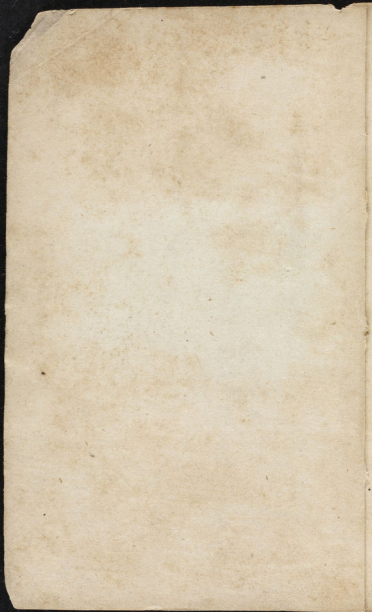
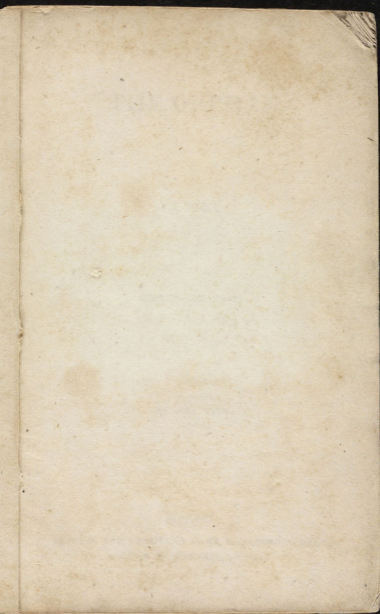


**THE ORPHAN :**

A TALE,

BY MRS. OPIE.





THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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FOUNDED ON FACTS:

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## THE ORPHAN.

“HAVE you had a pleasant walk, my dear?” said Mrs. Hanbury to her husband, as he threw himself into his arm chair; and, placing his hands on his knees, fixed his eyes pensively on the fire.

“No, I have not,” he replied; “for sad thoughts were my companions:—that poor unfortunate orphan! I can’t drive her from my mind.”

“Nor I neither,” answered Mrs. Hanbury: “if she haunted you abroad, she has haunted me at home. Poor Jane!—it is hard, very hard, to be an indigent friendless orphan!”

“Friendless!—who says she is friendless?—We are not dead, Mrs. Hanbury.”

“No, my dear; and she shall find that we are not.”

“That’s right, that’s right; but what a thoughtless extravagant fellow was Vernon! He a father, indeed!—he pretend to be fond of his daughter, and yet spend his whole income on himself, instead of saving all he could for his child! However, poor wretch! if he had his senses in his last moments he was sufficiently punished.”

“My dear Mr. Hanbury,” said Mrs. Hanbury eagerly, “his death was so sudden that I believe—I hope he could not think or feel at all.”

“So much the better, so much the better:—but what can this poor dear girl do?”

“Nay, I don’t know, Mr. Hanbury; she must go out as a companion, or get into a school as an assistant, I suppose; or—”

“Go out as a companion!—get into a school!—What, madam, is this all you can do for the only child of your friend Mrs. Vernon?”

“All *I* can do for her!—No, to be sure; but you did not ask me what *I* could do for her. O! if I *might*, I could do a great deal.”

As she said this she drew her chair close to husband’s, and, leaning on the arm of it, looked up in his face with great meaning.

“Well, now, what would you do if you *might*?”



“Why, I—you know, my dear, we have no children, nor are we likely to have.”

“The more ’s the pity,” replied Mr. Hanbury sighing.

“Not so, my love, if we adopt this poor orphan; at least she would be some consolation to us for the want of a family; and then we should have the comfort of knowing that we had done a kind action: and if I should ever meet my dear Mrs. Vernon in another world,” added she, melting into no displeasing tears as she spoke, “think with what delight I should say to her, ‘My dear friend, I have been a mother to your orphan daughter!’”

Mr. Hanbury did not at first answer her; but he grasped her hand with great affection, and then, in a sort of choked voice, said—

“My dear good woman, we will order the carriage at seven o’clock to-morrow morning, and pay Miss Vernon a visit.”

The next morning, at the appointed time, they set off; but, as soon as they were on the road, Mr. Hanbury said—

“My dear, there is, I doubt, one objection to the plan of Miss Vernon’s living with us.”

“Aye; I doubt so,” replied Mrs. Hanbury, “for I see one myseff.”

“Name it.”

“Your ward’s residing with us also.”

“Yes, that is the one I alluded to: yet I do not see why that should be any objection, either: it does not follow that he must fall in love with her, or she with him.”

“But suppose he did fall in love with her—what then?”

“Why, you know, she has no fortune; is only a country clergyman’s daughter; and, as our estates are all entailed on the male heirs, we can leave her nothing but a bare maintenance.”

“Well, but has he not fortune enough for them both?”

“True.”

“And were not her birth and education those of a gentlewoman?”

“Very true.”

“Then Douglas may thank us for throwing such a treasure in his way, as Jane Vernon must prove to the man whom she marries.”

“Having thus overcome the only objection to their benevolent scheme, the warm hearted couple pursued their journey, full of satisfaction from the anticipation of the delight which they flattered themselves they were going to bestow.

Nothing could be better timed than the visit of the Hanburys to Miss Vernon. The suddenness of her father’s death had almost deprived

her of reason; and on the day of the projected visit she had, for the first time, summoned courage to put on her mourning, for the first time ventured to look over her father's papers and accounts, and convince herself that she was a complete beggar.

She was, for the first time also, left alone since her father's death: two of her neighbours, well meaning persons, but little skilled to minister to a mind diseased, had been prevailed upon by her to return home to their families; though it was not without great difficulty that they could be persuaded to believe that solitude would not be unpleasant to her.

Had Jane declared to them that it would be a luxury to be left to commune with her own thoughts, and indulge her grief to the utmost, they would have attributed her words to frenzy, and have insisted on staying with her. But she did not say to them what she was sure they could not understand; and, with many friendly regrets, the two ladies left her.

The first use of their absence which Jane made, was to give an unbridled vent to the tears which her friends had been urgent with her to repress. For now she no longer heard, "Do not cry so, my dear; you will make yourself quite ill—It is wicked to repine at the dispensæ-

tions of Providence ;”—and therefore she felt relieved beyond measure. But from regret for the father, who, with all his extravagance, had treated her with unbounded kindness, she passed to fears for her own future happiness.

Jane Vernon was what is understood by the truly feminine character—embarrassed by notice, and terrified at attracting attention. She had always taken as much pains to conceal her beauty and her talents as most women take to display theirs. Her father only was allowed to hear her sing or play ; her father only knew that her pencil sketches from nature did honour to her taste and execution ; but even he was unconscious that she had no inconsiderable power of writing verses.

But now, of these talents, which she had cautiously concealed from every one, she found herself obliged to make a public boast. She saw herself forced to say “ I can draw, I can paint, I can sing, I can talk French, I can embroider,” and insist on all her pretensions, with, in her eyes, unbecoming effrontery. And while she was conjuring up this painful prospect to frighten her extreme delicacy, and wound her even morbid sensibility, she had just resolved to hide herself in an obscure lodging, and take in plain work for her livelihood,—when Mr. and Mrs.

Hanbury's carriage stopped at the door, and substituted a present for a future apprehension.

But, as soon as she saw the amiable old couple alight, her fears vanished; she knew that they must be come on an errand of kindness; and when she recollected that Mrs. Hanbury was the dearest friend of that mother whom she lost just as she was old enough to feel her value, her usual diffidence yielded to strong emotion; and as soon as the old lady entered the room, Jane precipitated herself into her arms, as if into the embraces of a parent.

"That's right, that's right, my dear," said the kind old man, wiping his eyes: "cry on, cry on; make no strangers of us, for we come to cry with you:—grief must have its season, and then comes resignation; and then, in due time, comes smiles again."

Jane wished to say, that to her, smiles would never return; but she could not speak, and therefore escaped making that rash declaration, so familiar to the lips of all who are experiencing a first sorrow.

At length Jane's feelings became more calm, and she was able to reply to the delicate but anxious inquiries made by the Hanburys into her circumstances and future intentions. As soon as she had given them, on this subject, all

the information which they required, and acquainted them with her fixed resolve to submit to any drudgery rather than try for a situation which would force her to boast of her own accomplishments, Mr. Hanbury made a sign to his wife to open the business on which they came; but Mrs. Hanbury's heart was full with a mixed feeling of pity for the timid girl left to struggle with the world, and of self satisfaction for the part which she was going to act: therefore she was unable to speak, and returned to her husband's a sign expressive of her wish that he should speak first, and he began with—

“Well, my dear, and so you mean to shut yourself up, and work from morning to night at your needle in order to earn bread for the day! —a pretty resolution, truly! But we are come to tell you, you shall do no such thing; for I am sure you love to oblige, and Mrs. Hanbury and I mean to request you to do us a favour.”

Here he hemmed several times, as if choked with a pleasing emotion; and Mrs. Hanbury, giving him through her tears a smile of approbation, took up the business where he left it off.

“Yes, my dear girl,” said she, “Mr. Hanbury tells you truly; we are come to ask a favour of you; we are come to request you to take pity

on our childless age, and be to us a daughter and a companion."

Jane gasped for breath at hearing these kind and welcome words; and while she was vainly seeking language to express her feelings, Mr. Hanbury said—

"I assure you, my dear, if you consent to oblige us, you will find enough to do: we shall not let you be idle: my wife there grows too old to look after the family herself, and you must be housekeeper; and when I am ill with the gout, you must take the trouble of nursing me, I can tell you that."

Jane had a heart alive to all the finest touches of generosity and delicacy of which the human mind is capable; and feeling, to the bottom of her soul, the generous intention with which her venerable friends endeavoured to lessen, in her eyes, the degree of obligation which they were going to confer, her weak frame sunk beneath the tide of overwhelming emotions which oppressed her, and heaving a deep sigh, she leaned on Mrs. Hanbury's shoulder, and sobbed aloud.

As soon as she recovered her composure, and could tell her kind friends that she accepted their offer, and would cheerfully devote her life to the study of their slightest wishes, they pro-

posed that she should go home with them immediately; and Jane having made the necessary arrangements, and informed her friendly neighbours of the happy change in her prospects, accompanied them, with a grateful and lightened heart, to the place of their residence.

As they went along, the Hanburys informed her of their way of life, and told her they feared that she would find it very dull: but Jane assured them, that she believed no situation could be dull, in which the affections were called forth. "And shall not I," she said, "be with my benefactors?"

Still they persisted in expressing their fears on this subject, as the roads round their house were in winter scarcely passable.

"But then, indeed," observed Mr. Hanbury, "in the winter vacation we are always sure of having my ward Mr. Douglas with us; and he enlivens our solitude a little, though not so much as he would do if he were not so very studious; for we never see him till evening."

"Your ward, sir?" replied Jane; "what, Mr. Douglas of Trinity!—is he your ward? and does he stay with you sometimes, sir?"

"Yes, certainly; our house is his home, I may say: but what do you know of Mr. Douglas?"



“ I !—Nothing, sir ; only a friend of mine knows him, and—and—she says, sir, he is a very proud young man.”

“ Does she ?—Ah ! she is not the first person who has mistaken coldness and reserve of manner for pride ;—but suppose he is proud, what can that signify to you ? To you he will not show his pride, I am sure.”

“ Would I were as sure of that !” thought Jane ; who, oppressed by the idea of her lowly fortunes, thought a man of Mr. Douglas’s pride and consequence would treat, perhaps with neglect, if not with scorn, the dependent on his guardian’s bounty : and while she heard the Hanburys exult in the prospect of seeing their ward very soon, she felt the expectation of his arrival throw a cloud over the pleasure which stole through her whole frame, as she seated herself by the cheerful wood fire in the wide chimney of Mr. Hanbury’s comfortable study, which had been lighted to cheer a chill September evening.

“ Well,” said Jane to herself, “ If he comes, he can only stay two or three months, and Mr. Hanbury says they never see him till evening.”

Thus she consoled herself for the expected interruption to herself for the expected interruption to her happiness ; and then, with a heart full of devout thankfulness, she retired to rest,

happy in the consciousness that she was once more sheltered under a parental roof.

In a few days, Jane entered on her domestic duties ; and in a short time she forgot her sorrows in the unexpected comforts which she enjoyed, and dreaded rather than wished any change in the family to take place.

But the visiter, so wished for by the Hanburys, so dreaded by the timid Jane, arrived ; and after the most affectionate greetings had taken place between Douglas and them, Jane was introduced to him as "Miss Vernon," and to her low courtesy he returned a cold and distant bow. "My friend was right," thought Jane.

Mr. Hanbury then said, "Douglas, this young lady is my ward now as well as yourself." In reply he smiled indeed, but bowed as coldly as before, concluding it was an heiress left to the kind protection which he had experienced himself ; and the smile, had she understood it, was one of congratulation on her good fortune.

Soon after the tea-things were brought and Jane sat down to officiate at the table. But what a difficult task it was ! Douglas sat opposite to her, and she found his fine dark eyes fixed on her in a manner that distressed her exceedingly, and confirmed more than ever, her idea that he was proud, and presumed on his superior

fortune. But Jane was very wide of the truth : the truth was, that Douglas, whose feelings were completely absorbed in an ardent passion for study, and whose warmest ambition was to excel both as a mathematician and a metaphysician, was at this time writing a definition of beauty ; and having read in sir Joshua Reynold's admirable discourses, that he imagined beauty to consist in "the medium form in every thing," he had for some hours been considering within himself how far this definition was true or false ; therefore when we beheld in Jane a face and form of great beauty and regularity, he could not help gazing at her in order to apply to nature the rules and opinions which he was revolving in his mind ; and while so engaged he quite forgot that he was probably wounding the modesty of a timid girl of seventeen. But Jane dared not even reprove him with a frown : and he continued his offence, and his ignorance, though the victim of his metaphysical abstractions dropped the sugar-tongs in confusion, upset the milk-pot, and occasionally scalded her fingers.

At last, tea was over, and Jane took the first opportunity of retiring to her chamber, where she vented her indignation in expressions of "hateful, proud wretch ! if I had been his equal he would not have dared to stare at me in such

a manner ; but no doubt he heard before he came that his guardian had taken into his house on charity the penniless orphan of a country curate !” Full of these unpleasant thoughts, she did not choose to go down stairs again till the first bell rang for supper ; and then with a swelling heart she returned into the parlour.

As soon as she appeared, Douglas, the formidable Douglas immediately arose from his seat, and handing a chair to her, bowing as he did it with an air of great respect, and an expression of kindness and interest on his countenance, which could not be misunderstood even by the prejudiced eye of Jane. Surprised, pleased, but conscience stricken, Jane stood quite still, neither accepting nor refusing the offered chair.

“ Do sit down, miss Vernon,” said Douglas : “ you look pale, but perhaps you had rather sit nearer the fire ; and in an instant he had moved the seat nearer it ; for Jane was no longer in his eyes a rich independent heiress ; he had heard her story, and his generous nature had felt for the poor destitute orphan. Jane listened to him, heard the deep and impressive tone of his voice, felt too that it was modulated, as he addressed her, by the influence of compassion ; and recollecting what she had said and thought of him, while she sat sullenly in her own room,

she threw herself into the chair and burst into tears.

Douglas was surprised and shocked ; but the Hanburys told him that miss Vernon's spirits had been so weak, since her father's death. that even the sight of a stranger was to much for them ; and then they endeavoured judiciously to direct her thoughts into another chanel. Nor was it long before Jane recovered her composure ; but it was nearly overset again on Douglas's drawing his chair close to hers, and saying, in a soft and gentle tone of voice, " There is a striking and in one respect, a happy similarity in our fate, miss Vernon : we have both lost our natural protectors, but have fortunately obtained the love and protection of two kind friends, who are able and willing amply to supply their loss ; therefore dear sister in early sorrow, let me prevail on you not to dwell on the past, but look forward with cheerfulness and hope to the future."

" This man has a heart then," thought Jane ; and with feelings very different to those with which she had attended the tea table, she sat down to supper,

Nor did Douglas repeat his former offence ; he had forgotten even his projected essay, in the pity which the Hanburys had excited in his breast

for the poor orphan, now become an object of such sacred respect in his eyes, that he was afraid of not being attentive enough in his manner to her; and never had Douglas been known to pay such attention to any woman, as he did this evening to the poor orphan Jane.

“So this is the man whose arrival I dreaded,” said Jane to herself as soon as she reached her chamber. “I never will allow myself to be prejudiced against any one again, nor to form a hasty judgment.”

Then determining to make Douglas ample amends by her good opinion of him in future, for the injustice which she had done him, she lay awake some hours, her spirits being too much elevated to allow her to sleep, as she felt that delightful sensation to the heart of the poor dependant victim of ill fortune, the consciousness of being to the prosperous the object of attention and respect.

The next morning Jane experienced a slight disappointment at finding herself obliged to begin breakfast without Douglas; but Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury assured her that they never waited for the young philosopher, and Jane was forced to proceed even to her second cup before Douglas appeared. Jane blushed, when, after having apolo-

gized for not being down sooner, he turned to her with an air of coldness, and enquired after her health; but as soon as he had performed this necessary act of politeness, and exchanged a few common place observations on the weather and politics, Douglas fell into a profound reverie, from which he did not seem to awake till the breakfast things being removed, he bowed without speaking to any one present, and retired to his own room again.

But though Jane was vexed at Douglas's absence and inattention, she was not angry, for she did not attribute his coldness, and neglect to pride, but to learned abstractions; and in this idea she was confirmed by hearing Mrs. Hanbury say, "Ah! he is gone; and I know by his manner that we shall see him no more till dinner time, as he is study mad, as usual."

"But at dinner time we *shall* see him," thought Jane; and while she busied herself in making preparations for the dinner, and in other household occupations, she could not help thinking how much the arrival of a visitor enlivened a family, and added interest to the dull routine of domestic duties.

At dinner, and not till then, Douglas re-appeared, but cold, reserved, and taciturn. The interest which the forlorn condition of the poor orphan

had excited in him, was swallowed up in mathematical perplexities; and having eaten his meal almost in silence, he again retired to his studies, leaving Jane quite as silent as himself.

At tea time he came again, and behaved in the same manner: but at length arrived his accustomed season of relaxation: and an hour before supper, satisfied with his long application, and in consequence of it with himself, he joined the party round the wood fire, with all that grace and amenity of manners which had filled Jane with such remorseful and pleasant feelings the preceding evening, and with such a degree of vivacity and animation which she did not imagine him to possess.

After supper Douglas proposed to Mrs. Hanbury a renewal of their old habits; to which she cheerfully consented; and in a moment Mr. Hanbury was seated on a little table, on one side of the fire, with his pipe and wine and water by him. Douglas had placed Mrs. Hanburys work table on the other side of it; and she and Jane having resumed their work, Douglas took up a play book, and began reading *The Rivals* aloud. Douglas read admirably; and Jane to whom the play was entirely new, almost forgot her usual timidity, and laughed aloud at the humour of Acres, Sir Anthony, and Mrs. Malaprop,



while she wept in uncontrollable sympathy for the wrongs, and delicate tenderness, of the truly affectionate Julia ; and midnight came unnoticed, unfelt by them all.

“ And is it indeed time to go to rest !” thought Jane. “ Surely this has been the most delightful evening that I ever passed. Who could ever have made me believe that I should laugh so heartily again ?”

The next morning philosophy and mathematics as usual, like the Alps crowned with snows, sat on the brow of the Cambridge student, and Jane hardly knew him again.

“ But evening will come at last,” she said to herself : and it did come, and Douglas read another comedy ; and again the amusement which he afforded in the evening made ample amends for the gloomy abstraction of the day.

In this manner, with very little interruption, continued to pass the days and evenings while Douglas remained at the Lodge, as Mr. Hanbury's seat was called ; and Jane's letters to her friends in her native village, though they did not express absolutely how happy she was, breathed nothing but happiness ; one of them was as follows :

“ You say, my dear friend, that you should think, but for the style of my letters, that I

must pass my time very heavily at the Lodge, shut up, as you phrase it, with two old people, and a young man who is notoriously proud, and never talks. But I assure you, you are quite mistaken; and I sometimes think that it is very wicked in me to be so happy as I am. It seems as if I had forgotten my poor father; but indeed I have not; I often think, fine reader as he was himself, how he would have enjoyed hearing Mr. Douglas read.—It is very strange how one's opinions alter!—I used to be so fond of an autumnal morning; and love to walk out, and try to paint the varied and warm tints of the falling leaves; but now, it is quite otherwise; I long for evening, and its cheerful fireside; my mornings are entirely filled up with attention to domestic concerns, and even, would you believe it, to cookery and making pastry! Mrs. Hanbury likes that I should make myself useful, and you can't think what pleasure I take in it.

“To do Mr. Douglas justice, he is not at all difficult to please, though he has been used to college living; but I have found out his favourite dishes, and I take care that he shall have them—I am sure he deserves this attention from me, by reading to us while we work. Once he obligingly declared that the sweets were the best he had ever tasted; and I could not help

blushing, for I thought Mrs. Hanbury was going to tell him that I made them: but she did not, and I was so glad that she did not! at least it certainly was as well that she did not.

“After dinner both Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury go to sleep in their arm chair, and I sit meditating, looking at the fire, and anticipating the comforts of the tea table and the closed curtains; while sometimes, but very rarely, Mr. Douglas comes down, and sits meditating too; but an hour before supper, he always comes down, and after supper he reads till bed time.—Oh, my dear friend! blest be the hour when my kind protectors sought me in my misery, and gave me a home with them!”

In this manner did Jane continue to write during the time of Mr. Douglas's stay at the Lodge. But at length term time arrived, and the once eagerly anticipated evening hour became as joyless to her, as the lately neglected autumnal morning; and her letters to her friends were so unfrequent, and so full, when she did write, of indications of weariness, and melancholy, that her correspondents took the alarm, and earnestly begged to know whether the discontent now so visible in her letters, proceeded from a change in the conduct of the Hanbury's to her.

Jane, distressed and astonished, answered this letter by return of post, and expressed her wonder that any thing in her letters should have occasioned suspicions so false and injurious, for that "she was sure she never was happier, at least she was very sure that she was very happy."

When the christmas vacation came, which Douglas usually passed in London, his guardian was surprized to receive a letter from him, saying that he should pass the whole of it at the Lodge.

"So, so, my dear," said Mr. Hanbury, nodding very significantly at his wife, "Douglas never did this before; do you not think he finds our house more attractive now, than it used to be?—You understand me!"

"I do, Mr. Hanbury," replied Mrs. Hanbury gravely, "but I am by no means sure that your suspicions are just; and I earnestly conjure you not to drop a hint of such an idea, even in joke, to Miss Vernon: she has great sensibility and great delicacy: the former might lead her to repay the supposed gift of Douglas's heart with the real gift of hers; and the latter would make her unable to support his presence, without a downcast eye, a blushing cheek, and a consciousness truly distressing."

“ Well,—and what then? She would only look the prettier;—I must have my joke, wife, I must indeed!”

“ Not at the probable expense of a young girl’s peace.—Believe me, my dear, that I should as soon plant a dagger in the heart of a young woman, as endeavour to persuade her that an amiable man beheld her with partiality, unless there was no possible doubt of his intentions towards her, as I know that women commonly love because they are beloved, and gratitude in a well disposed mind is the foundation of passion. So promise me, my dear husband, that you will not, for the sake of a little pleasantry, run the risk of exciting in Jane’s feeling mind an idea, which she may learn to dwell upon with too much delight.”

“ Do you think, then, she is already disposed to like our ward?”

“ Is it possible that any one can know him, and not be disposed to like him? At present, I am sure that Jane’s regard for him does not exceed the bounds of esteem; but if she thought that his for her was of the nature of love, who knows how soon her pure heart might reflect the feeling which she was told she might attribute to his?”

“Well—well, my dear, what you say is very reasonable, and I will behave as well as I can.”

And he did behave well; for, when he told Jane that Douglas was coming, he did so without a comment, or even a significant smile: a smile, indeed, Jane would not have seen; for surprise, joy, and a feeling as yet undefined even to herself, covered her cheek with blushes, and fixed her eyes on the ground; while, making some excuse to leave the room, she bounded like an antelope through the hall and up the staircase, and, rushing into her own apartment, stood panting there with breathless yet pleasurable emotion.

“He is coming, and we shall have no more long evenings,” said Jane to herself; and unconsciously, perhaps, she recollected that she had heard it was not usual for him to visit the Lodge at christmas. The next day and the succeeding one did not appear very tedious to Jaue, because she was employed in making preparations for Douglas’s arrival; and on the third day he actually arrived.

But though Jane had been clandestinely watching for his arrival at the hall window, no sooner did she see him approaching than she fled into her own apartment, too much fluttered to stay and receive him; nor did she venture

down stairs till Mrs. Hanbury came up to chide her for not being in the way to welcome Mr. Douglas.

After the first emotions of pleasure, on seeing his friends again, had subsided, and the usual questions and greetings were ended, Douglas's manner became more cold, and his countenance expressed even greater absence of mind than ever; and it was evident that study was even more than usual the idol of his soul; while the supper hour, and the hours succeeding it, instead of being, as formerly, enlivened by Douglas's own pleasantry, or his taking the trouble of reading the pleasantries of others, were passed by him in alternate fits of reverie, and cold efforts to talk; and by the rest, in that sort of languid disappointed silence, which is often caused by the marked taciturnity and abstraction of one person in a small circle.

Bed time at last arrived; and Jane, who sat leaning her head on her hands some time before she undressed herself, thought how excessively tired with his journey Mr. Douglas must be, and hoped, with a sigh, that he would be better the next day.

But morning brought no change with it in the conduct of Douglas; and Mr. Hanbury seeing by his manner to Jane that it was not on her ac-

count that he visited the Lodge at that unusual season of the year, asked him at breakfast why he preferred visiting them to a visit to London. Douglas immediately answered, without the slightest embarrassment, that he felt the necessity for increased application to his studies, grow stronger in proportion as the goal for which he panted appeared in view ; therefore, as several of his college friends were gone to London on a scheme of pleasure, and would necessarily make him join in their amusements if he was of their party, he thought it more prudent to put himself out of reach of any temptation to sacrifice to pleasure that time which he wished to devote to a better purpose ; namely, to the close application requisite to ensure him the honour of being senior wrangler.

When he had said this, Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury and Jane felt assured that he spoke truth ; and the latter said no more during the day, but was graver and paler than usual, nor was her countenance at all enlivened when evening arrived ; for Douglas did not come down till supper was on the table, and he retired to his own apartment at ten o'clock, without once offering to read out as he had formerly done. Nor did he relax from this strict attention to his studies till the last week of his stay at the Lodge, and



till Jane had learnt to be satisfied with being near him, and able to see him every day. One hour in a morning, and one only, he devoted to walking, but even that hour was not unemployed by Douglas. He was well known in the abode of the poor and the industrious in the neighbourhood; and Jane having learnt that Mr. Douglas's arrival at the Lodge was eagerly looked for, not by her alone, but that in the cottage of the peasant "his presence made a little holiday," she had no difficulty in believing that the pleasure which she derived from gazing by stealth on his fine countenance, and listening to the impressive tones of his voice, was merely a tribute which duty exacted from her as due to superior virtue and superior abilities.

But, contented as Jane had learnt to be with the mere presence of Douglas, she was as much charmed as ever when he allowed himself to relax from his application, become the cheerful companion, and read out to them as he had formerly done, and the evening hours fled again with the rapidity of lightning. But the time of Douglas's departure arrived, and Jane's letters to her friends resumed their gloomy character; nor did they impress on her correspondents the reality of the happiness which she endeavoured to assure them of, till the long vacation ap-

proached, and Douglas had announced his decided intention of spending it at the Lodge.

He came,—but not as usual to seclude himself all day in his study; he had injured his health by his unremitting application, and his physician had said to him:

“There is, I dare say, no doubt of your being senior wrangler, provided you do not kill yourself by study before the time comes: therefore, I desire you to go into the country, and, instead of studying all the day, take exercise, and endeavour to be as idle as your neighbours.”

Douglas obeyed, though reluctantly; at least he studied only a few hours in the early part of the morning when he reached the Lodge, and passed the rest of his time in driving Mrs. Hanbury and Jane in a little low whiskey about the country, or in rowing them in a boat on a piece of water in the grounds; and the evening was no longer the only season of Jane's enjoyment, but Douglas was with her always, except when he was studying, and she engaged in domestic arrangements; and when she retired to rest at night, she could not sleep till she had recollected all his words and looks during the day, and had assured herself that she might consider him as her friend and well wisher. Nor, as her tender apprehensions had been considerably awak-

ened by the severity of the cough which tormented Douglas, could she forbear sitting up in her bed, as his chamber was immediately over hers, in order to listen whether its violence was abated; and not till she heard him cough no longer, but fancied him fallen asleep, could she seek repose herself; and as she did so, she used to exclaim with a sigh, "Thank God! he is certainly better than he was."

But November came, and Douglas perfectly restored to health, returned to college; while the only thought that had power to call a smile to the pale lip of Jane was, that he would certainly return to the Lodge at the ensuing vacation.

Christmas came, however, but not Douglas; Easter arrived, and still he had not announced his intentions of coming to the Lodge; and while Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury had begun to wonder at neither hearing from him nor seeing him, he sent a letter to inform them that he was too deeply immersed in study to be able to spare from it even the time which he must be on the road; and Jane, complaining of a violent headache, went to bed that day immediately after tea. But Jane's complaint continued for several successive days. Still, however, she persisted in reading out in an evening, and in reading the

very plays which Douglas read when she first knew him ; while Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury were surprized at her powers of imitation, for they assured her that she read them exactly like Douglas. Jane's headach, and other complaints, however, vanished as June approached, and Douglas's promised visit was openly anticipated with eager expectation by his old friends, and secretly by Jane.

At length the very day for his coming was fixed, and the young housekeeper busied herself in contrivances to add to his comfort and his pleasure ; when, the day before he was expected, Mr. Hanbury received a letter from him, saying that he found it necessary to stay at college during the whole vacation, as he wanted to consult books there, which he could get no where else ; nor could he be sure of coming to them even at Easter. This letter, which he had read aloud to his wife, gave pain to the affectionate hearts of the old people ; and they would have indulged in many expressions of regret at not seeing the youth so justly dear to them, had not their attention been called off by a scream from the servant, who was in an adjoining room (the door of which was open) assisting Miss Vernon to preserve some sweetmeats ; the affrighted couple immediately ran

into the room, and found Jane fallen on the floor in a fainting fit. She was instantly conveyed to bed, and at length they succeeded in restoring her to life; but such was her languor and weakness that she declared her inability to rise again, and for two days she kept her bed, while Mr. Hanbury sent a message to beg she would make haste to get well again, as he could not exist without her and Douglas too: "And I am sorry to tell you, my dear Jane," said Mrs. Hanbury, as she delivered this message, "that Douglas does not come to us at all this year."

"Indeed!" said Jane; and hiding her face in the pillow, she seemed to prepare herself for sleep, that she might avoid the necessity of feigning the surprise which she did not feel, as she had overheard the letter, and had fainted in consequence of it.

When Jane made her appearance again below stairs, Mr. Hanbury told her she might just as well have staid above, for any pleasure that he was likely to derive from her presence: "For indeed," added he, "my poor child, you are so altered, and look so ill, that it almost breaks my heart to look at you."

"Indeed, if you go on *thus*, Jane, I must have a physician sent for," said Mrs. Hanbury, taking her burning hand; but Jane, changing colour,

declared that she was quite well again, and would not consent to have any advice. But in vain did her tongue contradict her feelings. Her heart preyed on her delicate frame, and she was convinced too late of its real situation. The pangs which the alteration of Douglas's intention of coming to the Lodge inflicted on her, opened her eyes to her own passion for him, and at the same time convinced her that he felt nothing for her but the calm regard of friendship and esteem; for, if he had, could he have given up his visit? Not that she allowed herself to indulge in the presumptuous hope, as she called it, of ever being his,—but such a hope, unconsciously to herself, had crept into her soul: and now, execrating her own daring folly and indelicate weakness, she hated, she despised herself, without being able at the same time to cease to love Douglas.

A few weeks of this internal tumult and agony, which with the fortitude of the Spartan boy she concealed from every observer, at length proved too much even for her resolution to contend with, and she was compelled at last to own that she was ill, very ill,—while Mrs. Hanbury was desired by the medical attendants to lose no time in conveying her to Bristol. There she remained without any symptom of amendment

till the month of October, when Mr. Hanbury wrote word to his wife that Douglas was coming to spend three weeks at the Lodge, contrary to his original intention; and that he bitterly lamented, that as Jane was not at all better, Mrs. Hanbury would not be able to hasten home to receive him.

This letter Mrs. Hanbury read to Jane, who made no comments on it; but the next morning, when Mrs. Hanbury entered her room, she found her to her great astonishment up and dressed, and looking considerably improved in health; nay, she continued mending so rapidly during the following week, that she declared herself able to return to the Lodge; nor could Mrs. Hanbury hesitate one moment to believe her. Accordingly they set off on their return, and arrived at home the day after Douglas.

The delighted Mr. Hanbury and his ward hastened to the door to welcome them; but Douglas started back shocked and affrighted when he beheld the alteration in miss Vernon's appearance: and when he pressed forward to assist her out of the carriage, and found that she was so weak that he must take her out in his arms, he could not resist the impulse of affectionate pity as her head involuntary sunk on his shoulder; but pressing her to his heart, he said, "My

dear girl, little was I aware how very ill you had been !”

The action and the words had only too powerful an effect on the unhappy and conscious sufferer, who fixing on him a look which any one but himself must have understood sighed deeply, and fainted on his bosom. But her fainting was attributed to the fatigue of the journey; and Jane on her recovery, saw no reason to apprehend, from the countenances of those around her, that her fatal secret was discovered.

The next morning she was able to come down stairs before dinner, and during Douglas's stay she continued to do so, and even to sit up nearly as late as usual; while Douglas, aware that by reading he amused the invalid, forgot sometimes the mathematician in the man, and began to read earlier than he had ever done before.

“How kind, how generous he is!” thought Jane: “he pities me evidently; but how much more he would pity me if he knew——! but that he shall *never know*.” And with a sort of desperate energy she suppressed the rising sigh, and taught herself to behave to him with reserve almost bordering on coldness; and Douglas, though surprized, and hurt at first at this change, attributed it to the caprice incident to constant illness.



In November, Douglas returned to college, and in a few weeks, Jane was threatened with another journey to Bristol ; but being well aware that change of scene would cause no change of feeling, she begged, she entreated to be allowed for the present to stay where she was. At the ensuing vacation, Mr. Hanbury announced Douglas's approaching visit to Jane, and being off her guard, she burst into tears ; while the good old man felt confirmed by this circumstance in the belief which several things had led him to entertain, that she had an aversion to Douglas, whose cold manners could not, he fancied, be very prepossessing to women ; and kindly taking her hand, he told her, that if in her weak state his ward's coming would be disagreeable to her, and she should feel his presence unwelcome, he would write and request him not to come. Scarcely could Jane help screaming with apprehension at this proposal ; but she assured him that on the contrary, Mr. Douglas's society would amuse her ; and then she tottered into her own apartment.

“ So, he is coming again ! ” she said to herself, “ but not for *me*, he is not coming to see *me*, However, I shall see and hear him, and he will say with a look of great kindness, ‘ My dear Miss Vernon, how are you ? ’ and ‘ I hope you are bet-

ter than you were !” while his looks tell me how much he thinks me altered !” She then looked in the glass, “ Altered indeed I am ! He once thought me handsome, I have been told, but (and she smiled mournfully as she spoke) there is not a trace of beauty left now : still, that would not signify ; for, if he knew *why* I was so changed, he would, if he had ever loved me, love me the better for the alteration ; and at any rate he would *pity* me. Pity me ! pity me ! pity the poor lovesick girl ! Horrible ! No—never, never may I live to see myself an object of *such pity* to him ! No—I can *die*, and die contented, so I believe myself still an object of his esteem and respect ; and when he comes, I will behave with such resolution !”

But Douglas did not come, and Jane grew daily worse ; nor did he talk of coming in the ensuing vacation, and Jane was again ordered to Bristol ; but she declared herself too weak to undertake the journey, and the physician himself owned that he believed it would be unavailing.

A few days after he had said this, and had witnessed the extreme grief which this declaration had occasioned the kind protectors of the unhappy orphan, he begged them to attend him into another room as he had something of great

importance to say to them. They obeyed, and he told them he was perfectly convinced that Miss Vernon's disorder was caused by mental uneasiness. "She has something on her mind," said he; "and unless you can prevail on her to disclose what it is, believe me, it is not in the power of medicine to save her."

Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury's astonishment equalled their distress, and the physician proceeded to suggest the probability of pining in secret and unrequited love.

"Impossible!" cried Mr. Hanbury eagerly, "impossible!"

"Would I thought so too!" mournfully replied Mrs. Hanbury, whose long blindness was now painfully removed.

Mrs. Hanbury had very rigid ideas on the subject of female delicacy, and was not therefore able to bear for a moment the idea that any woman whom she esteemed could be guilty of such a violation of it as to entertain a passion for a man who had never by word, look, or action endeavoured to inspire her with it: but she now recollected a thousand instances of Jane's attachment to Douglas which had hitherto escaped her; and while she thought how cruelly her intended kindness to the orphan of her dearest friend had been perverted by circumstances, she

gave way to an agony of grief, and was some time before she could listen to the voice of consolation.

“Compose yourself, my dear woman,” cried Mr. Hanbury: “you know what we did was meant for the best, and God and Mrs. Vernon could require no more of us. Indeed the doctor must be mistaken. You know she has seen no young man often but Douglas.”

“*But Douglas!*” echoed Mrs. Hanbury; “is not he only too likely to be the object of her affections?”

“He is *not*, however; for I have long thought, and I now lately have been *convinced*, that she dislikes him.”

“Dislikes him!”

“Yes:—In the first place you know she was much prejudiced against him before she saw him, and I see clearly, by the distance of her manner to him for some time past, that her old prejudices are returned. Then you see that I have never been able to prevail on her to sing to him, or show her drawings to him, though I have sometimes conquered her timidity on other occasions: but she always refuses to oblige him this way; and I assure you, that when I told her last christmas that he was coming to see us,

she burst into tears and looked I don't know how."

"Say no more, say no more, Mr. Hanbury," cried his more quick-sighted wife, "it is then, I see, too true!"

"Nay, madam, if you require any further proof," said the physician, "read these verses, which, as she lay in a restless sleep just now, dropped from her pillow. They are torn through, you see, and she was probably going to destroy them entirely, when some one came in and interrupted her. Read them and let me replace them before she awakes from the sleep into which she is again fallen.

Mrs. Hanbury read them hastily, and mournfully exclaimed, "I fear these lines are only too prophetic; and she will, she must die! for I know she will never own the truth, and such a load of unshared anguish must sink her to the grave."

In vain did Mr. Hanbury declare he did not believe that love and Douglas were the only causes of Jane's disorder; his wife and the physician were both against him; and it was resolved upon that the latter should inform Miss Vernon that he knew the cause of her complaint was seated in the heart, and that if she wished to give herself a chance of living, she must unburthen her mind to her kind and affectionate

friends. He did so, and Jane heard him with a degree of fierce indignation wholly foreign to her character; for her extreme delicacy was wounded by his suspicions, and roused her to the most violent resentment. But the feeling was too strong, and too uncongenial to her nature, to last, and she sunk almost fainting on her pillow; and then her kind adviser attacked her feelings in another way. He represented to her the affection, even parental, which the Hanbury's entertained for her; and, that however desirous she might be of dying, her life was no longer at her disposal, as it was due to the friends who had adopted her, and that she ought to struggle with her feelings, and endeavour to take every means of recovery for their sakes, if not for her own. This was attacking the grateful and affectionate heart of Jane on the right side; and after a long and dreadful struggle between delicacy and duty, Jane owned that the physician's suspicions were well founded, and promised solemnly to confide in her venerable friends.

At length, after many struggles, many fruitless efforts, and many expressions of the horror and contempt excited in her by her own weakness, the poor self-condemned sufferer confessed to her afflicted friends that she had imbibed a deep-rooted and hopeless passion for their un-

conscious ward; and she made this avowal of a pure and virtuous attachment to one of the most amiable of men, with more reluctance, timidity, and self-condemnation, than is felt by some women who have to own that the violence of passion had led them to the commission of error; nor did she do so till she had obtained from them both the strongest assurance that they would keep her secret with all possible fidelity.

Mr. Hanbury was surprised and afflicted too, nay, perhaps mortified at his want of discernment; but sorrow was the only feeling experienced by his wife; and after having spoken the kindest words of consolation to the wretched girl, she took the first opportunity of leaving her, that she might consult with her husband of what was best to be done.

While they were consulting together, Douglas, who was not to be of age till three-and-twenty, but was now within six weeks of his majority, wrote a few hasty lines to announce his intention of coming to them the next day for a week; and the distressed couple, convinced that they ought not to sacrifice Jane's life to their promise, or her delicacy, took their resolution accordingly.

Douglas came in high spirits; but they were greatly damped on hearing the sad situation of

the interesting orphan, for whom he felt a sort of brother's love.

But his feelings then were blissful to what he experienced, when, after many tears from Mrs. Hanbury, and many sighs of strong emotion in his guardian, as they drew round the evening fire, Mrs. Hanbury simply and shortly related the cause of Jane's malady; which in proportion as he dwelt on the length, truth, and ardor of Jane's affection, Mrs. Hanbury as fully expatiated on her extreme delicacy; on the difficulty which they had to get the secret from her; and on the eagerness with which she extorted a promise from them never to reveal it.

When they had done this, they ceased speaking, and did not make a single comment. Douglas listened to the tale motionless as a statue, and incapable of speaking a word, while his friends sat equally silent by his side; till Mr. Hanbury, sliding a copy of the poor orphan's torn verses into his hand, explained what they were, how they had obtained them, and told him to read them when he was alone.

Immediately after, Douglas started up to retire to his own room; but when he had reached the door he turned round, and said, "Allow me this night for reflection,"



He had need of it, indeed.—Humanity, pity, and gratitude, called upon him imperiously to offer the unhappy Jane his hand, and save her from the misery of dying of unrequited love. But then the sacrifice was a tremendous one. He felt for Jane, though she was beautiful, amiable, and intelligent, no sentiment resembling passion, and marriage itself was at that time, inconvenient, nay, even hateful to him; as it would interfere with all those plans so long the darling objects of his wishes, plans calculated to repay him for the severity of his past studies, by opening to him new fields of improvement and delight.

It had for years been his intention to travel over Greece, and, indeed, over every part of Europe, and great part of Asia, as soon as he had taken his long expected degree, and had possession of his fortune; and he well knew that it was impossible for him to take a wife with him in some of the expeditions which he was most fond of projecting. But then he recollected, that if he did marry Jane, pleasure was all he gave up, and if he did not, he sacrificed *her* life.

At this moment the verses given him by Mr. Hanbury met his eye, and he read as follows:

Not one kind look—one friendly word !  
 Wilt thou in chilling silence sit ;  
 Nor through the social hour afford  
 One cheering smile, or beam of wit ?

Yet still absorb'd in studious care,  
 Neglect to waste one look on me ;  
 For then my happy eyes may dare  
 To gaze and dwell uncheck'd on thee.

And still in silence sit, nor deign  
 One gentle precious word to say ;  
 For silent I may then remain,  
 Nor let my voice my soul betray.

This faltering voice, these conscious eyes,  
 My throbbing heart too plainly speak ;  
 There timid hopeless passion lies,  
 And bids it *silence* keep, and *break*.

Dear exquisite girl !” cried Douglas when he  
 had perused these lines:—“ No ! thy heart shall  
*not* break.

So saying, he read some more lines:—

To me how dear this twilight hour,  
 Cheer'd by the faggot's varying blaze !  
 If this be mine, I ask no more  
 On morn's refulgent light to gaze ;

For now while on his glowing cheek  
 I see the fire's radiance fall,

The darkest seat I softly seek,  
And gaze on him unknown by all.

His folded arms, his studious brow,  
His thoughtful eye, unmark'd, I see ;  
Nor could his voice or words bestow  
So dear, so true a joy to me.

But he forgets that I am near—  
Fame, future fame, in thought he seeks.  
To him ambition's paths appear,  
And bright the sun of science breaks.

His heart with ardent hope is fill'd ;  
His prospects full of beauty bloom ;  
But, oh ! *my* heart despair has chill'd,  
My only prospect is—the tomb !

One only boon from heaven I claim,  
And may it grant the fond desire !  
That I may live to hear his fame,  
And in that throb of joy *expire*.

“ No—that thou shalt not,” said Douglas,  
bursting into tears ; thou shalt live to share and  
to enjoy it. How blind how fatally blind have I  
been !”

The next lines that attracted his notice were  
these :

Oft hast thou mark'd my chilling eye,  
And mourned my cold reserve to see,  
Resolved the fickle friend to fly,  
Who seem'd unjust to worth and thee ;

While I, o'erjoyed, thy anger saw—  
 Blest proof I had not tried in vain  
 To give imperious passion law,  
 And hide my bosom's conscious pain.

But when night's sheltering darkness came,  
 And none the conscious wretch could view,  
 How fiercely burned the smother'd flame !  
 How deep was every sigh I drew !

Yet still to thee I'll clothe my brow  
 In all that jealous pride requires ;  
 My look the type of Etna's snow—  
 My heart, of Etna's secret fires.

“I will read no more,” said Douglas, pacing the room :—“ Oh ! what a monster I was, to be blind and insensible to so true and delicate an attachment ! And yet, what a coxcomb must I have been, had I thought myself capable of inspiring such a passion as this !”

At this moment another song dropped on the floor ; and, contrary to his resolution, he could not forbear reading that as well as the others.

One little moment, short as blest,  
 Compassion Love's soft semblance wore,  
 My meagre form he fondly press'd,  
 And on his beating bosom bore.

His frame with strong emotion shook,  
 And kindness tun'd each faltering word :

While I, surpriz'd, with anxious look  
The meaning of his glance explor'd.

But soon my too experienced heart  
Read nought but generous pity there ;  
I felt presumptuous hope depart,  
And all again was dark despair.

Yet still in memory, still my heart  
Lives o'er that fleeting bliss again ;  
I feel his glance, his touch, impart  
Emotion through each bursting vein.

And " *Once* (I cry) those eyes so sweet  
" On me with fondness deign'd to shine :  
" For once I felt his bosom beat  
" Against the conscious throbs of mine !"

Nor shall the dear remembrance die  
While aught of life to me is given ;  
But sooth my last convulsive sigh,  
And be, till then, my joy—my heaven !

" She shall not die, by Heaven she shall not!" exclaimed Douglas, again bursting into tears:—" She shall live—she must live—if it be in the power of love, gratitude, and admiration, to save her!—O would it were morning! I could find in my heart to call up the family, and entreat to be admitted immediately into her presence."

With these feelings, satisfied with himself and full of tenderness towards Jane, Douglas fell asleep; but his rest was disturbed, and towards morning he awoke with a sort of oppressive and painful consciousness on his mind, the cause of which he could not at first recollect; but, by degrees, the truth burst upon him, and he recollected the sacred, but still reluctant duty which he was called upon to perform.

“But surely I can offer her my hand (thought he,) engage myself to her, and then travel for three years before I marry?”

But he recollected that if he did so, he should inevitably prove to miss Vernon, that pity and not love occasioned his offer; and seeing that her secret was betrayed, she would die with shame and consternation.

“No,” said Douglas to himself after a long struggle, “the sacrifice must be complete, or not made at all;—nor will I call it a sacrifice. That man is a contemptible being who lives for himself alone, and I have it in my power not only to save the life of one of the most amiable of human beings, but bid her live for happiness dear as unexpected.—No: mine she shall be; and I doubt not but that in a short time my love will fully equal hers.”

Then, having laid his plan so as to prevent all possibility of Jane's suspecting that his pity and not his passion spoke, he wrote a letter to her requesting an interview; and having given it to the servant, with slow and pensive step he entered the breakfast room.

"Well, my dear boy," said Mr. Hanbury, holding out his hand to him, and he could not utter another word; while Mrs. Hanbury, fixed her eyes on his face, as if to read his very soul.

"I have written a note," replied Douglas, "to request an interview with miss Vernon."

"Then," cried Mrs. Hanbury, "she will suspect that we have betrayed her to you."

"On the contrary," replied Douglas, "I wrote purposely to prevent this suspicion, and I am sure that she cannot suspect it."

Still Mrs. Hanbury continued to be alarmed; and when informed that Miss Vernon was awake, she hastened to her, to learn how the letter affected her. She found her in great agitation, but it was of pleasure only.

"See, my dear madam," said she holding out the letter; "see!—a letter from Mr. Douglas!—So, he is here!—and I shall see him once more!—and he says;—but read what he says yourself:—it has made me so happy!" And

then she wiped from her forehead the chill damps emotion had gathered there.

The letter was as follows :—

“ MY DEAR MISS VERNON,

“ I am here, arrived only for a few days, and with inexpressible grief I find myself forbidden to see you. Our good friends tell me you are too ill to bear the sight of a stranger, as they spitefully call me ; but as we may not meet again for some time, I cannot bear to depart without bidding you farewell, and judging for myself of the real state of your health. You know I pique myself on being somewhat of a physician ; but that is not all. I have something to consult with you upon, which is of importance to my future happiness ; and you know, in some cases the young had rather ask advice of the young than of the old. Do therefore see me, if it be but for a few minutes ; and if you will be so kind, I will defy the frowns of our too careful guardian.

“ Yours most affectionately.

GEORGE DOUGLAS.”

Mrs. Hanbury turned away to hide the starting tears which this proof of Douglas's watchful delicacy forced from her eyes ; while the deceived and happy Jane exclaimed, “ Only think !



he wants to consult me, to ask my advice ! and I shall not only see him before I die, but I shall have perhaps the consolation in my last moments to reflect that I may be of use to him, and that through life he may feel the benefit of my regard ; for you know," added she, " though I am so much his inferior in sense as well as in every thing else, my wish to serve him may inspire me with the means."

" Don't talk so, Jane ; I can't bear it," said Mrs. Hanbury : " you are not dying, and you shall not die ; I can't part with you."

Jane smiled mournfully as Mrs. Hanbury said this, and then asked her why they would not let Douglas see her.

" Because we feared that the sight of him might overpower you, and betray the secret which you so much wish to keep."

" No, my dear madam, no," said Jane with a self approving smile ; " think me not so weak. Terror lest he should suspect my secret, has given, and will give me courage to face and overcome the danger : besides, it is only one struggle, one effort more ; and shall I let my strength fail me in sight of land !"

" You are a noble girl, Jane," replied Mrs. Hanbury, " and in spite of your despondency I trust you will be spared for happiness."

Jane said nothing, but prepared to dress herself; but not being able to endure the indecorum of receiving Mr. Douglas where she was, she was at last with some difficulty seated in an easy chair in the next room, supported by pillows; and having desired Mrs. Hanbury to tell Mr. Douglas that she was ready to receive him, with a beating heart and varying colour, she sat awaiting his approach. But the moment of Douglas's appearance was the last of Jane's weakness; delicacy and virtuous pride had power to overcome even imperious love; and while her heart throbbed almost to bursting, Jane's manner, dignified and composed, though gentle and affectionate, excited at once surprise, tenderness and admiration in Douglas; and as he approached her, unable to overcome, and wishing to conceal his emotion, he turned to the window, having grasped and then relinquished the cold clammy hand which hung almost powerless by her side.

"You find me greatly altered," observed Jane with surprising firmness; and Douglas in silence seated himself next to her. He then questioned her on the state of her symptoms; felt her pulse; and having at length composed his own spirits a little, and amused Jane, he assumed a smiling air, and told Mrs. Hanbury he wished to

be left alone with miss Vernon, as he had some important business to settle with her. Mrs. Hanbury affected to joke in return, and then left the room unable to support herself.

“ My dear miss Vernon,” cried Douglas turning very pale, “ I have been guilty of a sort of subterfuge in order to obtain this interview. I knew that the fears of my kind friends would forbid it, especially if they suspected my reasons for asking it ; and I could not bear any longer the suspence which now oppresses me.” Here he paused, and Jane gazed on his evident emotion with feelings which I cannot pretend to analyse or describe. At length taking her passive hand, and almost weeping over her faded form as it reclined on the pillow which trembled under her, he proceeded thus : “ You know not, my dear girl, how much I am interested in your speedy recovery. In a few days, a very few weeks I shall be of age, and my own master ; and then, if you are able and willing to listen to me, it is my fixed intention to offer you my heart and hand.”

On hearing these words, these welcome, precious, and unexpected words, the keenly feeling girl sprung up from her chair in a transport of joy and tenderness, and instantly fell lifeless at his feet !

In vain was every possible remedy applied to restore her to life, in vain did her terrified friends hang over her in mute and breathless agony. It was soon ascertained that the too susceptible girl was indeed gone for ever!

I shall leave my readers to imagine the anguish of Douglas and the affectionate protectors of the ill fated orphan, when the melancholy truth was at last reluctantly admitted by them; but I cannot dismiss my subject without holding up this melancholy incident, as one of the many striking and warning examples so frequently exhibited, of the danger accruing to the young and unwary of my sex from the thoughtless indulgence of a preference for any man, however amiable he may be, unless assured beyond the power of doubt that such a preference is mutual. The extreme amiableness of the object is no excuse for giving way to a passion which may doom the sufferer who nourishes it to pine in sorrow or in sickness, converting her into a useless, joyless member of society; an object of pity bordering on contempt to her acquaintance, and of painful anxiety to her relations and friends.

If a sword deprives us of the use of our limbs, it is no satisfaction to us that the sword was a golden one; and whether the man for whom a

young woman sighs in hopeless love be vicious or amiable, is of no further importance than as it serves to shew whether her taste be depraved or otherwise.

Nor should those to whom is delegated the task of watching over the conduct and propensities of young women, allow themselves to imagine that they may on the subject of love sport with the hopes and vanity of an inexperienced girl. If such an one be in the habit of hearing from the weak women or flattering men who surround her, persons more desirous of saying a pleasant than a true thing, that she appears the object of decided preference to an amiable man, she learns to view him with more than common complacency; and should distressing consequences ensue from their imprudence, the persons so talking would vainly endeavour to excuse themselves by declaring that they did not think so prudent, so delicate, so sensible a girl was likely to be injured by the hints which they had given. Let them remember, that true love, like the Cretan monster of old, is fond of preying on the CHOICEST VICTIMS; and that the PUREST streams reflect images more DEEPLY and more PERFECTLY than OTHERS.

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