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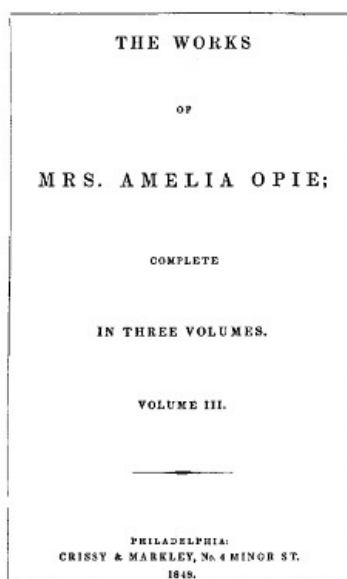
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THE WORKS

OF MRS. AMELIA OPIE;

COMPLETE
IN THREE VOLUMES.

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A WOMAN'S LOVE, AND A WIFE'S DUTY.

You command, and I obey: still, so conscious am I of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and especially of my own, that I am doubtful whether I am not following the dictates of self-love, when I seem to be actuated by friendship only; as you have repeatedly assured me, that the story of my life will not alone *amuse* and *interest* you, but also hold up to an injudicious and suffering

friend of yours, a salutary example of the patient fulfilment of a *wife's duty*.

There is something very gratifying to one's self-love, in being held up as an example: but *remember*, I beg, that while to oblige you I draw the veil from past occurrences, and live over again the most trying scenes of my life, I think myself more a warning than an example; and that, if I exhibit in any degree, that difficult and sometimes painful task—the fulfilment of a wife's duty—I at the same time exhibit the rash and dangerous fervour of a *Woman's Love*.

I must begin my narrative, by a short account of my progenitors.

INTRODUCTION.

My grandfather and the grandfather of Seymour Pendarves were brothers, and the younger sons of a gentleman of ancient family and large possessions in the county of Cornwall; some of whose paternal ancestors were amongst the first settlers in America. Disappointments, of which I never heard the detail, and dislike of their paternal home, determined these young men to leave their native country, and embark for the new world, where the family had still some land remaining, and on the improvement of which they determined to spend a sum of money which had been left them by a relation. They carried out with them, besides money, *enterprise, industry, integrity,* and *talents*. After they had been settled in Long Island three years, they found themselves rich enough to marry; and the beautiful daughters of an opulent American farmer became their wives.

My grandfather had only one child—a son; but his brother had a large family, of whom, however, one only survived—a son also. These two cousins were brought up together, and were as much attached to each other as if they had been brothers.

Never, as I have been told, was there a scene of greater domestic happiness, than my grandfather's house exhibited, till death deprived him of his beloved wife. He did not long survive her; and my uncle soon afterwards lost her equally-beloved sister, whose health had been destroyed, first by the fatigue of attendance on her sick children, and then by grief for their loss.

George Pendarves, the sad survivor of so many dear ones, now lost his spirits—lost that energy which had so much distinguished him before; and he soon sunk under the cessation of those habits of exertion and temperance, which he had once practised, and, after two or three years of protracted suffering, died. Thus the two youthful cousins found themselves both orphans before they had reached the age of twenty.

They had not inherited their parents' dislike of Europe. On the contrary, when their fathers imparted to them the learning and the elegant arts which they had acquired at the university, and in the society of England, they were impressed with respect and admiration for the sources whence such precious stores were derived, and resolved to enter themselves at an English college.

Accordingly, having put a confidential agent into their farms, they set sail for the land of their ancestors, and arrived at PNDARVES CASTLE, the seat of their eldest paternal uncle, who had come into possession of the estates on the death of his father.

At this time, my mother and Lady Helen Seymour, the daughter of Lord Seymour, were both on a visit there. The young Americans had now been some months expected, and their relations had long been amusing themselves with conjecturing what these SAVAGES (as they fancied them) would be like; while they anticipated much pleasure from beholding their surprise at manners, scenes, and accommodations, so different from their own. Nor was my mother, though she was their relation, and herself a Pendarves, less forward than her friend Lady Helen to hold up these strangers in a ridiculous view to her imagination, and to express an unbenevolent eagerness for the arrival of the *Yankees*.

At length, they came; and it was on the evening of a ball, given by Mr. Pendarves, to celebrate the birth-day of his wife. The dance was begun before they arrived; and their uncle was called out of the room to receive them. He went with a heart warmed with fraternal affection, and yearning towards the representatives of his regretted brothers: but the emotion became overpowering when he beheld them; for those well-remembered brothers seemed to stand before him in improved loftiness of stature, dignity of person, and beauty of feature. From their mothers, they had inherited that loveliness and symmetry, which so peculiarly distinguish American women; and in stature they towered even above their father's family.

The young men, at the same time, were considerably affected at sight of Mr. Pendarves, as he reminded them strongly of their parents. While these endearing recollections were uppermost in their minds, Mr. Pendarves at first wholly forgot how different his nephews were from the pictures his laughter-loving family had delighted to draw of them. But when he did recollect it, he enjoyed the idea of the surprise which their appearance would occasion.

Their dress, as well as their manners, bespoke them perfect gentlemen; but their hair was not yet spoiled by compliance with the fashion of England at that period; for it curled, uncontaminated by powder, in glossy clustering ringlets on their open brows.

Such were the young men who now followed Mr. Pendarves to the apartment in which his lady

received her guests.

"Dear me! how surprising!" cried that lady, who was very pretty, very volatile, and very apt to think aloud. "Are these the Yankees? Why, I protest they look more like Christians than savages, and are like other people, except that they are much handsomer than other people."

This last part of her speech made some amends for the first part; but had she been of a contrary opinion, Mrs. Pendarves would have uttered it; and the glow of indignation on their cheek was succeeded by that of gratified vanity, for their hostess added to her compliment, by asking Mr. Pendarves if he was not quite proud of his nephews.

He replied in the affirmative, declaring himself impatient to show them to the assembled family. It was therefore with cheeks dyed with becoming blushes, and eyes sparkling with delight at the flattering welcome which they had received, that they followed their uncle to the ball-room, but at his desire they stopped within the folding-doors, whence they surveyed the gay groups before them. Mr. Pendarves made his way amongst the dancers, and accosting his guest, Lady Helen Seymour, and Julia Pendarves, his niece, told them they must leave the dance a little while, for he must present to them the *Yankees*, who were just arrived.

"I will come as soon as I have been down the dance," they both exclaimed. "But how unfortunate they should come to-night! for what can we do with them in a fine party like this? because," said Julia, "though they may do to laugh at in our own family circle, one should not like to see one's relations supply subjects for laughter to other people."

The dance was now beginning, and Mr. Pendarves, smiling sarcastically as he listened to his niece, allowed her to dance to the bottom of it, secretly resolving that she should now *ask* him for that introduction which she had thus delayed; and in the meanwhile he amused himself with watching for the first moment when Lady Helen and Julia should discover the two strangers, which he knew they could not fail to do, as the dance down which they were now going, fronted the folding-doors.

Mr. Pendarves did not watch long in vain; Lady Helen and her companion saw them at the same instant, and were so struck with their appearance, that they were out in the figure, and wondered to their partners, who those strangers could be.

"I cannot think," replied one of the gentlemen; "but they look like brothers, and are the finest and handsomest men I ever saw."

"Julia," whispered Lady Helen, "Is it possible these can be your Yankee cousins? If so, I am so ashamed."

"And so am I; and do look at my uncle, he is laughing at us."

"Oh, it must be they, I am so shocked!"

When they reached the bottom of the dance, they vainly looked towards Mr. Pendarves; he cruelly kept aloof. The strangers turned, however, eagerly round at hearing some one behind them address another by the name of Miss Pendarves.

Their glowing cheeks, their animated looks, were not lost on their equally conscious observers, and Mr. Pendarves now good-naturedly came forward to put a stop to this embarrassing dumb show, by presenting the cousins to each other, and then introducing them to Lady Helen.

You remember my mother, and you have seen a picture of Lady Helen; you will not wonder, therefore, that the sudden admiration which Lady Helen felt that evening for George Pendarves, and my mother for Charles, was as warmly returned. It even seemed that their attachment foreran that of their lovers, for the cousins went to college without disclosing their love. On their return, however, finding the dangerous objects whom they meant to avoid still at Pendarves, they ventured to make their proposals; and unsanctioned by parental authority, Lady Helen and my mother accepted the vows of their lovers, and pledged theirs in return.

I shall pass over the consequent misery which they underwent, and simply state that the two friends were at last so hurried away by their romantic affection, that they allowed the cousins to carry them to Gretna Green; and that after the ceremony they embarked from the nearest Scotch port for America.

At first Lady Helen was too happy in the new ties which she had formed, to feel much sorrow or much compunction when she remembered those which she had broken. But when she became a parent herself, and learnt the feelings of a mother, she thought with agonizing regret on the pains which she had inflicted on her own, and in the bitterness of awakened remorse, she supplicated to be forgiven. The answer to this letter was sealed with black, and was in the hand of her father! It was as follows:

"Your mother is dead, and it was your disobedience which killed her. Expect, therefore, no forgiveness from me.

"SEYMOUR."

A fever of the brain was the consequence of this terrible stroke, and her life was despaired of. In the agonies therefore of anxious affection, George Pendarves wrote to Lord Seymour, retorting on him his own blow, for he told him that his letter had *killed Lady Helen*.

The wretched husband inflicted as much pain as he intended; for Lady Helen, however faulty, was Lord Seymour's *favourite* child—his only daughter; and the next letters from America were expected with trembling anxiety. The information, therefore, that Lady Helen was better, was *received* with gratitude, though it did not procure an offer of forgiveness.

My mother, though not quite such a culprit as Lady Helen, because she was one of many daughters, left an aged grandmother and an affectionate uncle with whom she lived; but the former pronounced her forgiveness before she breathed her last, and suffered the will to remain in force in which he had left her a handsome legacy. Nor was her uncle himself slow to pronounce her pardon. She therefore had no drawbacks on her felicity but the sight of Lady Helen's constant dejection, which was so great that my father thought it right to make an effort to procure her the comfort of Lord Seymour's pardon.

The troubles in America were now on the eve of breaking out, for it was the year 1772; and the joy of my birth was considerably damped to my affectionate parents by the increasing agitation of the country. But George Pendarves was too miserable and too indignant to write himself; he therefore gladly deputed my father to write for him. While they were impatiently awaiting the reply, they both busied themselves in politics, in order to escape from domestic uneasiness; and though undetermined which side to take, they were considerably inclined to espouse the cause of the mother country, when Lord Seymour's answer arrived, in which he offered Lady Helen and her husband his entire forgiveness, on condition that the latter took part against the rebels, as he called them, and accepted a commission in the English army, which would soon be joined by his son, Colonel Seymour.

It is impossible to say which at this trying moment was the governing motive of George Pendarves,—whether it was chiefly political conviction, or whether he was influenced insensibly by the wish of conciliating his father-in-law, in order to restore peace to the mind of the woman whom he adored; but certain it is that this letter hastened his decision, and that my father, who loved him as a brother, coincided with him in that decision, and resolved to share his destiny.

Accordingly, both the cousins *accepted* commissions in the British army; and when Colonel Seymour met his brother-in-law at head-quarters, he presented to him a letter from his father, containing a fervent blessing for Lady Helen and himself.

The husband and the brother soon after obtained permission to visit the one his wife, and the other his sister; and something resembling peace of mind, on one subject at least, returned to the patient Lady Helen, while with a mother's pride she put into the arms of her brother her only child, Seymour Pendarves, to whom, unpermitted, she had given the name of her family, and who was then seven years old. But now a *new* source of anxiety was opened upon her. Her husband was become a soldier, and she had to fear for his life; nor was she in a state to follow him to battle, as she would otherwise have done, because she had lately been confined with a dead child. My mother was in this respect more fortunate; for she was able to accompany her husband to the seat of war, and she persisted to do so, though both my father and his cousin earnestly wished her to stay with Lady Helen and myself, I being at that period only two years old.

But my mother had set up her husband as the only idol whom she was called upon to worship, and before that idol she bowed down in singleness of adoration; nor could the inconvenience to which her resolution exposed him at all shake her constancy. She was equally insensible also to the anxiety which her leaving Lady Helen at such a time occasioned, both to the husband and the brother of that amiable being.

The reply of, "It is my duty to accompany my husband as long as I can," silenced all objections from others, and all the whisperings of her own affectionate heart; and she tore herself away, though not without considerable pain, from the embrace of her friend, and committed me to her maternal care.

Dreadful was the moment of separation between Lady Helen and her husband: but the former bore it better than the latter; for, as her mind was impressed with the idea that she had deserved her afflictions, she believed that by patient submission to the divine will, she could alone show her sense of the error which she had committed. Yet, independently of the violence thus done to the enjoyment of affections, it was impossible for a feeling heart and a reflective mind to contemplate that awful moment without agony—that moment, when brother was about to arm against brother—when men speaking the same language, and hitherto considering themselves as subjects of the same king, were marching in dread array against each other, and breathing the vows of vengeance against those endeared to them perhaps by habits of social intercourse and the interchange of good offices. Such was the scene now exhibited at Lexington, in the April of 1775; for there the *first* blood was spilt in the American contest.

In that hour of deadly strife, my mother's trial was not equal to Lady Helen's; for she could linger around the fatal field, she could ask questions of stragglers from the army, and her daily suspense would end with every day; while other anxious wives around her, by sharing, soothed her uneasiness. But Lady Helen was in a sick chamber, surrounded by servants and by objects of interest which only served to heighten her distress; for, as she gazed upon her son and her charge, she knew not but that she was gazing at that moment upon fatherless orphans. There is certainly no comparison in strength between the uneasiness which can vent itself in *exertion*, and that which is obliged by circumstances to remain in *inaction*.

But not at the battle of Lexington was the heart of Lady Helen doomed to bleed. Her husband

escaped unwounded, and once more he returned to her and to his children. The interview was indeed short, but it was a source of comfort to Lady Helen, which ended but with her life. His looks—his words of love during that meeting, were treasured up with even a miser's care; for, after their parting embrace—after that happy interview, they *never met more*.

George Pendarves fell in the next decisive battle, which was fought near his residence. By desire of his afflicted brother, the body was conveyed to his own house, which was near to that of the unconscious widow. The bearers mistook their orders, and conveyed it home. Lady Helen, who was at that moment teaching me my letters, after having set Seymour his lesson, broke off to listen to an unusual noise of feet in the hall; then gently opening the door, she leaned over the baluster to discover the cause. Young as I was, never can I forget the shriek she uttered, which told she had *discovered it!* while, wildly rushing down stairs, she threw herself upon the bloody corse. We, echoing her cry, followed her in helpless terror; but fear and horror were my only feelings. Poor Seymour, on the contrary, was old enough to take in the extent of the misery, and I yet hear his fond and fruitless exclamations of "Papa! dear papa!" and his vain, but still repeated supplication, that he would open his eyes and speak to him.

Lady Helen now neither screamed, nor spoke, nor wept; but she sat in the *silent desolation* of her soul on the couch by the body of Pendarves, with eyes as fixed and even as rayless as his. There was a something in this still grief which seemed to awe the by-standers into stillness also. No hand was lifted to remove *her* from the *body*, nor the *body* from *her*. The only sounds of life were the *sobs of Seymour*, for my cries had been checked by alarm and the groans of the compassionate witnesses, or the grief of the servants. But this state of feeling could not last long, and I remember that Seymour destroyed it; for, looking terrified by his mother's changed countenance, he threw his arms passionately around her, conjuring her not to look so terribly, but to take him on her lap, and speak to him. The attendants now came up to take her away; but she resisted all their efforts with the violence of frenzy, till she sank exhausted into their arms, and could resist no longer. The month that ensued was a blank in the existence of Lady Helen: that pressure on the brain from which she had suffered so much before returned, and delirium, ending in insensibility, ensued. When consciousness was restored, her feelings of humble piety and deep contrition returned with it, and kissing the rod which had chastised her, she resolved for our sakes to struggle with her grief, and enter again upon a life of usefulness.

My father meanwhile fought, and my mother followed his fortunes. Once he was brought wounded to his tent, and she was allowed to nurse him till he recovered. After that, she had to cross the country, and endure incredible hardships; but her husband lived, and hardships seemed nothing to her.

During this time—a period of two years—I have heard Seymour Pendarves say, that he dreaded his mother's receiving a letter from the army, because it made her so wretched. He used to call my father and mother uncle and aunt; and when, in seeing her affliction, he asked her whether uncle Pendarves was shot, or aunt Pendarves ill, she was accustomed to reply, "No—they are indeed sufferers, but have much to be thankful for; for *he lives*, they are *together*, and SHE IS HAPPY!"

In the October of 1777, the British army, commanded by General Burgoyne, under whom my father now served, and held a major's commission, were obliged to lay down their arms at Saratoga—yet not before my father had been severely wounded, and taken prisoner. This was a new trial to my mother's constancy; but her courage and her perseverance seemed to increase with the necessity for them; and had she wanted any other incitement to fortitude than her conjugal affection and her sense of duty, she would have found it in the splendid example of Lady Harriet Ackland, whose difficulties and dangers, in the performance of a wife's extremest duty, will ever form a brilliant page in the annals of English history.

Some of the dangers and many of the difficulties of Lady Harriet, had been endured by my mother, but had ended in her being allowed to share the prison of my father; when, on the surrender of General Burgoyne's army, the officers were allowed to return on their parole to England.

My father, therefore, was glad to hasten to that spot from choice, to which he might be ultimately driven by necessity; and my mother, who never liked America, was rejoiced to return to the dear land of her birth. Lady Helen, meanwhile, had undergone another sorrow; but one which, during its progress, had given a new interest to life. Her brother, Colonel Seymour, had been desperately wounded at the beginning of the year 1777, and had been conveyed in a litter to the house of his widowed sister.

Had the wounds of Lady Helen's heart ever been entirely closed, this circumstance would have opened them afresh. "So," she was heard to say, "would I have nursed and watched over my husband, and tried to restore him to life; but to go *at once*—no *warning*—no *preparation*! But God's will be done!" And then she used to resume her quiet seat by the bedside of her brother; whom, however, neither skill nor tenderness could restore. He died in her arms, blessing her with his last breath.

Colonel Seymour was only a younger brother; but having married an heiress, who died soon after, leaving no child, and bequeathing him in fee her large fortune, he was a rich man. This fortune, as soon as he was able to hold his pen, he bequeathed equally between his sister, Lady Helen, and her son, desiring also that his remains might be sent to England to be interred in the family vault of his wife.

I was five years old, when my father and mother returned to us, to prepare for their departure to England, and to prevail on Lady Helen to accompany them; and I have a perfect recollection of my feelings at that moment—or rather, I should say, of my first seeing them; for Seymour and I were both in bed when they arrived. I have heard since, that my father's resemblance to his brother awoke in Lady Helen remembrance even to agony, and that he was not much less affected. I also heard that my mother soon hastened to gaze upon her sleeping child, and to enjoy the luxury of being a parent, after having been so long engrossed by the duty of a wife; for, though she had been confined once during her perils, her confinement had not added to her family.

The next morning, I remember to have felt a joy—I could not tell why—at hearing that my father and mother were come, and that I was both pleased and pained when Seymour ran into the nursery, screaming out, "Oh, Ellen! my uncle and aunt are come, and I have seen them; but they are very ill-looking, poor souls! and my uncle is so lame!"

"Ill-looking, and my papa lame!" thought I. It was with difficulty the nurse could prevail on me to obey the summons; and I behaved so ill when I got to their bedside, that they were glad to send me away. It was impossible that I could know either of them, they were really so pale and haggard through fatigue and suffering; and I shrunk frightened and averse from their embraces.

True, the name of mother was associated in my mind with all that I best loved, for by that name I called Lady Helen. But why did I so? Because she had been to me the tenderest of guardians, and had fulfilled the duty which my real parent had been forced to resign. On returning to the nursery, I found Lady Helen, to whom I clung in an agony of tears, satisfied that *she* was my *own dear mamma*.

But when my father and mother were seated at the breakfast-table, and gave me some of the nice things set before them, I became less averse to their caresses, and before the day was over, I consented to have one papa and two mammas, while Seymour assured me he thought my papa, though *ill*, very handsome, and like his own poor papa.

At first, Lady Helen shrunk from the idea of returning to England; but she at length consented, from consideration of the superior advantages which her two young charges would receive from an English education, and as it was evidently in conformity to her brother's intention. Accordingly, in the beginning of the year 1779, we arrived at Liverpool, bringing with us the bodies of Colonel Seymour and George Pendarves.

Well was it for Lady Helen that we reached the inn at Liverpool at night, and that she had some hours of refreshing slumber, to prepare her for the surprise which awaited her the next day. While she and my parents were at breakfast the following morning, and Seymour and I were amusing ourselves with looking out at the window, we saw a very elegant carriage drive up to the door: our exclamations called Lady Helen to us.

"What are those pretty things painted on the sides, mamma?" asked Seymour.

"An earl's coronet, and supporters to the arms, my dear!" repeated Lady Helen in a faint voice, and suddenly retreating, as she saw there were gentlemen in the carriage, who looked up, on hearing the children's voices. It was her father's.

Nor had time, suffering, and sickness so altered her beautiful features as to render them irre recognizable by a father's heart. Catching the arm of Lord Mountgeorge, his son, who was with him, Lord Seymour exclaimed—

"O Frederic! surely I have beheld your sister!" and with trembling limbs he alighted, and reached the rooms bespoken for him.

He was on his way from London to the seat of a gentleman near Liverpool, from whose house he was to proceed to his own place in the North.

He now sent for the landlord, and begged to know if there were not some American strangers in the house; and on receiving from him a confirmation of his suspicions, he desired one of the waiters to tell Major Pendarves that a gentleman begged to see him.

On entering the room, Major Pendarves took in silence the hand which the agitated earl in silence tendered to him. The past and the present rushed over the minds of both; while Lord Mountgeorge, whose emotion was less violent, begged the major to prepare his sister to receive them.

In the meanwhile, Lord Seymour, with his heart full of his lost son, surveyed with respectful pity the faded cheek and altered form of the once-blooming Charles Pendarves.

"You did not look thus when we last met," said he; "but you have suffered in a noble cause, and you have only lost your *health*."

Here the lip of the bereaved parent quivered with agitation, and Lord Mountgeorge turned mournfully away.

My father then rejoined his party with evident agitation.

"What new sorrow awaits me?" cried Lady Helen; "for I see it is for me you are affected, not for yourself."

"No, my friend; these tears are tears of emotion, but of pleasure also."

"Pleasure!"

"Yes: Lord Seymour and your brother are in the next room, and eagerly long to see you."

The feelings which now strove for victory in Lady Helen's breast were too much for her weakened frame to support; and shuddering and panting, she caught hold of my mother to save herself from falling, while the scream of the terrified Seymour, as he beheld her nearly fainting on the sofa, was heard by the anxious expectants, who hastily entered the room.

Lady Helen, who had not lost her senses, instantly sunk on one knee before her agitated parent, and pushing her son toward him, desired him to plead for his unhappy mother.

"Helen!" cried Lord Seymour, in a voice broken by sobs, "you need no advocate but my own heart!" and Lady Helen was once more clasped to his bosom.

"And is this fine creature my grandson?" said he, gazing with delight on Seymour, while he kissed his open forehead; then seating himself by his daughter on the sofa, while Lord Mountgeorge sat by her on the other side, he drew the wondering boy to his knee.

My father now presented my mother and myself to Lord Seymour.

"I am disappointed," said he, civilly: "I hoped, Mrs. Pendarves, that this lovely girl was my grandchild also."

This was enough to conciliate my young heart; and I wondered to myself, I remember, why my Lady mamma should have seemed so sorry at seeing such a good-natured old gentleman; nor could I conceive why Lord Seymour, as he kept looking on Lady Helen, should shed so many tears.

"My poor Helen!" cried he, "your face tells a tale of sad suffering—and Augustus, too—both gone! But they fought bravely."

"Ay—but they *died!*" cried Lady Helen, clasping her hands convulsively.

"And they shall both have a magnificent monument erected to their memory, my child," cried Lord Seymour.

Lady Helen looked gratefully up in her father's face, as he said this.

Lord Seymour now wrote to his friend, to say that he and his son were prevented paying him the promised visit; and the next day we all set forward for the seat of Lord Seymour.

I forbear to describe poor Lady Helen's feelings when we reached Seymour Park, and what she endured, when she visited, at her own family vault, the remains of her beloved mother, after she had seen her husband and brother interred in that of the *latter*. But she had the consolation of knowing that Lord Seymour's resentment had made him unjust, as a mortal malady had long been preying on her existence.

Having only visited Seymour Park in order to witness the funeral solemnities, my father and mother soon took their leave, and, to my great agony, insisted that I should accompany them on their projected visit to Pendarves Castle, and also to my grandfather and grandmother; and I well recollect the violent sorrow which I experienced when I was torn from Seymour and Lady Helen. I was told, however, that I should certainly come back to them, and not soon leave them again; and that pacified me. Indeed, it was my father's intention to settle near Lady Helen Pendarves, who meant to fit up a cottage in her park for their residence.

When my father and his cousin first came over to England, they had found some property due to them in right of their father's will. This property was vested in the English funds, and there it had remained untouched, both principal and interest, for eight years. During this period, it had accumulated so much as to be sufficient for us to live upon, should the event of the war be such as to cause the confiscation of our American estates; and my mother had also to receive the legacy bequeathed by her grandmother. Their present enjoyment, therefore, was not clouded over (to my parents) by the fear of pecuniary distress; and after their first arrival at Pendarves Castle, (that scene so fraught with grief in its results to friends most dear to them,) they looked forward with joyful anticipations to the future.

They were speedily joined there by my mother's uncle and her parents. Thither, too, Lady Helen had at last resolution to venture also; and I was again united to my brother Seymour, as I always called him.

On leaving her carriage, Lady Helen desired to be shown to my mother's apartment, in order to recover herself before she saw the rest of the family; for she dreaded to encounter the thoughtless Mrs. Pendarves, who would say things that wounded the feelings in the most susceptible part.

On the third day, while she was administering a nervous medicine to her widowed guest, she could not help exclaiming,

"Poor dear! what will all the physic in the world do for you, cousin Helen? as the man says in the play—

'What can minister to a mind diseased?'

And—

'Give physic to the dogs.'

Here my mother, with a pathetic look, motioned her to be silent—but in vain.

"Nay, my dear Julia!" said she, "I must speak: my dear cousin Helen will not know else how I have cried and lain awake all night with thinking of her miseries."

"She does not doubt your kind sympathy, dear aunt—she does not, indeed!"

"But she cannot be sure of it, Mrs. Charles, unless I tell her of it, and tell her

'I cannot. But remember, such folks were,
And were most dear to all.'

Oh! he had

—'An eye like Mars!'

and that is quite appropriate, you know, as he died in battle. I mean your poor husband, poor George Pendarves! not your brother—I never saw him."

My mother looked aghast. Since the death of George Pendarves, no one had ever ventured to name him to Lady Helen;

"But fools rush in where angels dare not tread."

And Lady Helen hid her face in agonizing surprise on my mother's shoulder.

"Ah! one may see by your eyes that you have shed many tears. Why, they tell me you never knew what had happened till you saw the poor dear love lying dead and bleeding. There was a shock! Oh! how I pity you, dearest soul! I have often thought it was a mercy that you did not fall over the balusters, and break your neck!"

"It broke my heart!" screamed out Lady Helen, in the voice of frenzy, unable to support any longer the horrible picture thus coarsely brought before her; and in another moment the house resounded with her hysterical cries; while Mrs. Pendarves added, she could not but think Lady Helen was very bad still, as she could not bear to be pitied; though pity was said to be very soothing—and though she,

—"Like pity on one side,
Her grief-subduing voice applied."

As my mother expected, Lady Helen now conceived a terror of Mrs. Pendarves, which nothing could conquer; and her health became so visibly worse, that she quitted the place the following week, accompanied by my father and mother, and my mother's uncle, to London, leaving Seymour and myself behind, to be spoiled by our too-indulgent relatives.

In a short time, my father and mother had settled their pecuniary concerns, and purchased furniture for their new habitation, of which they now hastened to take possession; and there we soon joined them.

I have detailed thus minutely the sentiments and sorrows of those with whom my earliest years were passed, as I believe that by them my character was in a great measure determined; and that I owe the merit which you attribute to me, and the crimes of which I am conscious, to having been the pupil of *Lady Helen*, and the daughter of *Julia* Pendarves.

The next three years passed quietly away; but my parents observed with pain that Lady Helen's visits to Seymour Park became more and more frequent, though Lord Seymour had married a young wife before his daughter's return, who was jealous to excess of Lady Helen's influence over her lord, and that she had evidently lost much of her enjoyment of their society. The truth was, that though Lady Helen did not envy the happiness of my parents, it was not always that she could bear to witness it; because it recalled painfully to her mind the period of her life when *she was equally* happy; and she had no longer that sympathy with my mother which is the foundation and the cement of friendly intercourse; so true is it, that *equality of prosperity*, like *equality of situation*, is necessary to give *stability* to friendship. My mother, though she felt this, was too delicate openly to repine.

My intercourse with her, and the benefit which I derived from her instructions, remained the same, for I was always allowed to accompany Lady Helen to Seymour Park.

But, alas! the tide of sympathy towards my poor mother, which had been checked in Lady Helen's bosom by happiness, now flowed again with increased fulness, when she was summoned to console her under a sorrow kindred with her own.

My father had been saved from the dangers of war, to perish at home by a *violent death*. He was thrown from his horse, struck his head against a stone, and died upon the spot.

Lady Helen having removed her to her own house, devoted her whole attention to the offices of a comforter. In proportion as my poor mother's sense of happiness had been keen, her sense of privation was overwhelming.

But, so curiously, so mercifully are we fashioned, that we are sometimes able to derive medicine for our suffering from its very excess.

My mother was, as you well know, a woman of *high aspirations*, and loved to be pre-eminent in all things. She was proud of her conjugal love; she was proud of the dangers which she had dared under its influence, and of the sufferings to which she rose superior, to prove the tender excess of that love; she was proud, also, of her good fortune, in having her husband's life so long preserved to her, and she gloried in his devoted and faithful affection. But now of this idolized husband she was bereaved in a moment, and without any alleviating circumstances.

Soothing, though painful, are the tears which we shed for those who fall in battle; and sweet, "like music in the dead of night," heard after distressing dreams, or while we are kept waking by mournful realities, falls the sound of a *nation's regret* on the ear of those who weep over a *departed hero*.

But my father died *ingloriously*, and YET my mother felt pride derived from that *very source*, for it made her, in her own estimation, *pre-eminent* in trial; for how hard was it, after having shared her husband's dangers, and the struggles of war, to see him perish at home, the victim of an ignoble accident!

"Had he died in the field of glory, I might have found," she cried, "some solace in his renown; and I was prepared to see him fall, when others fell around him. But to perish *thus!* oh! never was woman's trial so severe!"

And thus, while descanting on the pre-eminence of her misfortunes, she got rid of much of their severity.

You remember with what eloquence my mother used to describe what she had endured in America; you have also, I believe, heard her speak of the manner of my poor father's death: but you never heard what I have often listened to, with the pity which I could not utter, Lady Helen's assertion of her *own* trying sorrow, when my mother had harrowed up her feelings by the painful comparison.

"You may remember, that *you* were happy *many years*: but I" (here tears choked her voice) "remember, that while you were allowed to prove your love by soothing the sufferings of the being whom you adored, and had his smile to reward you, I was forced to prove mine only in the privacy of solitary and almost maddening recollections. Till recently, *you* have never known a *real affliction*, and I—oh! when have I *for years* experienced an enjoyment?"

This language used to *silence*, if it did not *convince* my mother.

But however they might dispute on the superiority of their trials, they loved each other the better for them, and were now scarcely ever separated.

Hence, Seymour and I were in a measure educated together, till it was judged fit that he should go to a public school. This painful trial was imposed on Lady Helen by her relations, and approved by her own judgment against the suggestions of her feelings; when I was eleven, and Seymour near fifteen years old; and when our mothers (as I was not long in discovering) had projected a union between us, and had promised each other to do all they could to ensure it.

Thus ends my *Introduction*.

Here begins, my dear friend,

THE HISTORY OF SEYMOUR AND HELEN PENDARVES.

Forgive me, if I introduce my narrative with a very vulgar but a most excellent proverb—which is, that "Little pitchers have wide ears;" or, that children hear many things which they ought not to hear, and which they were certainly not intended to hear. Now, to illustrate the truth of this proverb, and this explanation of it.

It certainly could not be the intention of two such sensible women that I should know I was designed for the wife of Seymour Pendarves; and yet they talked of their plans so openly before me, that I was perfectly mistress of their designs; and that precocity of mind which they had often remarked in me was increased so much by this consciousness, that while they fancied I was thinking on my doll or my baby-house, I was in reality meditating on my destined husband, till my heart was prepared to receive the passion of love at an age when it would have been better for me to have been ignorant of its existence. And this passion I was authorized to feel, and for a most engaging object! I leave you to judge how pleasant I found this permission—how much, young as I was, the idea of Seymour Pendarves now mixed itself with every thing I thought, and did, and said. Small was the chance, therefore, that even my highly honoured mother could ever succeed in changing the bent of those inclinations which she had herself given in the pliant hours

of childhood and earliest youth.

It was some time before Lady Helen recovered her spirits, after the departure of her son. I also gave myself the air of being very dejected; but as with me it was the season of "the tear forgot as soon as shed," and of the preponderating influence of animal spirits, I bounded over the lawn as usual, after the first three days were gone by, and at length won Lady Helen from her reveries and her gloom; but I had the satisfaction of hearing the mothers say to each other,

"What sensibility! She really seemed to regret his absence with a sentimental dejection unusual at those years."

This idea, so flattering to my self-love, I took care to keep alive, by frequently inquiring how long it was to the Christmas vacation; and when that long-expected time arrived, and I found it settled that Lady Helen should meet her son at Lord Seymour's in London, and spend the holidays with him there, I gave way to the most violent lamentations, declaring that she should not go without me. Nor in this instance did I at all exaggerate my feelings of disappointment; for Seymour's absence made a sad void in my amusements, and I had looked forward to his return with the sincerest satisfaction. But my entreaties and my expostulations were equally vain.

Seymour, however, wrote to me twice at least from London. These letters I treasured up with the fondest care, and read them once every day; though I could not but think there was not quite love enough in them, and that I was too big to be called little Helen, and to be told by my correspondent that he blew me a kiss. I remember, also, that when I showed my mother my answers, which were those of a little old woman, and not of an artless girl, she used to say,

"I wonder where the child got those ideas."

When the holidays were over, Lady Helen returned, and brought me a beautiful writing-box, as a present from her son, with a guitar, as a present from herself. We immediately began our practice upon this instrument; and I made a rapid progress, from the hope of being able to charm Seymour when we next met.

But again Lady Helen went to meet her son in London; and it was not till two years after his first departure, that he revisited the North. Never shall I forget the flutter which I felt at the idea of his return; but I am very sure that I was more taken up, in spite of my sentimentality, with thinking what effect I was likely to have on him at our meeting, than with the idea of the pleasure which I should have in seeing him. Two years had made a great improvement in my person; but I was not tall for my age, and I was so thin, that I looked much younger than I really was. My glass, however, and the injudicious praises of flattering visitors, had told me I was handsome; and I really believe I expected to take Seymour's heart—of the actual possession of which I had some doubts—by a *coup de main*; for I had both heard and read of "love at first sight." Never before had I been so difficult to please in the shape of my frocks, which I in vain tried to persuade my wiser mother to alter into *gowns*—as vainly did I try to persuade her to let me have my hair dressed, and wear ear-rings: she coolly told me simplicity was the beauty of a *child's dress*; and I, swallowing as I could that mortifying appellation, was obliged to let my auburn ringlets fall in natural glossy curls into my neck, unfripped and untortured. But unable to keep my vexation to myself, to the great amusement of my mother, I said, rather petulantly, as I was leaving the room one day, "Well, I must do as you please, mamma; but I am sure Mr. Seymour Pendarves, who is used to London young ladies, will think me a great fright."

"Mr. *who*, my dear?—whose opinion is of so much consequence to you?"

"Seymour Pendarves," replied I blushing, and leaving out the *Mr*.

"Oh! Master Pendarves! Really, my dear, I can't think it matters much, what such a mere boy as that thinks; and it is enough for you that you are a good child, and obey your mamma."

At length, Seymour arrived, and the delighted Lady Helen brought her idol to our house; while I gazed with wonder as well as pleasure and embarrassment, on the change which two years had made in my youthful companion. He, though only seventeen, had assumed the dress of manhood: his throat was tied up with a large cravat—his hair was powdered, and worn in a club behind, according to the then fashion—his hat was set on one side, and he was dressed in a grass-green coat. Nothing so smart had ever met my sight before; and what with his fine teeth, his dimpled cheek, and his sparkling eyes, I thought I had never even *read* of any one so beautiful: and this lovely youth was intended to be my husband. But had he himself any such intentions? That I could not say; and I was both mortified and displeased at the way in which he first addressed me, even though I drew up my long neck as high as possible, to look as tall and womanly as I could. He flew up to me, calling me—

"Dear *little* Helen! how are you? I am so glad to see you again!"

And then, in spite of my dignity, he clasped me round the neck, gave me a kiss which might have been heard in the next room, and left the mark of his metal sleeve-buttons on my throat. My mother saw my confusion, and, as she did not approve such familiar and boisterous ways, coolly said, "My daughter is not used to such rough salutations, my dear Seymour; and I did not expect such a remnant of the great romping boy from you."

Alas! all remnant of youthful unrestraint and of the boy now vanished; natural feeling, which the sight of his early companion and playfellow had called forth, disappeared, and the manners of the young men of the world *then* and *for ever* replaced them. But what provoked me was, though he

seemed to consider himself as a *man*, he never even for a moment treated me as a *woman*. I was his "little Helen," and his "chicken," and his "tiny pet;" and then, dreadful degradation! he used to chuck me under the chin: nay, once he asked me, pulling up his neck-cloth, and looking in the glass, whether the neighbourhood was improved, and whether there were any *fine women* in it, who visited our mothers.

I had a mind to answer, "What does it signify to you whether there are or not?" but as I dared not so reply, it was a relief to me when my mother came in, and put a stop to his inquiries.

But never, indeed, have I since felt more jealousy than I experienced during Seymour's residence at home, in various ways. Soon after his return, I went with one of my cousins from Pendarves Castle, then on a visit to us, to a public walk in a neighbouring town, which was then much frequented, and Seymour accompanied us: I, conscious that my straw hat and purple ribands became me, and that my young friend, who was remarkably plain, served only as a foil to my charms.

"Now, then," thought I, "his hour is come." While glorying in this imagined security, I was hurled down into the depths of despair; for we scarcely reached the Mall, when we met some fine showy-looking women, whom I thought *old*, as they seemed past five-and-twenty. Seymour, to my great consternation, inquired who these *lovely creatures* were, declaring they were the handsomest women he had seen since he had left London.

"My cousin can introduce you," said Harriet Pendarves.

"I! not I, indeed!"

"Why not, dear Helen!" cried Seymour.

"Because—because I have only lately known them."

"Oh! that is quite enough," he hastily returned; but I still refused.

However, the ladies returned, accompanied by a young man of Seymour's acquaintance; and in a few minutes we beheld him laughing and talking with the party. My feelings at that moment still live in my memory as vividly as ever. I was thunder-struck. What! Seymour Pendarves, the friend of my childhood, to leave me for women whom he never saw before; and call them handsomer than any thing he had seen since he left London! It was in vain that two youths of my acquaintance—one of them a young lord—joined my deserted side: I was silent, absent, and unhappy; for Seymour remained with his new acquaintance.

It never occurred to me to talk and laugh with my beaux, for I was a stranger to coquetry, and the natural feelings of my heart were allowed to display themselves: still, an untaught delicacy made me try to hide the cause of my oddness from my companions; and a headache, which was not feigned, was my excuse.

The ladies, however, at length left the walk, and Seymour was forced to return to us. He immediately launched forth into rapturous praises of their charms and elegant manners, while I listened in angry silence, as I had expected him to apologize for leaving me; and nothing, I perceived, was further from his thoughts.

"But what is the matter?" cried he. "Are you not well, Helen, that you do not speak?"

"Not quite."

"Helen has a headache," said my cousin.

"Poor child!" cried Seymour kindly; "then let us go home directly; it grows late, and I believe you do not sit up to supper yet, Helen, except on great occasions."

Here was an affront. I angrily replied, "Indeed, Mr. Seymour Pendarves, you seem to know very little about me, and to *care* very little about me now."

"*Mr.*, and a tossed-up chin, and a flushed face! Why, really, Helen, I find I did *not* know much about you: I took you for a sweet-tempered girl; but I have often thought you captious and pettish of late, and I never could imagine why; but let me tell you, Miss Helen Pendarves, that if you lose your good-temper, you will lose your greatest charm—*any* woman's greatest *charm*."

This reproach I could not bear from him; for I knew, if I was become pettish and captious, affection for him was the cause; and I burst into tears. But struggling with my feelings, I sobbed out, "And I suppose, sir, you think I *have* no *other* charm than my good-temper."

"*I*, Helen! No such thing: I think quite the contrary; and I do assure you, the ladies I have just left, they——"

"O yes!" cried I, "they, I suppose, have every charm possible."

"They have great charms, certainly, both of face and person; still, they are only *fine women*; but *you*, Helen, are quite a *little beauty*—only you are as yet but a *child*, you know."

Away went my ill-humours, and even my jealousy; for I was sure, though the boy of seventeen thought it more manly to talk to women grown, I knew as he advanced in life, and I too, he would be of a different opinion; and I also knew a few years would fade the ladies whom he so much admired, while the same number of years would leave me still young, and *still a beauty*. Yes, he

thought me a beauty, and he had told me so; and I repeated his words to myself so often, that in a reverie I once spoke them aloud, and my mother asked, "Child, what are you saying about Helen and beauty?"

"Helen was a great beauty, mamma—was she not?" said I, blushing at my own duplicity; but the subterfuge weighed heavily on my mind, nor could I rest till I told the whole truth to my mother, who, in consideration of my ingenuousness, merely observed to me, that when, from the exaggeration to which even boys were much given, Seymour called me a beauty, he only meant I was a pretty girl: but *I* thought *differently*.

Seymour now remained at home full six months, with a private tutor, as he was too old to go back to school, and Lady Helen thought him too young for Oxford. During that time, my mother, from (as I suspected) some private information, began to form an unfavourable opinion of his steadiness of conduct; and the anxieties of a mother for his future well-being clouded the still beautiful countenance of Lady Helen.

Once, as I was apparently engaged in reading, I overheard Lady Helen say to my mother, "Do you not discern any symptoms yet of a growing attachment on his side? he may be on his guard before me."

"None whatever: he seems to consider her still only as a beautiful child; and she is certainly not at all more womanly in her appearance this last year."

"I am sorry for it," was the answer; "for there is no guard so good for the morals of a young man, as a virtuous attachment."

"Yes," said my mother; "and I had hoped, that by being so much with Helen, he would have loved her, as it were, by anticipation."

I never could find out whether they *meant* me to hear this conversation or not; but the assurance which it conveyed, that Seymour did not love me yet, was not lost upon me; and it was possible that all this was said for that purpose. The consequence was, that I put the strictest guard over my words and manners, lest Seymour should discover the attachment which I had with much confidence indulged; and the attachment itself, I resolved to resist, with all the energy possible: for surely, thought I, if I am too young to inspire love, I ought to be too young to feel it; and I am too proud to love where I am not beloved. And I kept the former part of my resolution, for my attachment remained unsuspected; nor did its strength hold out entirely uninjured against the conviction of the utter indifference of its object. However, an affectionate grasp of my hand, and a respectful salute of my cheek, replaced the boisterous familiarity of his greeting, when we first met.

"Surely," said I to myself, "his feelings towards me have undergone a change;" and while hope was thus restored to my bosom, I felt that my former feelings would, on the slightest encouragement, return with undiminished force.

I have since learnt—though not till long after the period in question—that Lady Helen had thought proper to have a conversation with her son on the subject nearest her heart; namely, a marriage between him and me, in the course of a few years.

He listened to her, I found, with great surprise, but great complacency; only exclaiming, "But she is such a child at present, dear mother!"

"But she will not always be a child," replied Lady Helen; "and though I believe she is quite indifferent to you *now*, I am much mistaken if that 'child,' as you call her, did not at your first arrival feel something resembling love and jealousy too."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Seymour, "and I not to be conscious of it! *Dear* little Helen!" And then he recollected the scene in the walk, and my petulance, silence, and tears, for which he now accounted in a manner flattering to his vanity; and it was so new—so *piquant*, to be loved by a child, that he was charmed with the idea of his conquest. But then Lady Helen had told him he had lost this affection; and as none can bear to renounce the power which they have once possessed, he was resolved to pay me those attentions by the want of which I had been alienated. He was too conscious, however, to be able to act upon his resolves; and he had learnt to consider me in so new a light, that he felt embarrassed when he should have been assiduous; and though I saw a change in his manner during the last four days, it was far from being a favourable one. It was only on the last of the four days that he seemed to have shaken off the trammels which hung about him. That day, as I was drawing at the window, and he was reading aloud by his mother, I saw him lay down his book, and whisper in her ear.

"Helen," said she, "what do you think Seymour says? He says, that he has now found that you are no longer a child."

"Indeed!" replied I, blushing, but in a tone of pique: "and since when? That is a discovery which I have long made."

"And since when have you *yourself* made it, dear Helen?" said he, with that saucy smile of his which you have often said was irresistible.

"These four years, at least," I answered, trying to avoid his eyes.

"Do not fib, Helen," was his impertinent reply.

"You make Helen blush, my dear son."

"So much the better; she never looks so beautiful as when she blushes, and I dare say some little time hence, we shall have some English Priam exclaiming of this modern Helen—

'No wonder, Britons, that such heavenly charms
For ten long years have set the world in arms!'

While *I* shall sit and sing—

'Ah, Chloris! could I now but sit
As unconcern'd as when
Thy infant beauty could beget
Nor happiness nor pain!'"

I was now so pleased, so confounded—yet so happy, that I knew not where to look or how to behave; but remembering that the "best part of valour is discretion," I fled from the danger I could not face, and had just presence of mind enough to run away.

"What is the matter with Helen?" cried Seymour, when I was gone. "Is she angry?"

"No," replied Lady Helen, more skilled in the nature of woman's feelings; "she is only conscious of being too well pleased—that's all;" and from that time—had not Seymour left us the next day—the chances are that we should soon have become lovers.

I, meanwhile, had gone into my own chamber, where I found my mother. I threw myself into her arms, without saying a word, and hid my blushes and my tears in her bosom. My mother, untold, knew those tears were not tears of sorrow, and soon drew from me a part of the truth; for I told her Seymour had been so full of his compliments that I came away.

During the course of that day, Seymour was continually exclaiming, "How provoking it is, that I should be forced to go away just now!"

"Ah!" cried I, pertly enough, and insincerely too, "what will poor Miss Salter do?" This was the name of one of the ladies with whom he had fancied himself charmed.

"Miss Salter!

'I think not of Miss Salter—
My fancy has no image now but—'"

Here my mother rather pettishly interrupted him.

"I think, for Miss Salter's sake, young man, it is well you are going, as you certainly took great pains to make her think you admired her; and I must say, I am no friend to coquetry, be it in man or woman."

"Nor I," said Lady Helen; "and I trust the next time my son makes love, he will do it with his whole heart, and not mistake the illusions of fancy for the dictates of attachment."

"I trust so too, my dear mother," he replied, "and that the object will be one whom you approve."

The next morning he set off, and every thing at first seemed a blank to me. He wrote frequently during the first weeks of his residence at Oxford, but my mother discouraged my answering his letters, and he soon grew remiss in his correspondence even with Lady Helen, who found that his allowance, though handsome, was insufficient for his wants, and suspected that the life must be dissipated which required such an exorbitant expenditure. My mother knew that it was so; why she imparted what she heard to her friend, I cannot tell, because it made Lady Helen unhappy, and she wrote to her son in the language of expostulation. I was vexed to find that my mother gave such implicit credence to the stories of Seymour's errors, as the accounts might be exaggerated; and when I had once admitted that he was the victim of misrepresentation, pity for Seymour added force to my attachment.

It seemed a very long time to me till the next vacation came; but Seymour passed it in London, at his grandfather's; my mother was glad, but I was disappointed. Nor did he come down into the country till half of the long vacation was expired; and after he had spent a week with Lady Helen, my mother took me to pay a visit to a relation of her's. In vain Lady Helen remonstrated, and Seymour entreated; she replied she had put off her journey in the expectation of seeing him in June, and she could no longer delay her visit. He sighed, looked conscious and confused, and forbore to urge her again.

My mother was certainly right in thus resolving; for she knew, though I did not, that Lady Helen had communicated to him her views and wishes with regard to me; and she left home with a firmness and decision of manner which promised ill for the success of her hopes.

When we came back, Seymour was returned to Oxford. The following Christmas, Lady Helen, whose health seemed evidently declining, went to London for the advice of physicians, and Seymour attended her home; but he only stayed a week, as he was under an engagement, he said, to accompany some friends abroad. He departed, however, with evident dejection and reluctance, and seemed while with us to enjoy the quiet of our domestic scenes; but as his actions were not regulated by a steady principle of *right*, and under the restraint of moral and religious

obligation, no sooner was he removed from our purifying influence, than he became again the follower of pleasure, while as he was driven backward and forward upon the ocean of the world, my image, which his poor mother thought would save him from temptation, appeared to him only as a beacon at a distance to remind him of that shore of safety which the waves forbid him, however much he wished it, to approach. During the next term, and in spite of his dissipation, Seymour obtained a prize for writing the best prose essay; and he sent it to his mother just after some very unfavourable accounts of the society which he frequented in London, had reached her, and had been only too strongly confirmed by my mother's secret informant. These reports had not been communicated to me, but I happened to be present when Lady Helen received two copies of the essay, accompanied by a letter, in which he begged that his dearest friend Helen, would not only accept, but do him the favour to criticise the little production which he had sent, as he knew no one whose praise he should so highly value, or to whose censures he should pay greater attention. Methinks I still see the delight yet gleaming mournfully through tears, which beamed from Lady Helen's countenance when she received the essay and read the letter. Alas! that renewed and increased brightness was but too like the flame of an expiring taper.

"My dear Julia!" cried she to my mother, in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, "what a foolish thing is a fond mother's heart! Now it is all fear, and now all hope; now it is broken, and now healed again. This boy, this dear, naughty good boy! it was but yesterday I cried for his weakness, and now I cry for his strength."

"No one, I believe, ever doubted your son's talents," said my mother coldly, and I thought crossly.

"True," replied Lady Helen meekly; "and this prize, I own, is not proof of amended conduct."

"I know not," cried I eagerly, "what fault poor Seymour has committed; but of this I am sure, that if he was so very idle as ill-natured people say he is, he could not have found time to write for a prize, and still less have been able to gain it."

"Thank you, my dearest girl, for being my poor boy's advocate; for what you say is very just: and Seymour shall know how kindly you took his part."

"I must beg he may not know," said my mother, angrily.

"Indeed!" answered Lady Helen mournfully. "But I cannot now blame your change of feeling on this subject, for I myself should hesitate to give my daughter to a youth such as Seymour is said to be."

I now turned round, and looked at Lady Helen with so alarmed and inquiring a countenance, that she could not withstand the appeal. She took my hand, and said—

"Yes, Helen, your mother and I had pledged our words to each other, to do all in our power to promote a union between my son and you, and to cherish every symptom in you of a mutual attachment; but now, owing to some too well-founded reports, I fear, of his faulty conduct, she wishes to retract her promise; and here, as one of my last acts and deeds, (for I feel that I shall not be with you long,) I solemnly give her back that promise in your presence! declaring to you, my beloved child, that unless your mother thinks Seymour deserving of you, I cannot wish you to be his wife; and that it will be my parting injunction to you, Helen, never, never to marry an immoral man."

Lady Helen had scarcely said this, while I listened with downcast eyes, when my mother threw herself into her arms, sobbing out convulsively, "My own dear generous friend! for your sake I will try to think well of your son, and to believe he will reform—only don't talk of dying; I can't bear *that!*"

"But I wish to prepare you for it."

"Prepare, Helen! prepare. Do you think anything can make me endure the idea of losing you? Oh! it will be losing all I ever loved a second time!"

Lady Helen shook her head, but did not speak; for she knew that her friend must soon undergo this dreaded trial—and *she*, too, felt that for *some* blows there is no such thing as *preparation*.

The night that followed was the first of real agonizing sorrow which I had ever known. I had heard that Seymour was believed, even by his own mother, to be unworthy of me, and that mine was decidedly averse to that union which she had originally made the first desire of my heart; I had also heard from Lady Helen's own lips a solemn assurance that she was dying.

At my time of life, however, the spirits are never long depressed, especially by an uncertain and remote sorrow; but as a captive butterfly, when the pressure on its wings is removed, flutters them again in air, with all their glittering dyes and buoyancy uninjured, so do the spirits of youth quickly resume their brilliancy and their elasticity.

When I rose the next morning, I was *sure* that Lady Helen would *recover*; I was sure that Seymour would *reform*, even if the reports concerning him were *not* exaggerated; and I was also sure that some time or other I should be his wife.

But, alas! Lady Helen had not spoken from momentary dejection, and still less from the ungenerous wish to excite interest and alarm in the hearts that tenderly loved her: she spoke from her deep conviction—a conviction only too well founded.

In less than two months, she was attacked by fever and inflammation of the brain, such as had before seized her on the death of her husband. She had, however, lucid intervals; and though my mother and myself felt our hearts wrung by her delirious ravings—during which she called upon her son's name in the most affecting language—still we suffered more, when, on recovering her senses, she asked for this darling son, and we were obliged to reply that he was not yet arrived.

And where—oh! where was he, at a moment like that? We knew not.

As soon as Lady Helen's attack was judged to be a dangerous one, my mother wrote to him at Oxford, desiring him to set off immediately, or he might come too late; and as Oxford was only a ten hours' journey from home, he might have been with us the next morning, had he been at college. It was also term time; but yet he came *not*, though on such an occasion, leave of absence was easily to be obtained. My mother was too angry to be as wretched as I was at this distressing circumstance—for indignation often swallows up every other feeling, and once she hinted to me that he must have received the letter, and that mere idle neglect kept him away; but the poor invalid, who, unsuspected by us, overheard our conversation, exclaimed—

"No, Julia; whatever are his other faults, my poor boy loves me—tenderly loves me; and even from a sick-bed he would hasten to his dying mother. Oh no! he has never received your letter—he is not in college."

"Then where is he? In college he ought to be."

"True, Julia; but he is young and thoughtless, and we ought to remember that we were so *once ourselves*. We ought not to have run away from our parents—yet we *did* so, Julia."

"We did, indeed," cried my mother, abashed and silenced.

"Yes," continued Lady Helen; "and therefore I have always endeavoured to be mild in my judgment of other people—especially of the young."

"Helen," cried my mother, "forgive me, thou blessed spirit! I will be merciful to him, even though it makes me unjust to—"

"No, your first duty is to your daughter: but listen to me, Julia! Be *sure* to convince Seymour, when I am no more, that I did not impute his absence to want of love, but merely to *accident*. Be *sure* you do; for he will feel only too much, when he comes and finds that he has no longer a mother!"

The afflicting image thus presented to my mind, of what would be Seymour's misery if he indeed arrived too late, was more than I could bear, and I was forced to leave the room. Soon afterwards, Lady Helen's senses wandered again; but when I returned, she was sensible, though exhausted; and as I entered, she hastily put back the curtain, and said—

"Oh! I hoped it was my dear, dear boy!" Her breath now grew fainter, and she exclaimed, "Oh! where, where is he? must I die without seeing him once more, and giving him my blessing? Helen! Julia! be sure to speak very kindly to him, and tell him that I blessed him! But thy will, O Lord! be done!"

Still, as long as consciousness remained, her eyes were anxiously turned towards the door, as if looking for that beloved object whom she was never more to see, we thought, in this world. At that moment, however, my watchful ear heard a quick step on the stairs, and an exclamation of agony, not mistaken by me.

"*He is here!* I am *sure* he is here!" cried I, bending over her pillow; and in another moment Seymour was on his knees at the bedside. Never shall I forget his look of speechless woe, when he found her last agony approaching; but it seemed as if *affection* struggled successfully with death for a few short moments. She could not speak, but her eyes were eloquent; and as she laid her hand upon the head of her child, those eyes were raised to heaven in earnest supplication: they then turned on him, while she reclined her head on my mother's bosom, and her right hand was clasped in mine. I cannot go on: the scene is still too present to my view.

Deep as was my affliction, it sunk into nothingness, compared with that of the bereaved and self-reproving son. It was really a *relief* to me to see his sense of anguish suspended by his insensibility.

When he recovered, there was something so full of woe, and yet of a woe so stern, in the look with which my mother ordered me away, that I had not the heart to resist it. It was near an hour before she came to me; and never before had I seen her so overpowered with affliction. She called upon Lady Helen by the tenderest names; talked of her patient gentleness—of the sweetness of that temper which she had so often tried—and reproached herself for having thus tried it. But she spoke not of Seymour; and deep as my regret was for the dead, it was equalled by my anxiety for the living. I therefore ventured to say, "But how is poor Seymour?"

"Unfeeling girl!" cried my mother; "you can think only of him when his angel mother lies dead!"

"*She* would have *thanked* me for my anxiety," I replied, rendered courageous by distress. "I shall go and inquire after him."

"Hold, Helen! he is extremely wretched; so much so, that I could not bear to listen to his self-upbraidings, nor to witness his caresses of that hand which replied no longer to his grasp; and then his wild entreaties, that she would speak to him once more, and say that she forgave him!"

"And could you have the cruelty to leave him alone in such a state?" cried I. "Do you think his mother would so have left *your* child?"

My mother started—"You are right!" said she: "I will return, and do my duty by him."

"Oh! let me go with you!"

"No, Helen; I must do my duty by you too—and the poor youth at this moment is only too dangerous."

She was right, and I submitted; but I had gained my point, and she was gone back to the poor afflicted one. Before she went, however, she insisted on my going to bed; where, wearied with three nights of watching, I fell into a heavy slumber. But, oh! that wretchedness on waking, which attends the recollection of a recent affliction! and I was giving way to all the misery I felt, when, soon after eight in the morning, my mother came into my room.

She told me she had not been in bed all night, for that she dared not leave Seymour.

"How kind it was in you, my dearest mother!"

"No, it was only right," she answered, in great agitation: "he was a bitter and penitent sufferer; and if my departed friend is conscious of what is passing here, I trust that she was satisfied with me, for I tried to do a mother's part by him. And now, my dear child, we must both return home: this, you know, is no place for you, Helen."

"And must I go without taking leave of poor Seymour?"

"What leave is there to take?"

I had nothing to reply, and we came away.

As my mother knew that Seymour's sleep was likely to be long, she did not return to the house of death for some hours; but when she did, I earnestly conjured her to let me accompany her. I pleaded, however, and wept in vain: in vain did I urge, that Seymour would think me unkind in forsaking him wholly at such a time as this was.

My mother said she feared that Seymour would only be too ready to attribute his not seeing me to her commands, rather than my own inclinations; and, disappointed and wretched, I threw myself on the bed in an agony of grief, and never rose from it, feeding my distress by every means in my power. I must own, however, that temper and contrivance had some share in this self-abandonment, or sensibility, which I thought would at once punish my mother for her obstinacy, (as I called it,) and induce her to give up her resolution. How often is grief, like love, made up of materials which we dream not of—and how often has temper much to do with it! But my seeming unmixed sorrow had no effect on my excellent parent, whose decisions, where I was concerned, were the result of firm principle. Her first observation was—

"This excessive misery, Helen, accompanied, as I see it is, with a degree of sullenness, is not likely to make me change my purpose, but rather to confirm me in it the more; because it proves to me the great extent of the danger to which my compliance would expose you, when you can thus, in spirit at least, be rebellious; and this at a time, too, when I want every comfort possible."

These words subdued every particle of resentment in me: I threw myself on her neck, and assured her she should never have so to reproach me again; nor did I even venture to inquire for Seymour—but she was generous enough to speak of him unasked. She told me he woke, after a long sleep, more composed than she expected; "though, on his first waking, he started me excessively," she said, "by asking for his mother, and wondering to see me instead of her. My tears seemed to force back his recollection; and in a faint voice, and with a look of wretchedness, he added, 'Ah! I remember now;' and hiding his face in the pillow, he wept aloud.

"And I—I was but a sad consoler, for I wept in silence by him. When he was calm again, I wished him to rise; and before I left him, in the fulness and tenderness of my heart, poor child! I stooped down, and kissed his burning forehead. But I soon repented; for he exclaimed, 'Oh! that was so like *her*! But she never—no, never more——' and again he lay almost convulsed with his feelings.

"When this fresh paroxysm was over, I left him."

"But I am sure," said I, "that he will be soothed by that kind kiss in remembrance, though it affected him painfully at the time."

"Perhaps so: but his grief, violent though it be, will soon go off, and be after a time forgotten. Lady Helen was his mother, and he loved her; but she had not been the chosen playfellow of his childhood—the friend of his youth—the companion of his riper years—the sharer of every joy—the soother of every sorrow—and the being endeared to him by daily and confidential intercourse: and yet all these was she to *me*, Helen."

"But, dearest mother, the love and regrets of a child are *very* strong."

"I own it, Helen, especially when, as in the case of this miserable boy, self-reproach mingles with

them, and deepens every pang. Helen, my child—my only treasure now," she added, speaking with difficulty, "never, never, when I shall be as she is now, may you have cause to shed such tears as his, Helen! Remember, there are no upbraidings so terrible as those of one's own heart; and for your own sake, if not for mine, be dutiful."

I was too much affected to reply; and my mother continued—"Yes, *he* will recover his loss—you will recover *yours*, Helen. But what can ever replace to me the loss of the friend of my whole life—the sole relic of the joys that are past? George—Charles—Helen! you are all gone now! and I," (here she raised her arms with a sort of appealing look to heaven,) "I stand alone, unsupported, and unsupporting, too, like the sole remaining pillar of a once-noble temple, to speak of former pride and present desolation."

As my mother's imagination had now entered into play, my fears for her health in a great degree vanished; for I knew that the grief which can vent itself in imagery, however gloomy, is not of that sort which preys rapidly on life; for it is

—"The grief that doth not speak,
Falls on the burthen'd heart, and bids it break."

Taking advantage of a pause, during the first part of which my mother seemed engaged in fervent devotion, I now ventured to ask her if Seymour had inquired why he did not see me. She told me that he had, and that he had been told in reply there were sufficient reasons for our not meeting: amongst the foremost of which, was the certainty that we should make each other *worse*, and with this reason he had seemed satisfied. She did not tell me, however, that he inquired for me every day; nor did she relate to me any of their conversation, except the one which took place the evening before the funeral; and *that* she felt it to be her duty to disclose.

"I have to inform you, my dear child," said she, "that when Seymour and I stood together to take our last look and last kiss before the coffin was closed, he suddenly seized my hand, and, wildly addressing the unconscious dead, conjured that pale cheek, and that closed eye, to appeal to my heart in his favour, and to remind me of the promised pledge to his mother to promote his union with you. This was the language of passion, and there was a strange effect in it, I thought—neither of which, you know, can affect me. I therefore replied, though not without emotion, that it was a subject which I could not discuss in that room. Accordingly, after he had taken many more last looks and leaves of the beloved dead, I led him from the chamber.

"When he was calmed a little, I had resolution to resume the conversation; and to own the truth, Helen, I was *glad* to discuss it, without the presence of that mournful object which, spite of myself, armed my feelings against my judgment."

Here my mother walked about the room in considerable agitation; but she soon recovered herself.

"I then related to him our conversation with Lady Helen."

"And did you tell him how I defended him?" cried I.

"No, certainly I did not," she coldly replied; "but I convinced him that his mother gave me back my promise, and that her last parting words to yourself should be, 'Helen, never marry an immoral man.' On hearing this, he exclaimed—

"Did my mother say this? Did she think me an immoral man? Oh! insupportable agony! Well, madam," added he, turning fiercely round, "and so I suppose you have said the same to your daughter, and have engaged her to combat the regard she once felt for me; for I know she loved me once, or would have done so, for so the lips that never deceived assured me: but mark me, madam, I will not take a refusal from any lips but hers."

"If you wish to alienate my affection entirely from you, Seymour," I replied, "you will make this appeal to Helen; for neither by letter nor personal application will I sanction it, till I am convinced your improved conduct makes you more worthy of my daughter."

"But you deny me the motive to improvement, by forbidding my addresses to her."

"O Seymour!" answered I, "if you have no *better* motive, such a change is not to be depended upon; nor would I entrust to you, under such a precarious alteration, the happiness of my child."

He looked distressed, but rather proudly replied—

"Well, madam, we will talk further on this subject some other time. I cannot pursue it now." And soon after I took my leave."

"And will you not allow him to have one interview with me, before he returns to Oxford?"

"No, I will not expose you to his dangerous eloquence: as he is not really in love with you, he would have more self-possession, and plead his cause so much the better."

"*Not* in love with me!"

"No; his attachment is now irritated by obstacles, and also stimulated by fancied duty; but could he, if he really felt a virtuous passion, maintain a disgraceful connexion in London, as I know him to do? Helen, my child! what ails you?" Here her voice sounded like thunder in my ears, and I fainted.

I had certainly been led to believe that Seymour led a life of general dissipation, and I had not allowed myself to attempt to define the exact nature of the charges against him; but when I heard him positively accused of an improper attachment to one individual object, a mixed feeling of jealousy, disgust, misery, and indignation came over me, with the sickness of death, and for the first time in my life I lost all consciousness. How long I remained insensible, I know not; but when I recovered, I found my mother weeping over me—not because she *had* feared for my life, but because she *did* fear for my peace of mind. She was consoled, however, when I assured her, that from that moment I should think it my duty to drive Seymour Pendarves from my mind, and that I had no longer any difficulty in submitting to her wishes. She kissed me, called me her dear, good girl, and we parted for the night.

The next morning was the morning of the funeral. Lady Helen had desired it might be a private one, and had she not, it could not have been otherwise; for Lord Seymour, though not an old man, was fallen into a state of imbecility; Lord Mountgeorge was at Lisbon, attending his dying wife; and Mr. Pendarves, our great-uncle, was confined in Cornwall by the gout.

"Poor Seymour!" cried my mother, as she heard this account of the family; "there is much to be said in your excuse; for how completely has he been left to himself, amidst the dangers of a metropolis!"

My mother, when she said this, was certainly *thinking aloud*; but my hearing her had, at that moment, no bad effect on me, as my jealousy remained unappeased, and my mortification unsoothed, and nothing could reinstate him as yet in my estimation: nay, I believed I should see him the next day without any emotion that could be attributed to him as the cause of it.

When we reached the house of mourning, we found Seymour anxiously expecting us. On seeing me, he seized my hand, and, unable to speak, kissed it repeatedly, then turned away in tears; and, I must own, at that moment I forgot his unworthiness and my own resolution, and remembered only his sorrow and his apparent affection. My mother *might* be right, but I began to suspect she *might be wrong*. All these feelings, however, were soon swallowed up in those of deep and tender sorrow. The procession began; and, clinging to each other's arm for support, my mother and I followed the unsteady steps of the chief mourner. But why need I dwell on the details of a scene so common? Suffice, that Seymour did not return with us: he remained in the church, in order to give way to the lately suppressed agonies of his heart. My mother wished to do the same; but she respected the sacredness of his sorrow, and she could visit the vault at another time.

The rest of the day was spent by Seymour in visits to those who had been maintained or assisted by Lady Helen, in order that he might personally assure them that his intention was to do all she would have done, had life been spared to her. Having thus performed his duty to the utmost, he appeared to my mother's eye to have recovered some of his usual brilliancy of countenance. The next night he was to return to Oxford. In the afternoon of that day, he called at our house, and requested to see my mother and *me*.

I rose involuntarily, in great perturbation.

"Tell Mr. Pendarves," said my mother, "that I will wait on him directly. Helen, my child! it is but one struggle more, and all the difficulty will be over; for I conclude, you, not only in obedience to my will, but in compliance with your own wise *wishes*, refuse to see him!"

What could I say? Could I tell her that the meeting of yesterday, and his subsequent conduct towards his mother's dependants, had altered my feelings? I could not do it, and I remained above stairs.

After a long conference, my mother came back to me, and I heard the hall-door close. Till this moment, I had hoped she would relent, and allow me to see him! at least, I guess so, from the cold chill which I felt at my heart, when I heard the noise of the closed door. However, I saw him from the window—I myself unseen—and his handkerchief was held to his eyes.

When my mother returned, I observed that she had been excessively moved, and the traces of recent tears were on her cheeks.

"Helen!" she at length said, "I trust I have done by Seymour Pendarves what I should wish a friend to do by a child of mine. And is he not *her* child—the child of that lost, matchless being, whom I loved only second to yourself, since one dearer than either was removed from me? Yes; I admonished him as a mother would have done; and though I refused his request, I did it—indeed I did—with gentleness and with anguish. Helen," she resumed, "if ever you should doubt the affections of your mother, remember what, for your sake, she has undergone this day. She has, though her heart bled to do it, wounded that of one whom she loves now next to yourself, and that one, too, the child of her adored Lady Helen. But the sense of a mother's duty, aided by a higher power, has supported me through it."

"And he is gone!"

"Yes; and he reproached me bitterly for my cruelty, Helen; but if he could see me now, do you think he would censure me for hardness of heart?"

Mournful were the hours that followed, and we retired early to rest. But my mother rested not. I heard her walking backward and forward in her room till near day-break; and till she had ceased

I was too uneasy to close my eyes.

When I rose the next day, and was walking in the garden before breakfast, I found my mother's windows still shut, and it was very late before she came down stairs. I had previously felt disposed to indulge my own dejection; but as soon as I saw her, all thought of myself vanished. For never did I see the expression of hopeless grief stronger than in her speaking face. As she did not talk, I vainly tried to converse of indifferent things. She smiled; but every smile was succeeded by a sigh; and once she exclaimed,

"No! they cannot come to *me*, but I shall go to *them*."

"Dearest mother," cried I, rising and looking up in her face, "you forget *me*. Surely you do not wish to leave me?"

"Do not ask me," she cried, clasping me fondly to her bosom; "I fear I am ungrateful for my remaining blessing."

From that time she struggled with her grief, and became, as you know, in *company*, at least, the agreeable companion; for about that time it was, I think, that your amiable husband succeeded to the living, and you came to enliven and adorn the rectory. However, as your friend, for whose inspection this is written, does not know any of the subsequent events, I shall proceed with the detail of my story.

During the ensuing six weeks we had only one letter from Seymour, but that was a pleasant one: for he told us that he had been studying very hard, and had gotten another prize, and he sent us his composition, adding in a very touching manner, that as the eye which he most wished to please by his production was for ever closed, his proudest desire now was to have it approved by those whom he and she best loved.

My mother was gratified by this compliment as well as myself; for she augured favourably of his amendment from this close application, and she owned to me in the fulness of her heart, that she had informed him, his obtaining my hand depended entirely on *himself*. I have said that my mother appeared quite recovered in company; but such was the constant recurrence of one anxious subject to her mind in private, that every thing unconnected with it soon became uninteresting to her; this was the renewal of virtuous friendship in another world; and she read and tried to procure every thing in the shape of a Sermon or Essay that had ever been written on the subject. One sermon, and it was a most eloquent one, bearing the title, "The renewal of Virtuous Friendship in another World,"^[1] delighted her so much, that it was never out of her reach; and though she found it difficult to deduce from the Scriptures any certain grounds for this consoling doctrine, still she delighted to indulge in it; and as she could never rest till she had tried to convert others to her own opinions, especially where those opinions were likely to increase individual happiness, those only with whom she was not intimate could avoid hearing her descant on this subject, with all that plausible and ingenious fluency which usually attends reasoning from analogy and imagination. While her mind was thus employed, it ceased to prey on its own peace; and though her system sometimes failed to satisfy her, she still found a soothing conviction in the thought, that should we not be permitted "to know and love our friends in heaven," we should be sure not to be *conscious* of the want of those who had been the dearest to us when on earth, but should find all the "ways of God" vindicated "to man."

It was now, while my mother was too constantly thinking of the regretted dead, and I of the still tenderly-remembered living, that a new acquaintance was introduced to us, who had power to withdraw our thoughts from these interesting speculations, and fix them for some time at least upon himself.

Methinks, my dear friend, I see you smile at this distance, and remark to your husband, "Now we shall see what she says of the impression which Count Ferdinand De Walden first made on her, for I never could understand how she could ever prefer another man to him."

You forget how very early in life my affections were turned towards Pendarves, and how soon I learnt to look on constancy in love as a sort of virtue; you also forget the "fascinating graces," and the "irresistible archness," to use your own expression, of Seymour's smile. But this is perhaps an ill-timed digression. Where was I? Oh! at the introduction of a new acquaintance.

My parents had made an acquaintance in America with the Count De Walden, the elder, whom curiosity and the love of travelling had led thither. On the breaking out of the war, he returned to his native country, Switzerland, by way of England; where he was so much pleased with the manners of the people and constitution of the government, that he resolved his nephew and heir, Ferdinand De Walden, who was like himself a protestant, should come over and enter himself at one of the universities. When the time for his admission arrived, the count remembered with renewed interest his acquaintance with my parents and their cousins; and that they now resided in England. Nor was it difficult for him to obtain particulars of their present residence and situation.

His uncle heard with pain that my mother, Seymour, and myself, were the only survivors of that happy family which he had so much loved in the new world. To my mother, however, he was still anxious to introduce his nephew; and he hoped that in Seymour he would find a durable friend at college; but in this expectation he could not be gratified, as he had resolved that Ferdinand should go to the mathematical university, and Seymour was of Oxford. This impossibility my mother thought a fortunate circumstance for Ferdinand.

When De Walden came, and showed, among other letters, one of recommendation to Mr. Seymour Pendarves, she coldly observed, "That letter need not be delivered yet;" and certainly, the appearance of Ferdinand De Walden did not promise much congeniality of disposition and pursuit with Seymour; for the latter, from the light gaiety of his manner and countenance, seemed as if he never thought at all; and the former, from the grave pensiveness and reserve of his, appeared at first sight as if he did nothing but think. The open eye of Seymour invited confidence, the penetrating one of De Walden repelled it; and as the one, when first seen, was sure to inspire admiration if not love, the other was as sure to excite alarm, if not a feeling resembling aversion. For myself, I must own that when De Walden was presented to me by my mother, I experienced towards him a little of the first, though none of the second sensation; for I had been accustomed to look on Seymour as my model for personal beauty and captivation; and the young Swiss, therefore, had not a chance of charming me at first sight. I had not seen my mother so animated for years as she was on the arrival of her foreign guest; for she had greatly esteemed his uncle, and Ferdinand strongly resembled him. With him of course were associated the ever-remembered hours of youth and friendship, wedded love and happiness; and De Walden shone with a radiance not his own. But my mother, much to my annoyance, was not conscious of this: she insisted that his brilliancy was all self-derived; that if she had never known *his uncle*, she should still have admired *him*. By this admiration, I am ashamed to confess, I was piqued and mortified, because I fancied it interfered with the rights of Seymour; and I suspected that, if he should repay the regard of the mother by loving the daughter, I could not without disobedience remain constant to my first attachment.

As De Walden was not to go to college till October, he had leave to stay with us till that time, since it was rather an unusual thing for a fine young man, unless he was a relation, to be the guest of a widow lady and her daughter for so long a period. I was therefore certain that my mother must have some particular point to carry, and that point was, I believed, the alienation of my heart from Seymour Pendarves. These suspicions certainly made me regard Ferdinand the two first days of his arrival with prejudiced eyes, not unmixed with fear of his keenness of penetration. But, in spite of myself, my fear of him vanished, and much of my prejudice with it, when I found that this grave sententious personage, who talked theology with my mother, and tried, poor man! to explain to us some new German philosophy, could laugh as heartily as if he never read and never thought, and had a sense of the ridiculous, which he found sometimes dangerous and troublesome to his good-breeding.

This welcome discovery happened to me at breakfast, while he was reading to us aloud some amusing extracts from a kind of periodical paper, published in France by the Baron De Grimm, one of which was so ludicrous, that he laid down the book to laugh at his ease, while I exclaimed, "Is it possible?"

"Is what possible, my dear?" said my mother.

"That Mr. De Walden," I repeated rather uncivilly, "can laugh so very heartily."

"*N'est-il pas permis en Angleterre, Mademoiselle?*"^[2] was his answer.

"Oh, yes!" said I, blushing, and looking very foolish, "only—"

"Oh! Je comprends: apparemment c'est Mademoiselle qui ne veut pas qu'on rit devant elle. Hélas, belle Hélène! il faut rire tant qu'on le peut, quand on a le bonheur de jouir souvent de votre aimable société; car il me semble qu'en ce cas là, on pourroit bien avoir raison de pleurer bientôt, et peut-être pour la vie."^[3]

Here was *gallantry* too, and returning good for evil; though I was rude, he was polite. I was humbled and ashamed, while he with increasing archness said, "*Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire avec votre—*" "Is it possible?"^[4] What! you think me a disciple of Crassus, and fancy me never laugh till I see an ass eat a thistle?" he added in his foreign English.

"Shall I tell you what I take you for now?" replied I, venturing to look up in his face, which, for the first time, animated as it now was by pleasantry and the consciousness of appearing to advantage, struck me with the conviction of its excessive physiognomical beauty; and I ceased to wonder at my mother's regard for him, not because he was possessed of great personal attractions, but because beauty of physiognomy cannot exist without corresponding beauty of mind, if not of heart.

"Well," he replied, "and what do you take me for?" speaking with that accent which in him I have often thought an additional charm.

"A kind-hearted man and a good Christian; for you returned good for evil, and repaid impertinence by making it the foundation of a compliment. Still, I must presume again, and tell you that I believe your laughs are like *jours de fête*; they do not come *every* day."

"Pour les jours de fête, non; ils ne me sont point venus tous les jours que depuis mon arrivée ici; mais à présent, Mademoiselle, tous les jours sont pour moi des jours de fête, et ma sainte est Sainte Hélène."^[5]

I was not yet old enough to know how to receive compliments like these without embarrassment; and to hide my awkwardness I exclaimed, "Why, what can have become of them? I have lost them; they are quite gone."

"Qu'avez-vous perdu, Mademoiselle? Permettez-moi de le chercher. Dites donc."^[6]

"My fear and awe of you."

"Fear and awe of me! *Oh! qu'ils s'en aillent tout de bon. Ce ne sont pas les sentiments que je voudrais vous inspirer pour moi.*"^[7] As he said this, there was an expression in his dark eyes which made me turn mine away; and addressing my mother, I told her that our guest reminded me of a little French paper toy which I had seen, called *deux têtes sous un bonnet*; that at first view, it was a monk with a cowl on, but that when the cowl was thrown off, there was a gay and smiling young man. So it was with Mr. De Walden: when he first came, he seemed a grave philosopher, and now he is an absolute lover of fun, and a laugher of the first order.

"De grâce, Mademoiselle, dites-moi lequel des deux caractères vous plait le plus; mais, ne me dites pas, je vous le demande en grâce, que je vous offense le moins dans mon rôle de philosophe; Hélas! auprès de vous qui pourroit rester philosophe?"^[8]

"I wish you," said I, "to resemble Democritus, who united the two characters of laugher and philosopher; and you, if you please, shall be the latter with my mother; you shall talk wisely and gravely with her, but laugh and talk nonsense now and then with me."

"Vous convenez donc de la justice de ma proposition, qu'auprès de vous on ne peut être philosophe?"^[9]

I shook my head and held up my hand at him, not knowing exactly how to answer: he seized it, and pressed it fervently to his lips. My mother, I saw, enjoyed this dialogue; but my own heart reproached me for having allowed myself to be amused and flattered into a sort of infidelity to Seymour, by a man too who would be, I foresaw, warmly encouraged by my mother.

By this conversation, which has never been effaced from my memory, you will suspect that my flippancy and the evident pleasure with which I kept it up, were proofs that nothing but a prior attachment could have preserved my affections from the power of De Walden, when he once displayed to me all the variety of his talents, and the graces of his mind. Even as it was, they would have had a more certain effect, but for the injudicious eagerness with which my mother tried to force a conviction of them upon me; for then my alarmed feelings took the part of Seymour, and I was piqued into underrating her idol, because she seemed to *overrate* him. How very rarely is it that one can obtain or give an opinion uninfluenced by temper, prejudice, or interest!

"Is he not very handsome?" she used to say.

"Yes, but I have seen a handsomer man."

"Oh, you mean Seymour; he is handsomer certainly, but then he is not near so tall."

"No, but he is better made."

"That *I* never remarked; and I hope you will only impart the result of your observation to *me*: others might think it indelicate. What a fine countenance he has!"

"Yes, *sometimes*, but not always; and I prefer one that is always so: I like *perpetual* rather than *occasional* sun-shine.—It is disagreeable to have to watch the sun peeping out from behind clouds."

"Helen, Helen!" replied my mother, "weak, foolish girl! to like what no one can on earth obtain—perpetual sun-shine in the moral world! And after all, when one considers what this life is, its *long pains* and its *short pleasures*, the *riches* of *one* day succeeded by the *poverty* of the *next*, the ties which are *firmly knit* only to be *severed* in a *moment*, and our *capacity* and *cause* for *enjoyment* never equal to our *capability* and *cause* of suffering; my child, what a *poor, thoughtless, frivolous* being must that be, whose *lip* can always *smile*, and whose *eye* can always *sparkle*, whom fears for *himself* can never *depress*, nor fears for *time* or for *eternity*, or anxiety for the welfare or the peace of others, can alarm into *self-government*!"

You know that when my mother was roused into any mental emotion, she did not talk, she harangued, she spoke as if she read out of a book; it was, as you perceive, the case now.

"My dear mother," replied I, "such a being as you describe would be as odious to me as he could be to you; and his vivacity either of manner or countenance must be the result of want of feelings, affections, or intellect. To *such* perpetual sun-shine, I, like you, should object. But then the *clouds* must not be occasioned by the absence of good-humour, or by the presence of sulkiness and ill-humour, or by hypochondriacal tendencies."

"You do not suppose, Helen," she cried, with quickness, "that De Walden is grave only because he is cross, and thoughtful only because he is hypochondriacal?"

"Were we talking of individuals, mamma?"

"If not, you know we were thinking of them, Helen; and I feel only too sensible that the pique with which you answer when I praise Ferdinand, springs from your still powerful attachment to Seymour."

I could not deny it: but my conscience reproached me for having, from a feeling of jealousy on

poor Seymour's account, not only seemed to insinuate an ill-opinion of Ferdinand, which I did not entertain, but for having also given unnecessary pain to my mother. Oh, my dear friend! how often since I lost her have I reproached myself with these little offences! and what I suffered for the more painful trials which I inflicted on her, no words can describe, no regret can atone. Sad state of human blindness, and human infirmity, when one seems conscious of the duties which one owes to a parent, only after one is utterly deprived of the means to atone for the neglect of them!

By what I have said of my jealousy of my mother's admiration of Ferdinand, you will see how much I had forgiven Seymour's imputed ill-conduct, and how little I adhered to my resolution of forgetting him. His letter and his new prize had much contributed to this. The latter was a proof that he had been leading a regular and studious life; and the former declared that my mother and myself were dearer to him than *any one else* in existence, and that our approbation was what he most coveted.—Alas! when one loves, one easily believes what the beloved object asserts.

Still, however, spite of my constancy, De Walden, by his varied talents, his rational pursuits, his instructive conversation, and his active benevolence, gained on my esteem every day. He was constantly occupied himself, and his example stimulated us to equal industry.—Weeks, therefore, fled as if they were days; and I felt raised in my own estimation, by seeing myself the constant object of interest to such a man, and also by feeling myself able to appreciate him.

If Seymour had not been able to write elegant prose, and gain prizes, my constancy would have been in great danger. But as it was, there was intellectuality on both sides; and I had only to weigh talent against strength of mind and extensive information, throwing a great many pleasant make-weights beside into the scale with the first.

My feelings toward Seymour were now called into fresh vigour by a letter from him, informing my mother that instead of having a monument made on purpose for his beloved parent, which would not have been ready for a considerable time, he had purchased one which had been nearly finished for a gentleman who died before it was completed, and who had intended it for his wife, and which the sculptor had been desired by the heir-at-law not to trouble himself to complete.

This monument Pendarves said had met all his ideas of simple and classical beauty, and it would soon be ready for the inscription. This, he added, he had also enclosed for the approbation of my mother and "his cousin Helen," as he called me; considering the former as the representative of his mother, and *me* as the only woman after her whom he wished to consult on any of his plans.

We were excessively affected at the receipt of this letter; and De Walden, who was present, appeared distressed at the sight of our emotion. "What do you think of the inscription, my dear!" asked my mother.

"Ask Mr. De Walden what he thinks of it," I replied.

It was as follows:

HERE LIETH ALL THAT WAS MORTAL
OF
THE LADY HELEN PENDARVES.
READER,
PITY ONLY HER SURVIVORS.

On the reverse side were to be the following words:—

THIS MONUMENT
IS ERECTED TO HER MEMORY
AS A TOKEN OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE,
BY HER ONLY CHILD,
WHOSE PROUDEST BOAST IT WILL ALWAYS BE,
THAT HE WAS
THE SON OF SUCH A WOMAN.

As I expected, he exclaimed in its praise; and as he was a great *theorizer*, he added much that delighted me, and much that consequently made my mother uncomfortable.

"It is," cried he, "simple and comprehensive. Oh! I must know him: simple virtues, simple manners, and simple heart. Pompous writers not much real feeling—not *true*. I must know Pendarves; a good son makes a good friend, good every thing. When shall I see him?"

My mother looked grave, and I saw that the observant eye of De Walden remarked our contrary emotions with surprise, if not with uneasiness.

"Then, I may tell Pendarves that you like the inscription; may I, Helen?" said my mother.

"Oh yes, that it is every thing I could wish;" and she retired to write.

When she returned, it was evident that she had been weeping violently; and De Walden, without saying a word, took her hand and pressed it respectfully to his lips.

This action, though it was at once feeling and affectionate, displeased me; for it seemed to my oblique manner of viewing such things, an injury to Pendarves, and in no very pleasant disposition of mind I left the room. Nor can I doubt but that my absence gave my mother an

opportunity of telling De Walden all the circumstances of our situation with Seymour; for on my rejoining them I found my mother looking agitated, though also much pleased, and De Walden dejected, abstracted, and silent. Need I add that I had long since had the pain of discovering that he had conceived an attachment for me?

You may easily believe that this letter from Seymour, and my mother's assurance that he would certainly come to see the monument put up, did not tend to further the suit which I foresaw in process of time would be urged to me by De Walden. But the monument was sent down and erected, and yet Pendarves did not arrive. Consequently we thought he would not come at all; still, as precaution is wisdom, my mother with much earnestness conjured me to pledge my solemn word to her, that if he came I would not converse with him alone, should he be ever so desirous of an interview, and that I would avoid him when he called at our house. This was a trial of my filial duty for which I was not prepared, but my mother was so bent on carrying her point, and she so solemnly expressed her conviction that his conduct when in London was not amended, that I gave at last the promise which she requested.

"Now then," said I to myself, "I hope poor Seymour will *not* come down."

Lady Helen's monument was placed next that of her husband, on which, by desire of Lord Seymour, an account of the two families and of the manner of his death, had been engraved in an ostentatious manner. Consequently it had not been necessary for Seymour to give any additional details. My mother likewise had found herself at liberty, when she hung up a beautiful tablet to the memory of her husband, to confine herself to the simplicity which she loved, and these last furnished a curious contrast to the pompous copiousness of the first.

Still it was not to enjoy the superiority of my mother's and Seymour's taste, that I now so often visited the church, and resumed the custom which I had adopted in America, of strewing the graves I honoured with flowers. Oh no! it was because the *mother of Seymour Pendarves* and the *dearest friend of my youth* slept beneath that spotless marble; and I not only gratified my own feelings, but was sure my tribute would be gratifying to those of Pendarves.

Of *his* father I had *no* recollection, and of *my own* not sufficient to make such a tribute, had I paid it to him, more than an act of coldly remembered duty; but my whole heart was interested when I performed it in honour of Lady Helen; and the chill and colourless marble looked warm and glowing, from the profusion of blooming flowers which I loved to scatter on it.

One morning, after offering, as usual, my tribute on this precious monument, and while kneeling beside it, a deep sigh startled me, and I beheld Seymour Pendarves, who had entered at another door, standing in pleased contemplation of me; but the view which I allowed myself of him was short indeed; my promise to my mother forcibly recurred to my mind, and the shriek of surprise and even of alarm which I uttered on beholding him so unexpectedly, was succeeded by my flying with the speed of phrensy to the door behind me, before Seymour, thunder-struck, mortified, and overcome by my seeming terror on observing him, could recover himself sufficiently to prevent or overtake me.

Alas! by the beating of my heart, and the trembling of my whole frame, I knew too well that on hiding myself from him depended my only chance of keeping my promise. I therefore took refuge in a cottage, the owner of which was well known to me, instead of hastening home along the park, where he must with ease have overtaken me. Accordingly, I followed a sharp turning which led through a little lane to the cottage, and making my way through the first room into the back one, I threw myself on a bed, trembling and breathless.

"What is the matter, my dear young lady?" cried the cottager.

"Ask no questions, but shut the door," was my answer.

She obeyed me, and I listened for several minutes for the sound of rapid footsteps, but in vain. I felt mortified at finding that Seymour did not trouble himself to pursue me; still I dared not go home, lest I should meet him on my road. I was therefore obliged to tell the cottager that I had a particular reason for wishing to avoid seeing Mr. Pendarves, and I would thank her to watch, if she could do it unsuspected, for his quitting the church, and inform me which way he went.

"Yes, yes," replied the woman, shaking her head, "he shall not see you if I can help it; for though to be sure I hear he is very good to the poor, folks say he is but a wild one, and they do say—"

Here, with an agonizing heart, and a gesture of indignant impatience, I bade her begone and do as I desired. When she had disappeared, I clasped my hands together convulsively. I sobbed aloud in the anguish of a wounded spirit; "And can it be," I cried, "that he whose sweet and pensive countenance so full of mournful tenderness I have just gazed upon for a moment, and shall never be able to forget again; can he be a man whose notoriously profligate habits make him the theme of abuse to a person like this?" No; there is not one pang in the catalogue of human suffering so acute as that which the heart feels from the consciousness of the decided depravity of a being tenderly beloved.

The woman on her return told me, "Mr. Pendarves was certainly seeking me; that he had, on leaving the church, looked round, and then ran several yards at full speed down the park, after which he stopped and she thought it probable that he would soon be past the front window, but she would look out and see." She did so, and having told me in a whisper, adding that "through a hole in the little muslin curtain I could see him without being seen," I was weak enough to take

advantage of the opportunity. He walked dejectedly and with folded arms; the glow on his cheek, which the sight of me had deepened, was now succeeded by a deadly paleness; and I felt a bitterness which not even my sense of his errors could assuage, that he was wretched, and that I had made him so. My spy watched him into his own house, and only then I ventured to return to mine. I must say that I look back on this morning, spite of the sufferings which I endured, with much self-satisfaction, as I had completely acted up to the dictates of filial duty under the strongest temptation of disobeying them, as my mother was gone with De Walden to spend the day from home; and had I not conscientiously avoided Seymour, I might even without any positive infringement of duty, have exposed myself to the risk of seeing him undisturbed by her presence. Happily, however, my principles were too firm to allow me to be satisfied with this subterfuge, and, as I before said, I recall this day with satisfaction.

Every hour I expected that Seymour would call, but he did not come: however, I saw his servant ride up to the gate, deliver a note, and wait for an answer. I gave it verbally to my own maid. It was, that Mrs. Pendarves was gone out for the whole day. Shall I confess that I *hoped* Seymour would, on hearing this, make an attempt to see me, though I was resolved to refuse him attendance; and I was *mortified* that he did not? Just before I expected my mother and De Walden would return, I saw Seymour's servant come to the door again, and deliver another note, as it seemed; but when it was brought into the room, I found it was a letter to me! I was at once relieved, agitated, miserable and delighted; yet my hand trembled so much I thought I should never be able to open the letter. The following were its contents:—

"When this letter reaches you, Miss Pendarves, I shall be at a distance from that scene which to me can now never again be a home, but which is endeared to me by such tender recollections, that not even by the miserable ones which now must succeed to them can they be ever effaced.

"Oh, my beloved mother! could you have believed that your son could be refused admittance within the doors of your dearest friend, and forbidden even to speak to the playfellow and companion of his childhood, and the once appointed sharer of his heart and his fortunes? Could you have thought that the friend who adored you would have gone from home purposely to avoid him, and to avoid his just reproaches; because, without any *new* offence on his part, she had not only resolved never to allow him to address her daughter, but had pledged that daughter's hand, as he is informed, to another? And yet her parting words were, 'Your marriage with Helen depends wholly on yourself!' These words I never have forgotten; they regulated my conduct, they gave strength to my resolutions; I came hither full of hope, and I go hence overwhelmed with despair. For my claims, claims which I have *never resigned*, have been disregarded, and Helen will be the wife of a stranger, the acquaintance of yesterday!

"Nay more, at sight of me, Helen herself, the conscious Helen, fled as from a pestilence! And at what a moment too, when I had surprised her in an office the most flattering to your memory, and the most precious to my heart!

"Cruel Helen! what have you done? and what have *I* done to be so treated? Surely it was from your mother herself that I should first have heard of your intended marriage. But no: I refused to believe it till your flight and your countenance of terror on seeing me confirmed the horrible truth.

"But though you might not be able to tell it me yourself, why did Mrs. Pendarves avoid me? why, when I wrote to tell her I was coming for a single day, did she not make a point of seeing me either at her own house or at mine? But I will not detain you much longer from your attention to the happy stranger.

"Oh, Helen! had you continued to encourage my hopes, I might have been a happiness to myself and an ornament to society. But now—yes, now, it will be well if I am not a disgrace to it. But why do I continue to write? Shall I tell you, Helen? It is because I feel that I am addressing you for the *last time*; for the wife of the Count De Walden must not, I know, receive letters from

"SEYMOUR PENDARVES."

Though I now think, and you will probably think so too, that this letter was written full as much from the head as from the heart, you will not wonder that it bent me to the earth in agony; and that when my mother entered the hall on her return, she heard my voice uttering the tones of loud lamentation, and found me in the arms of the terrified servants. Never have I since suffered myself to be so weakly overpowered. I try to excuse such weakness by the state of my health at the time. Indisposition, and a tendency to a severe feverish cold, had prevented me from accompanying my mother and De Walden. Nor did the sudden surprise of seeing Pendarves steady my nerves, or decrease my fever; but these circumstances prepared the way for the letter to affect me as it did, and to excuse in some measure the state in which my mother beheld me.

An open letter near me, in the hand-writing of Pendarves, accounted for all that she saw. I was become more composed, though I did not speak, and she then eagerly inquired, but she soon desisted, to express her surprise at the charge of having gone out purposely to avoid him; for no such letter had ever reached her: in consequence of some accident it did not arrive till the next day. She declared she could not sleep till she had written to Seymour to exonerate herself from so heavy a charge. I wished to say, "and to assure him, I hope, that I am not engaged to De

Walden, that, on the contrary, he is not even a declared lover:" but I *dared* not say this; and my mother read on—but she read hastily, and wished, I saw, to conceal from me the painful emotions which the letter occasioned her. She therefore insisted on my forgetting these ill-founded reproaches, as she called them; she then left me, to write to Seymour.

The next morning Seymour's servant came to say, he was going to rejoin his master, and wished to know if we had any commands for him. To him, therefore, was consigned the exculpatory letter. But of this I had no knowledge at the time; for when my mother and the servant entered the room next day, they found me in all the restlessness of fast-increasing illness, and my mother, before night, was assured by the medical attendants, that I was suffering under a very formidable attack of the scarlet fever.

For three days and nights my life was despaired of; and as, according to the merciful dispensations of Providence, "good always springs from evil," my mother learnt to know, from the danger of her only child, that life was not so valueless to her, as she was sometimes disposed to think it. But hope succeeding to fear, on the fourth morning from my seizure I was pronounced out of danger. Yet a cloud, and that a dark one, still hung over my mother's prospects; for I had named Seymour in my delirium, in such terms as convinced her that he was ever uppermost in my mind, and that my illness had been the consequence of misery endured on his account.

De Walden, during this time, was in a state of painful anxiety. Scarcely could he be prevailed upon to keep out of the infected chamber; his nights were never once passed in bed, till I was declared to be in safety; and on my recovery, I had to experience the mortifying necessity of owing gratitude where I believed that I could never make an adequate return of affection.

Well, I recovered, though I remained for many weeks thin, languid, and afflicted with the disagreeable local complaints which often attend on the subsiding of a fever like mine, particularly inflammations of the eyelid, and I could not bear for some time to have my eyes uncovered. During this period of suffering, De Walden devoted his whole time to amusing me. He read to me while I reclined upon the sofa, and I forgot my complaints while listening to his intelligent comments on what he read. It was therefore with considerable concern that I saw him depart for Cambridge, in October; but my concern was joy to his. Never did I see any one more agitated on such an occasion, and scarcely could the presence of my mother restrain the declaration of love which hovered on his lips, and which I dreaded to hear! but he did restrain it; for he had promised her that he would do so, on her assurance that the time was not come for its being favourably received.

At Christmas he returned to us, and the surprise which he showed at sight of me, convinced us of the great change which had taken place in my appearance, in consequence, as is sometimes the case at my age, (for I was not yet seventeen,) of a severe fever. I was become taller by several inches; that is, I had become from five feet five, full five feet eight, and from my upright carriage, as I have heard you remark, I look considerably taller. But I am quite sure, that had the attachment of De Walden been founded on my personal appearance, it would, during his stay with us, have completely vanished; for my eyes were inflamed, my *embonpoint* had not increased, and my colour was not only gone, but my complexion looked thick as well as pale. I perceived, however, no diminution in the ardent devotion which his manner expressed, and I sighed while I thought, that had Seymour Pendarves seen me, he perhaps would not have remained so constant.

What an argument was this belief for me to try to conquer my attachment! But certain it is, that the example of Lady Helen and my mother influenced me even unconsciously to myself, and that I considered eternal constancy as praiseworthy, and not blameable. Love had led my mother and my admirable friend and mistress to leave their parents and country, and they had wept the loss of husbands thus exclusively beloved, in sacred singleness of attachment. It was in vain, therefore, that my mother told me love was to be conquered, and that she insinuated it was even indelicate to pine after an object who was perhaps unworthy, and certainly negligent, if not faithless. Her example, as I before said, had raised the passion in my estimation; the object of my love was one on whom my eyes had first opened, one who was associated with my earliest and happiest recollections, one too, who, she must remember, had at an early age saved my life at the hazard of his own (a story I shall tell by-and-by); and I could not but think she wished me to forget Seymour, chiefly because she preferred Ferdinand. I believe I have forgotten to mention, that Seymour Pendarves went abroad as soon as he left our village, and that he did not receive my mother's explanatory letter till several months after it was written.

In January, De Walden returned to college, and I was still so unwell, that my mother wished me to change the air; and as business required her to undertake a journey, we set off, in February, on a tour.

I have never, I believe, during my whole narrative, mentioned some of my relations more than once, and this has been from a wish of not encumbering it with unnecessary characters. The uncle with whom my mother had lived previously to her marriage, who occasionally spent months at our house, and whom we visited in return, died suddenly, at a very advanced age, during my illness. It was this event which called my mother, as one of the executors, as well as residuary legatee, from her home.

The weather was cold, dry, February weather, and the brightness of the road, from the effect of frost and sun, was so painful to my eyes, that my mother resolved to travel all night, and repose in the day, after our second stage from London; and we set off for Oxford at one in the morning. From the ruggedness of the road, however, and the care which our coachman always took of our

horses, we had full leisure to dwell on the possibility of our being robbed; when about three in the morning, two horsemen rode past the carriage, and one of them looked into the window next my mother, which she had just let down: but he rode on, and we were grasping each other's hand, in terrified silence, when he came back again, and desired the postilions to stop. Our footman, who was on the box, was disposed to resist this command; when a faint voice, the voice of the other gentleman, who now rode slowly up, conjured them to stop for mercy's sake, for they were not highwaymen: the first now came up to the window, and begged to be heard.

He and his friend, he said, were Oxford students, who had been to London, without leave; and if they were missing another morning at chapel, they were liable to a punishment which they wished to avoid; but they should certainly have reached Oxford in excellent time, had not his companion been taken extremely ill; and unless we would take him in, he must stop at the next house, at whatever risk.

You may suppose that my mother did not hesitate: she instantly desired the footman to assist the gentleman into the coach, and mount his horse—a plan which was thankfully acceded to. His companion instantly galloped off at full speed for Oxford.

The invalid, unable to speak, sank back exhausted in one corner, and seemed most thankful, though he spoke almost inaudibly, for the use of my mother's smelling-bottle.

The weather had now experienced such a change, that the frost was gone; though the night was so dark, that the stranger could not distinguish our faces, nor we his. Indeed, he appeared to be insensible of external objects, and heedless of sounds, for he did not always answer my mother's kind inquiries.

I, meanwhile, was as silent as the invalid, and sat back in the coach, to indulge in the feelings which agitated me at the idea, that before long I should be in the very place which probably contained Pendarves, but without the remotest chance of seeing him. At length, we heard a village-clock strike four, and day began to dawn: my mother let down the glass, to feel, for a while, the refreshing breeze of morning. As she did this, desiring me to keep my thick veil wrapped close round my face, for fear of cold, the invalid said he would put his head out of the window, for he thought that the air would revive him. My mother drew back to make room for him; when, as the rays of the red and yellow dawn fell on his wan face, she recognized in this object of her kindness, Seymour Pendarves himself.

He, too, as her veil was thrown back, knew her at the same moment; and faintly ejaculating—

"Is it possible?" he turned his eyes eagerly toward me, then seized both her hands, and resting them on her knees, buried his face in them, and burst into tears; while, with the hand next me, he grasped mine, which was involuntarily extended towards him.

A painful silence ensued—the result of most uncomfortable feelings, which, on the side of Pendarves, were accompanied by the most distressing consciousness; for we had as it were detected him in a breach of college rules; and, but for us, his irregularity of conduct might, perhaps, have exposed him to the disgrace of expulsion; so much for that amendment on which *alone* depended his union with me. That was an event, however, which, though we knew it not, he had ceased to make probable; for the report of my engagement to De Walden was still current, wherever we were known; and if he had not known that Mr. Pendarves, the head of the family, knew nothing of this intended marriage, Seymour would have been convinced it was a fact *himself*.

My mother's tears now fell silently down her cheek, and in spite of herself she pressed her forehead on the head of Seymour, as it still rested on her knees. Certain it is, that she loved him with much of a mother's tenderness—loved him also because he resembled his father and mine—and loved him still more because he was all that remained to her of her ever-regretted friend. The opposition to our union, therefore, was the strongest proof possible of the strength of her principles, and of her affection for me; for, though she thus loved, she rejected him, because she was sure that he was not likely to make her daughter happy.

My mother was the first to break silence. In a voice of great feeling, she said, "Seymour! unhappy young man! why do I see you *here*, infringing college rules? and why do I see you thus? Have you been ill long? have you had no advice?" It was now quite day; and, as he raised his head, the wild wanness of his look was terrible to us both, and it was with difficulty that I could prevent myself from sobbing audibly, while I anxiously expected his answer.

"Spare me! spare me!" cried he mournfully, "a painful confession of follies."

"Did not business carry you to London, Seymour?"

"No—nor kept me there. It was the search of pleasure; and I have scarcely been in bed for three nights. Yet no; let me do myself some little justice: I was unhappy, and I *am* unhappy. By denying me all hope of Helen, you made me desperate, and I fled to riotous living, to get away from myself; therefore, do not reproach me; I am quite punished enough by seeing before me the intended wife of the Count de Walden—curses on the name! Tell me," cried he wildly, seeing that my mother hesitated to speak, "am I not right? Is not my Helen, as I once thought her, betrothed to De Walden?"

"Oh, no—no!" cried I, eagerly, and I caught my mother's eye rather sternly fixed upon me; but I regarded it not, for I felt at the very bottom of my heart the sudden change from misery to joy

which Seymour's face now exhibited. He could not speak—his heart was too full; but leaning back, overcome both with physical and moral exhaustion, he nearly fainted away. He was soon, however, roused to new energy by the indignation with which he listened to what my mother felt herself called upon to say. I shall not enter into a detail of her observations; suffice, that she candidly told him her objections to his being allowed to address me remained in full force, as did her ardent wish that I should marry De Walden, who had offered himself as my lover, and who (she was certain) would as surely make me happy in marriage, as he would make me *miserable*.

When she had ended, he thanked her for her candour, but coldly reminded her that he had always said he would never take a refusal from any lips but mine—and he retained his resolution.

"And now," said he, "the opportunity is arrived. Helen! such as I am—not worthy of you, I own, except as far as tender and constant love can make me so—I offer myself to your acceptance. Speak—Yes or No—and speak as your heart dictates!"

I remained silent for a minute; then faltered out, sighing deeply as I spoke, "I have no will—can have no will—but my mother's."

"Enough!" replied he, in a tone and with a look which seemed to me to be the climax of despair. "Hark!" cried he, "the Oxford clocks are striking six—why do I linger here? for here I am sure I have no longer any business!"

He let down the glass, and desired the postilions to stop, while the footman rode up to the door. This little exertion seemed too much for him, and he sunk back quite exhausted, while my mother tried to take one of his hands.

"Pshaw!" cried he, throwing her hand from him—"give me love or give me hate; no half-measures for me; nor hope, when you and your daughter have given me my death-blow, that I will accept of *emollients*. I thank you, madam, as I would a *stranger*, for your *courtesy* in admitting me here, and I wish you both good morning."

Again his strength failed him, and he was forced to wipe the dews of weakness from his forehead.

"Go, I must—even if I die in the effort!" he then exclaimed.

I could not bear this; and while my mother herself, greatly affected, held me back, I tried to catch him by the arm; and, in a voice which evinced the deep feeling of my soul, I exclaimed, "Stay, dear Seymour! you are not fit to go—you are not, indeed!" But I spoke in vain: he mounted his horse, assisted by the servant, while I broke from my mother, and stretched out my clasped hands to him in fruitless supplication; then giving me a look of such mixed expression, that I could not exactly say whether it most pained or gratified me, he was out of sight in a moment, while I looked after him till I could see him no longer; and even then I still looked, in hopes of seeing him again. I did see him again, just as we had entered Oxford, and were passing Magdalen; he *stood at the gate*; he had, therefore, *seen* my long, earnest gaze, as if in search of him; and though I felt confused, I also felt comforted by it. In another moment we were near him, and his eyes met mine with an expression mournful, tender, and I thought, grateful, too, for the interest which I took in him. He kissed his hand to me, and then disappeared within the gates.

"Helen!" said my mother, "I meant to have stopped here, to refresh the horses and ourselves; but after what I have seen this morning, I shall proceed immediately."

She left the footman, however, behind, to bring us word the next day how Mr. Pendarves was. Oh! how I loved her for this kind attention! But then she was a rare instance of the union of strong feelings with unbending principle.

Methinks I hear you say, "I hope you were now convinced that Seymour's attachment as well as Ferdinand's, was founded on too good a basis to be shaken by your altered looks."

No, indeed, I was not; for so conscious was I that my looks were altered, I *never once* lifted up my veil before Pendarves. I dare say, both he and my mother imputed this to the wish of hiding my emotion, whereas it was in fact only to hide my inflamed eyes, and my *ugliness*. But what a degrading confession for a heroine to make! to plead guilty of having bad eyes and a plain face! It is as bad as Amelia's broken nose. But *n'importe*: my eyes, like her nose, will get well again; and, like her, I shall come out a complete beauty, when no one could expect it.

We awaited with great impatience the return of the servant, from whom we learnt that Mr. Pendarves had been seized with an alarming fit on leaving the chapel, and was pronounced to be in an inflammatory fever.

"O my dear mother!" cried I, wildly, "he has no one to nurse him now that loves him!"

"But he *shall* have," she replied; and in another hour we were on our road to Oxford. My mother insisted on being admitted to the bedside of the unconscious sufferer, who in his delirium was ever blaming the cruelty of *her* who was now watching and weeping beside his pillow. Long was his illness, and severe his suffering; but he struggled through; and the first object whom he beheld on recovering his recollection, was my mother leaning over him with the anxiety of a real parent. Never could poor Seymour recall this moment of his life without tears of grateful tenderness.

He was too much disappointed, however, to find that her resolution not to allow him to address me remained in full force; for the circumstances on which it was founded were added to, rather

than diminished. Nor could his assertion, that his dissipation was owing to the despair into which she had plunged him, at all excuse him in her eyes, for she could not admit that any sorrow could be an excuse for error.

This, indeed, far from its being a motive to move her heart in his favour, closed it the more against him; as it proved she thought that from his weakness of character he never could deserve to be intrusted with the happiness of her child.

Bitter, therefore, was his mortification, when, on expressing the hopes to which her kindness had given birth, she assured him that her sentiments remained unaltered.

"Then, madam," cried he, "why were you so cruel as to save my life?"

"Young man," she gravely replied, "was it not my duty to try to save your life, that you might try to amend it? Were you prepared to meet that terrible tribunal from which even the most perfect shrink back appalled?"

On his complete recovery, my mother and I proceeded to the house of my uncle, now become our property; and thence we returned home. The following vacation Seymour finally left college, and again went abroad.

He wrote a farewell letter to my mother, as eloquent as gratitude and even filial affection could make it: she wept over it and exclaimed,

"Oh, that the generous-hearted creature who wrote this should not be all I wish him! He is like a beautiful but unsupported edifice, fair to behold, but dangerous to lean against!"

There was one part of the letter, however, which my mother did not understand: I fancied that I did, though I did not own it. He assured her, that in spite of everything he carried more hope away in his heart than he had ever yet known: hope, and even a *precious conviction* which he *had never known before*, and which he was sure his cousin Helen would wish him to possess, as it would be to him the *strongest shield* against *temptation*.

"My dear," said my mother, after long consideration, "how stupid I have been not to understand this sooner! He certainly means that he is become very religious: and that this hope, this sweet conviction, are faith and another world. Dear Seymour, I am so glad! for though I do not choose you should marry a Methodist, and one extreme is to me as unpleasant as another, still I believe Methodists to be a very happy people; and I hope Seymour, for his own sake, will not change again."

I smiled, but said nothing; for I put a very different interpretation on his words. As it appeared to me, his *hope* and *conviction* were that he possessed *my love*, and that my compliance with my mother's will was wholly against my own; for I recollected the tone in which I had replied to his question concerning my engagement to De Walden, "Oh, no! no!" and also my scream of agony in spite of his alarming weakness when he persevered in leaving us, and the anxiety with which I looked at him at the gates of Magdalen. Yes, when we exchanged that look, I felt that our hearts understood each other, and I was sure that the shield to which Seymour alluded was his conviction of my love.

But alas! he was absent—De Walden was present. He came to us at the beginning of the long vacation, and was to remain with us till he returned to college.

My mother now urged me to admit the addresses of De Walden, showing me at the same time a letter from his uncle, in which he expressed his earnest desire that his nephew should be a successful suitor, and offering to make a splendid addition to his fortune whenever he should become my husband. In short, could the prospect of rank and fortune, could manly beauty, superior sense, unspotted virtues, and uncommon acquirements, have made me unfaithful to my first attachment, unfaithful I should soon have become; but though the attentions of De Walden could not annihilate, they certainly weakened it. No wonder that they should do so, when I was so little sure of the stability of Seymour's affection, that I was fearful it would be weakened by any change in my external appearance, and as I had often heard him say, he did not admire tall women, I own I was weak enough to be uneasy at the growth consequent upon my fever; and I was glad, when we met in the coach, not only that my veil concealed my altered looks, but that, as I was seated, he could not discover my almost may-pole height.

De Walden, on the contrary, admired tall women; and declared that I had now reached the exact height which gave majesty to the female figure without diminishing its grace; and as I really thought myself too tall, his praise (for flattery it was not) was particularly welcome to me. Whatever was the cause, whether I liked De Walden so well, that I liked Seymour so much less as to cease to be fretted by his absence, I cannot tell; but certain it is that I recovered my bloom, and that from the increase of my *embonpoint*, my mother feared I should become too fat for a girl of seventeen: my spirits too recovered all their former gaiety, so that October, the time for the departure of De Walden, arrived before I was conscious that he had been with us half his accustomed time.

My mother now naturally enough augured well for the success of his suit; and I owned that I was no longer averse to listen to his love, but that I would on no account engage myself to him till I was *quite sure* I had conquered my attachment to Pendarves.

This was certainly conceding a great deal, and De Walden left us full of hope for the first time;

while I, who felt much of my affection for him vanish when I no longer listened to the deep persuasive tones of his voice, should have repented having gone so far, had I not seen happiness beaming in my beloved mother's face.

At Christmas De Walden came to us again, and I then found that in such cases it is impossible (to use an expressive phrase) "*to say A without saying B*;" I had gone so far that I was expected to go further; and but for the secret misgivings of my own heart, and the firm dictates of my own judgment, De Walden would have returned to college in January my betrothed husband. But, though we had not received any tidings from Pendarves, and my mother felt assured of his inconstancy, I persevered firmly in my resolution not to *engage* myself till I *had seen him again*, and could be assured, by seeing him with indifference, that my heart had really changed its master.

You will wonder, perhaps, how a man of Ferdinand's delicacy could wish to accept a heart which had been so long wedded to another, and that other a living object. But my mother had convinced herself, and had no difficulty in convincing him, that I was deceived in the strength of my former attachment; that she had originally, though unconsciously, directed my thoughts to him; that, like a romantic girl, I had thought it pretty to be in love, and that my fancied passion had been irritated by obstacles; but that, when once *his* wife, I should find that *he alone* had ever been the real possessor of my affections.

It is curious to observe how easily even the most sensible persons can forget, and believe, according to their wishes. My mother had absolutely forgotten the proofs of my strong attachment to Seymour, which she had once so much deplored. She forgot my illness, which if not caused was increased by his letter of reproach; she forgot the tell-tale misery which I had exhibited on the road to Oxford, and she did not read in the firmness with which I still persisted to see Seymour again, a secret suspicion of still lingering love.

But the crisis of our fates was fast approaching: I received an invitation to spend the months of May and June in London, with a friend who had once resided near us, and who had gone to reside in the metropolis.

I felt a great desire to accept this invitation; and my mother kindly permitted me to go, but declined going herself, saying that it was time *I* should learn to live without *her*, and *she* without *me*. Accordingly, for the first time we were separated. But this separation was soon soothed to me by the charms of the life which I was leading. I was a new face: I was only seventeen, and I was *said* to be the heiress of considerable property. This, you know, was an exaggeration; my fortune was handsome, but not very large: however, I was followed and courted, but none of my admirers were in my opinion at all equal to Seymour or De Walden: they gratified my vanity, but they failed to touch my heart.

One day at an exhibition, I met a newly-married lady, who when single had been staying in the neighbourhood of my mother's uncle during our last visit, and was much admired both by my mother and myself. This meeting gave us great pleasure, and she hoped I would come and see her at her lodgings. I promised that I would.

"But there is nothing like the time present: will you go home with me now, and spend a quiet day? You must come again when my husband is at home and I have a party; but he dines out to-day, and I shall be alone till evening."

"But I am not dressed."

"Oh! I can send for your things and your maid; and such an opportunity as this of telling you all about my love and my marriage may never occur again."

I was as eager to hear as she was to tell; my friend consented to part with me, and I accompanied her home.

In the afternoon while we were expecting two or three ladies of her acquaintance, and were preparing to walk with them in the park, my friend received a little note from her husband.

"That is so like Ridley," said she. "However, this is an improvement; for he often goes out and invites half-a-dozen people to dinner without giving me any notice: but now he has only invited one man to supper, and has sent to let me know they are coming. His name I see is the same as yours, Seymour Pendarves: is he a cousin of yours?"

"What!" cried I, almost gasping for breath, "Seymour Pendarves in England, and coming hither!"

"Yes; but what is the matter, or why are you so agitated?"

"If you please I will go home, I had rather go home."

Mrs. Ridley looked at me with wonder and concern, but she was too delicate to ask me for the confidence which she saw I was not disposed to give. She therefore mildly replied that if I must leave her, she would order her servant to attend me.

A few moments had restored my self-possession: and I thought that as the time was now arrived when I could, by seeing Pendarves, enable myself to judge of the real state of my heart, I should be wrong to run away from the opportunity.

"But pray tell me," said I, "when you expect Mr. Ridley and his friends?"

"Oh not till it is dark, not till near supper-time."

Immediately (I am ashamed of my girlish folly) I had a strong desire to discover whether Seymour would recognise my person, altered as it was in height and in size; and I also wished to get over the first flutter of seeing him without its being perceived by him. In consequence I told Mrs. Ridley that Seymour was my cousin, but that he had not seen me *standing* since I was grown so very tall; and I had a great wish to ascertain whether he would know me. "Therefore," said I, "do not order candles till we have sat a little while."

Mrs. Ridley smiled, fully persuaded that, though I might speak the truth, I did not speak *all* the truth. I was at liberty in the mean time, during our walk in the park, to indulge in reverie, and to try to strengthen my agitated nerves against the approaching interview. But concerning what was I now anxious?—Not so much to ascertain whether I loved *him*, but whether he loved *me*. Alas! this anxiety was a certain proof that he was still the possessor of my heart, and that of course I ought not to be and could not be the wife of De Walden.

Just as we stopped at the door, on our return from our walk, Mr. Ridley was knocking at it, accompanied by Seymour. I felt myself excessively agitated, while I pulled my hat and veil over my face: to avoid a shower, we had crowded into a hackney-coach. Luckily I had not to get out first; but judge how I trembled when I found Seymour's hand presented to assist me. My foot slipped, and if he had not caught me in his arms, I should have fallen. Mrs. Ridley, however, good-naturedly observed, that she had been nearly falling herself, the step was so bad, and her friend *Miss Pen* was also very short-sighted. I now walked up stairs, tottering as I went.

"Fanny," whispered Mr. Ridley to his wife, "who is she?" She told him I was a Miss Pen, and she would tell him more by and by.

"Pray, Fanny, when do you mean to have candles?" said Mr. Ridley.

"Not yet; not till we go to take off our bonnets. I like this light, it is so pleasant to the eyes."

"Yes, and so cheap too," replied her husband. "But I wonder you should like this sort of light, Fanny, for you are far removed yet from that period of life when *le petit jour* is so favourable to beauty: you are still young enough to bear the searching light of broad-eyed day, and so I trust are all the ladies present; though I must own a *veil* is always a suspicious circumstance," he added, coming up to me.

"Yes, yes," said his wife, "I always suspect a veil is worn to conceal something."

"But it may be worn in mercy," he added; "and perhaps it is so here, if I may judge of what is hidden by what is shown: if I may form an opinion indeed from that hand and arm, on which youth and beauty are so legibly written, I—"

Here, confused and almost provoked, I drew on my gloves; and Mrs. Ridley, who loved fun, whispered her husband,

"Do not go on; she is quite ugly, scarred with the confluent small-pox, blear-eyed, and hideous: you will be surprised when you see her face."

She then begged to speak to me; and as I walked across the room in which we sat to join her in the next, I saw Ridley whisper Pendarves.

"May be so," he replied: "but her figure and form are almost the finest I ever saw."

"And yet I am so very tall," said I to myself with a joy that vibrated through my frame.

The conversation now became general; and on a lady's being mentioned who had married a second husband before the first had been dead quite a year, Pendarves, to my consternation, began a violent philippic against women, declaring that scarcely one of us was capable of a persevering attachment; that the best and dearest of husbands might be forgotten in six months; and that those men only could expect to be happy who laid their plans for happiness independently of woman's love.

It is strange, but true, that the indignation which this speech excited in me enabled me to conquer at once the agitation which had hitherto kept me silent. Coming hastily forward, I exclaimed, while he rose respectfully,

"Is it for you, Mr. Seymour Pendarves, to hold such language as this? Have you forgotten Lady Helen, your own blessed mother, and her friend and yours?"

So saying, while he stood confounded, self-judged, and full of wonder, for the voice and manner were mine, but the height and figure were no longer so,—I left the room; and a violent burst of tears relieved my oppressed heart.

Mrs. Ridley then rang for a candle and considerably left me to myself.

Oh! the flutter of that moment when I re-entered the drawing-room, which I found brilliantly lighted up! Seymour, who had I found now doubted, and now believed, the evidence of his ears in opposition to that of his sight, was standing at the window; but he turned hastily round at my entrance, and our eyes instantly met.

"Helen!" exclaimed he, springing forward to meet me, while my hand was extended toward him;

and I believe my countenance was equally encouraging. That yielded hand was pressed by turns to his lips and his heart; but still we neither of us spoke, and Seymour suddenly disappeared.

Mr. Ridley, who was that *melancholy* thing to other people a *professed joker*, to my great relief (as it enabled me to recover myself,) now came up to me bowing respectfully, and begged me to veil my face again; for he saw that my excessive ugliness had been too much for his poor friend, and he hoped for his sake, as well as that of the rest of mankind, I would conceal myself from sight.

I told him, when his friend came back I would consider of his proposition, and if he approved it I would veil directly.

Before Seymour returned, I asked Mr. Ridley whether he suspected who his presuming monitor was.

"Pray, madam," he archly replied, "say that word again. What are you to Mr. Pendarves?"

"I said 'Monitor.'"

"Oh—*monitor!* I thought you were *something* to him, but did not exactly *know what*. No wonder he was so alarmed at sight of you, for monitors, I believe, have a right to chastise their pupils; and I begin now to fear he will not come back. Do you use the ferule or the rod, Miss Pendarves?"

"You have not yet answered my question, sir!"

"Oh! I forgot. 'Heavens!' cried he, as you closed the door, 'is it possible? Could that be my cousin, Helen Pendarves? Yes, it could be no other; and yet'—Is that like him, madam?"

"Oh! very!"

"Well, I, in the simplicity of my heart, replied, 'your cousin she may be; but my wife told me her name was Pen.'

"Oh yes, it must be Helen—it was her own sweet voice and manner!"

"She is given to scolding, then—is she?" said I.

"Oh!" said he, 'she is!' But I will spare your blushes, madam; though I must own that I could not believe you *were* the lady in question, because my wife told me you were hideous to behold, and *he* said you were a beauty: besides, when he last saw you, he added, you were thin and short; but then he eagerly observed, that a year and a half made a great difference sometimes, and you had not met during that period. But here comes the gentleman to answer your questions himself. What I further said did not at all please him."

"No! what was it, sir?"

"That, if you were indeed Miss Helen Pendarves, you were a great nuisance, for that you had won and broken at least a dozen hearts; but that it was a comfort to know you would soon be removed from the power of doing further mischief, as you were going to be married to a Swiss gentleman, and would soon leave the kingdom."

"And you told him this?" cried I, turning very faint.

"Yes, I did; and he had just turned away from me, when you made your appearance."

Seymour now entered the room; and I was, from this conversation, at no loss to account for the gloom which overspread his countenance, while he hoped Miss Pendarves was well.

"My dear Fanny," said Mr. Ridley, who must have his joke, "I hope you will make proper apologies to this gentleman and me, for having exposed us to such a horrible surprise as the sight of that lady's face has given us. Pray, was this ungenerous plan of concealment Miss Pendarves's or yours?"

"Her's, entirely."

"But what was her motive?"

"She wished to see whether her cousin would know her through her veil."

"Oh! she was acting Clara in the Duenna; you know she plays Don Ferdinand some such trick."

"True; but Ferdinand and Clara were *lovers*, not cousins."

"Cannot cousins be lovers, Fanny?"

Here the entrance of the servant with supper interrupted the conversation, and Seymour and I sat down to it with what appetite we could.

"It is astonishing," said Mr. Ridley, "what use and habit can effect; I have already conquered my horror at sight of your friend's face; and I see Mr. Pendarves has not only done the same, but I suspect he is meditating a drawing of it, to send to the Royal Society, as a *lusus naturæ*."

In spite of himself, Seymour smiled at this speech, and replied, while I looked very foolish, that he was gazing at me with wonder, as he could not conceive how I had gained so many inches in height since he saw me.

"I grew several inches after my fever," I replied.

"Fever? When—where—what fever, Helen? I never heard you were ill."

"Oh yes, I was—and my life was despaired of."

"You in danger, Helen, and I never knew it!"

"It was really very unkind," said Ridley, "to keep such a delightful piece of intelligence from you."

"But *when* was it, dear Helen?"

"When I saw you on the road to Oxford, I was only just recovered."

"Only just recovered! You did not look ill; but I remember you had your veil down, so I really did not see your face."

"So, so; wearing her veil down is a common thing with her—is it? I am glad she is so considerate."

These jokes, however, had their use; for they tended to keep under the indulgence of feelings which required to be restrained in both of us, in the presence of others.

"But, when were you first seized, Helen? and what brought on your fever?" said Seymour, as if urged by some secret consciousness.

You will not wonder that I blushed, and even stammered, as I answered, "I was not quite well when I saw you in the church—and—and——"

"And what?"

"I was seized that night, and when my mother returned, she found me very ill indeed!"

"That night!" Here he started from his seat.

"Ah Fanny!" cried Mr. Ridley, "you *would* buy them! I always objected to them."

"Buy what, my dear Ridley?"

"These chairs; I always said they were such uneasy ones, no one could sit on them long—you see Mr. Pendarves can't endure them."

I was very glad when Seymour sat down again; when he did, he leaned his elbows on the table, and gazed in my face as if he would have read the very bottom of my soul. But hope seemed to have supplanted despair. Mr. Ridley now suddenly rose, and holding his hand to his side, cried, "Oh!" in such a comic, yet pathetic manner, that though his wife really believed he was in pain, she could not help laughing; then, seizing a candle, he went *oh-ing* and limping out of the room, leaning on her arm, and declaring he believed he must go to bed, if we would excuse him.

There was no mistaking his motive, and Seymour was not slow to profit by the opportunity thus good-naturedly offered him.

"Helen!" he exclaimed, seating himself by me, and seizing my hand, "is what I heard true—am I the most wretched of men—is this hand promised to De Walden?"

"No—not yet promised."

"Then you mean to give it to him?"

"Certainly not *now*."

"Why that emphasis on *now*?"

"Because I am sure I do not love him sufficiently."

"And since when have you found this out?"

I did not answer; but my tell-tale silence emboldened him to put his own interpretation on what I had said; and now, for the first time, unrestrained by any unwelcome witness, he passionately pleaded the interests of his own love, and drew from me an open confession of mine. Nor was there long a secret of my heart which was withheld from him; and while he rejoiced over the certainty that his rival's hopes were destroyed by this interview, I rejoiced in hearing that the conviction he had received of my affection for him, had preserved him from temptations to which he would probably otherwise have yielded.

"But they are returning," cried he; "tell me where you are, and promise to see me to-morrow, my own precious Helen! Never, never was I so happy before."

"Nor I," I could have added; but I believe my eyes spoke for me, and I promised to see him the next day at eleven. He had just time to resume his chair when Mr. and Mrs. Ridley returned.

"I have been very unwell," said Ridley, "and am so still; but I would come back, as she would not leave me, because I was sure, what with the uneasy chairs, and Miss Pen's ugly face, you would be so fretted, Mr. Pendarves, that you would never come hither again.

"But then, my dear," said Fanny, 'you forget they are relations, and must love each other.'

"That I deny," said I, 'if they are not both loveable.'

"And then," says she, 'they have not met for so long a time, and have so much to say.'

"I don't believe that," says I: 'if so, they would have taken care to meet sooner'—but pray what has happened to you both since we went away? Well, I declare, such roses on cheeks, and diamonds in eyes! and, I protest, Miss Pen has learnt to look straight-forward, and is all dimples and smiles! and this, too, when, for aught you both knew, I might be dying!"

Seymour and I were now too happy not to be disposed to laugh at any absurdity which Ridley uttered; and never before or since did I pass so merry an evening. Seymour was as gay and delightful as nature intended him to be: you will own that the word "*fascinating*" seemed made on purpose to express him; and I, as he has since told me, appeared to him to exceed in personal appearance that evening (animated as I was with the consciousness of loving and being beloved) all the promises of my early youth; nor could he help saying—

"Really, Helen, I cannot but look at you!"

"That is very evident," observed Ridley.

"Yes, but I mean that I look at her because—because——"

"You cannot help it, and it requires no apology. I have a tendency to the same weakness myself."

"But I mean you are so surprisingly altered—so grown—so——"

"Say no more, my dear sir," cried Ridley, interrupting him, "for it must mortify the young lady to see how much she has outgrown your knowledge and your liking! and she is such a disgrace to your family, that it is a pity there is no chance for her changing *her name*, poor thing! those bleary eyes must prevent that. I see very clearly, indeed, she is likely to die *Helen Pendarves*."

This observation, much to Ridley's sorrow, evidently clouded over the brows of us both; for we both thought of my mother, and I of poor De Walden. But the cloud soon passed away; for we were together, we were assured of each other's love, and *we were happy*.—Nor did we hear the watchman call "past one o'clock," without as much surprise as pain. However, Pendarves walked home with me, and that walk was not less interesting than the evening had been.

But, alas! my mother's image awaited me on my pillow. I could not help mourning over the blighted hopes of De Walden, nor could I drive from my startled fancy the suspicion that I had committed a breach of duty in receiving and returning vows unsanctioned by her permission, or satisfy my conscience that I had done right in allowing him to call on me the next day. But I quieted myself by resolving that I would instantly write to my mother, tell her what had passed, and see Seymour only that once, till she gave me her permission to see him more frequently.

He came at eleven, and I told him what I meant to do. He fully approved, but declared he would not consent to meet evil more than half way, and give up seeing me. On the contrary, he was resolved to see me every day till she came; and as Mr. Pendarves our uncle was just come to his house in town, he meant to tell him how we were situated, and he was very sure that he would approve our meeting as much as possible. On leaving me he proceeded to lay his case before our uncle, while I sat down to write to my mother. It was a long letter bathed with my tears; for was I not now pleading almost for life and death? If I loved Pendarves when my affection was not fed by his professions of mutual love, how must that flame be now increased in fervour, when I had heard him plead his cause two days successively, and had enjoyed with him hours of the tenderest uninterrupted intercourse! Wisely had my mother acted in forbidding us to meet, as she wished to annihilate our partiality; for absence and distance are the best preventives, if not the certain cures of love.

My letter, which was full of passion, regrets, apologies and pity for De Walden, was scarcely finished, when I was told that a gentleman who was going immediately into Warwickshire, and would pass close by my mother's door, would take charge of it. I foolishly confided it to his care; I say "foolishly," because the post was a surer conveyance. However, I could not foresee that this gentleman would fall ill on the road; that he would not deliver my packet till ten days after it was written; and that I was therefore allowed to spend many hours with Pendarves unprohibited; for my uncle approved our meeting, and desired our union, declaring that he had always thought my mother severe in her judgment of his nephew, and that while considering the fancied interests of her own child, she had disregarded his.

"Besides," added he, "I am the head of the family, and I command you to meet as often, and to love as much, as ever you choose."

Alas! I obeyed him only too well, though my judgment was not blinded to the certainty that he had no rights which could invalidate those of my mother; and though I rejoiced at not receiving her command to cease to receive Pendarves, I was beginning to feel uneasy at her silence, when a letter from her reached me, saying, she was on her road to London, where she would arrive that night, and should take up her abode with our friend Mr. Nelson.

Never before had I been parted from my mother, and till I met Pendarves I had longed for her every day during my stay in London; but now, self-reproved and ashamed, I felt that a yet dearer object had acquired possession of my thoughts and wishes, and the once devoted child dreaded, rather than desired, to be re-united to one of the best of mothers.

She came; and we met again, as we had parted, with tears; but the nature of those tears was altered, and neither of us would have liked to analyze the difference.

Long and painful was the conversation we had together that night, before we attempted to sleep. I found my mother fully convinced that there was a necessity for my not marrying De Walden, a necessity of which he was now himself convinced; for she had gone round by Cambridge, in order to see him: but she was not equally convinced that there was a necessity for my marrying Pendarves, as all her objections to that marriage remained in the fullest force.

The next morning she opened her heart on the subject to Mrs. Nelson, who was Seymour's warm advocate, and assured her, that if she made proper inquiries, she would find that the character of Pendarves was universally spoken of as unexceptionable; and that whatever might have been the errors of *the youth*, they were forgotten by other people in the merits of *the man*.

"Ay, but a mother's heart can't forget them," she exclaimed, "when her child's happiness is at stake!" and she begged to have no private conversation with Seymour till the next day. In consequence, she saw him only in a party at my uncle's, where she was struck with the great improvement both of his face and person, for both now wore the appearance of health; and the countenance which, when she last surveyed it, bore the stamp of sickness and sorrow, now beamed with all the vivacity of youth and hope.

The party was a mixed one of cards and dancing; and as she gazed on Pendarves when he stood talking to me, he recalled forcibly to her mind the image of my father, as she first beheld him in a similar scene, four-and-twenty years before.

The next day Seymour obtained the desired interview with my mother. She brought forward his former errors in array against him, his debts, his dissipations, and his love of play; and though she expressed her readiness to believe him reformed, still, as he ingenuously admitted that his improvement was chiefly owing to my influence over him, she could not deem it sufficiently well-founded to obviate her objections; and he was still pleading, and she objecting, when Mr. Pendarves insisted on entering. Mrs. Nelson and I accompanied him.

"I tell you what, niece," said he, "you do not use this young man well: you bring up a parcel of old tales, and dwell upon the naughtiness of them, as if he was the only young man who ever erred. I know all his sins; he has made me his confessor. In the affair to which you allude he was much more to be pitied than censured, and yielded at seventeen to temptations which might have overcome seven-and-thirty. Since then he has distinguished himself at college: he has paid all his old debts, and incurred no new ones; he has steered clear of the quicksands of foreign travel, shielded (as he says) by the hopes of one day possessing Helen, and by the idea that he was the object of her love; and what would you have more? Besides, Helen tells me he once saved her life."

"I did so," cried Seymour, eagerly seizing her hands, "I did so, and you promised to be for ever grateful!"

"How was it, my dear nephew?"

"I will tell you, sir," cried I, gathering hope from my mother's agitation. "It was at the Isle of Wight, soon after we came to England: he and I were playing on the shore, and I, not knowing the tide was coming in, paddled across a run of water to what I called a pretty little island, and there amused myself with picking up sea-weed, when the sea flowed in, and he saw that I must perish; no one was near us. Luckily, he spied a boat on the dry land, which, with all his boyish strength, he pushed off to my assistance, and jumped into it. In one minute more it floated towards me, just as my cries had reached the ears of my mother, who was reading on the rock, and who now saw my situation."

"Helen! Helen!" cried my mother, "I can't bear it—the scene was too horrible to recall." But I persevered.

"Seymour seized my hand just as I was sinking, and dragged me into the boat; but in another moment the waves came swelling round us, and, without oar or help, I and my preserver were both tossed to and fro upon the ocean."

"Helen!" cried Seymour, with great feeling, and clasping me fondly to his heart, "I could almost wish we then had died, for then we should have died together!"

"Go on," said my uncle, "I hope you will live together yet!"

"I have not much more to tell, except that my mother's screams had now procured assistance, and a boat was sent out to follow our uncertain course. When we were overtaken, they found Seymour holding me on his lap, and crying over me in agony unutterable, for he thought that I was dead, and he had come too late. Who can paint my mother's transports, when she received me safe and living in her arms?"

"And how she embraced me, Helen," cried Seymour, "and called me her noble boy—the preserver of her child! (for she saw all I had done;) and how she owned she should ever love me as her own child—and vowed her gratitude should end but with her life!"

"It never *will* end but with my life!" cried my mother, throwing herself on Seymour's neck. "But is your having saved my child's life an argument for my authorizing you to risk the happiness of that

life?"

"Julia, Julia, I am *ashamed* of you!" cried my uncle. "Was there ever a better or more devoted wife than yourself? Yet, what did you do at Helen's age? You ran away from your parents, out of an ungovernable passion for a handsome young man."

"But is my error an excuse or justification of his?"

"No; but you are a proof that error can be atoned for and never repeated, as you have been a model for wives and mothers. But beware, Mrs. Pendarves, of carrying things too far; beware, lest you tempt Helen and Seymour to copy your example, rather than conform to your precepts."

"Ha!" cried my mother, clasping her hands in agony.

"Now, then," said Seymour, with every symptom of deep emotion, "the moment is come when I am authorized to obey the commands of the beloved dead, and fulfil the last injunctions of my mother."

A pause which no one seemed inclined to break, followed this unexpected observation; and Seymour, taking a letter from his bosom, kissed it, and presented it to my mother.

"'Tis Helen's hand," cried she.

"And her seal, too, you observe," said Seymour: "the *envelope*, you perceive, is addressed to me, and I have therefore broken it; the other is entire."

My mother read the *envelope* to herself, and these were its contents:—

"My conscience reproaches me, my beloved son, with having too lightly surrendered your rights, and probably your wishes, in giving my friend back her promise to promote your union with her daughter, as I know Julia's ability to act up to her strict sense of a mother's duty, even at the expense of her own happiness, and risk of her child's safety. But I have given up that promise, which might have pleaded for you, my poor child! when I was no more, and ensured to you opportunities of securing Helen's affections, which may now, perhaps, be for ever denied to you. However, I may be mistaken; therefore, if Helen's affections should ever be *yours—avowedly* yours, and her mother still withhold her consent, give her the enclosed letter, and probably the voice of the dead may have more power over her than that of the living.

"For your sake I have thus written, with a trembling hand, and with a dying pulse; but value it as a last proof of that affection which can end only with my life.

"HELEN PENDARVES."

The letter to my mother was as follows:—

"I speak to you from the grave, my dearest Julia! and in behalf of that child on whom my soul doted while on earth. But this letter will not be given you till he is *assured* he possesses the heart of your daughter; and when, if your consent is denied to their union, nothing but an act of disobedience can make them happy in each other. Are you prepared, Julia, to expose them to such a risk, and thus tempt the child you love to the crime of disobedience? that crime which, though it dwelt but lightly on your mind, weighed upon mine through the whole of my existence, as it helped to plunge my mother in an untimely tomb. Perhaps you flatter yourself that Helen's education has fortified her against indulging her passion at the expense of her duty. But remember, that your precepts are forcibly counteracted by your example.

"Anxious, however, as I am that Helen should not err, I am still more anxious that my son should not lead her into error, as I feel that he is doubly armed against her filial piety, by the example of her mother and his own.

"And must my crime be thus perpetuated by those whom I hold most dear? must the misery of my life be renewed, perhaps, in that of her whom I have loved as my own child? and must my son be the cause of wretchedness to the dearest of my friends, through the medium of her daughter?"

"Forbid it Heaven! I conjure you, my beloved Julia! by our past love—by *tanta fede, e si dolce memorie, e si lungo costume*, listen to this my warning, my supplicating voice; and let your consent give dignity and happiness to the union of our children.

"HELEN PENDARVES."

My mother, after having read this letter, covered her face with her hands, and rushed out of the room. It was in a state of anxious suspense that we awaited her return. When she appeared, her eyes were swelled, but her countenance was calm, her look resigned, and her deportment, as usual, dignified. Her assumed composure, however, failed again, when her eyes met those of Pendarves.

"My son!" cried she, opening her arms to him, into which Seymour threw himself, as much affected as she was; then, beckoning me to her, she put my hand in his, and prayed God to bless our union.

Little of this part of my life remains to be told. My mother had given her consent, and in two months from that period we were MARRIED.

Here ends my narrative of a WOMAN'S LOVE. When next I treat of it, it will be as united to a WIFE'S DUTY.

-
- [1] See a volume of Sermons written by the Rev. P. Houghton.
 - [2] Is it not permitted in England?
 - [3] Oh! I comprehend: you do not like any should laugh in your presence. Alas! beautiful Helen, one must laugh while one can, when one has the happiness of being in your society; for one runs the risk of crying very soon, and perhaps for life.
 - [4] But what did you mean with your 'Is it possible?'
 - [5] For holidays, no: they never came to me every day, till I came hither; but now, all days are holidays to me, and my saint is Saint Helen.
 - [6] But what are you seeking? let me look for it. Tell me.
 - [7] Oh, let them go away entirely! These are not the sentiments with which I wish to inspire you.
 - [8] In pity tell me, which of these two characters pleases you the most; but pray do not tell me that I offend you less as a philosopher, for who that is near you can long remain a philosopher?
 - [9] You agree then to the justice of my proposition, that near you no one can remain a philosopher?

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A WOMAN'S LOVE ***

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