

heart; and poor Sophie was doomed to pass another anxious year, and in all that time not a single line reached her from her lover.

The quick intelligence which now unites distant continents, was then unthought of; and in ordinary times, months generally intervened before a letter could receive an answer from the other side of the Atlantic. Added to this, there was then the uncertainties and accidents of war, and the frequent capture of vessels bearing despatches to other countries. Sophie made ample allowance for all these considerations, but they did not satisfy her heart. She was placed in a painful position; she had not a friend to consult or advise with, for all opposed her engagement to Brandon, and regarded her continued adherence to him as an act of childish and romantic folly. Other suitors persecuted her with their addresses, and among them was one who had found favor with all her family, but who was to herself an object of positive dislike.

Poor Sophie could not be blamed for her aversion to Mr. Arnold. It was the natural repugnance of a refined, sensitive, and graceful girl, to one as far removed from those qualities as the two antipodes. Arnold was a young clergyman, a favorite of the day; he had a quaint manner, and a sort of popular eloquence which drew crowds to hear him. He was a great stickler for clerical rights, and a notable expounder of the knotty points of theology. His stentorian voice, his imposing but ungainly figure, commanded attention, and he gained a reputation to which his merits by no means entitled him. His love for Sophie amounted almost to idolatry; it is difficult to account for the fascination she so reluctantly exercised over his coarser mind. Constantly repulsed, often with undisguised contempt, he still pursued her; repeatedly rejected, he was never discouraged, and only a most determined will could have overcome obstacles, conciliated friends, and at length distanced all other suitors by his assumption of success.

Time rolled on and still no tidings were received from Brandon. Sophie mourned as for the dead, for she believed that death alone could solve the mystery of his long silence. Her own heart, constant in its sorrowful remembrance, refused to doubt his faith or his affection. Her last letter written to his address at Brussels, had been returned, and a few lines stated that Brandon left for France some months before, from whence he intended to take passage for the United States. No one doubted that he had fallen a victim to the Revolution.

From that moment poor Sophie was a changed

being. Life became indifferent to her, and sorrow and disappointment traced their sad characters on her lovely features. Yet Arnold had sagacity enough to perceive, that in her inmost heart she cherished a secret hope of her lover's return. He knew that while this feeling was indulged, he had no chance of winning her regard, and he therefore set about devising some plan by which he could impress her mind with the certainty that Brandon was no longer living. Accident favored his design. He one day surprised Sophie in earnest conversation with a withered old woman in a red cloak, who enjoyed the unenviable reputation of a fortune-teller, and being already aware, that with all her good sense she had a vein of superstition, he resolved to turn the weakness to his own advantage.

A few days after, Arnold, with the assistance of a female friend, who entered into his plan, invited a few young friends to join them in a rural excursion to some well known place, at a short distance from the city. In the mean time, he had seen the fortune-teller, and given her suitable instructions for the occasion. He told her enough of Sophie's past life to suit his purpose, and dictated exactly to her the information she was to give, and the predictions she must utter. Sophie was of course the guest of most importance in Arnold's arrangements; but with difficulty was she persuaded to join the merry-making, for her heart could not respond to gaiety, and she felt that her sad presence would only check the happiness of others.

In the midst of their rural sports, the party were surprised by the appearance of the old fortune-teller. She came suddenly upon them, with her usual slow step and mysterious manner, her shrivelled form scantily covered by the old red cloak, and a sort of gipsy hat shading her wrinkled features. In one hand she carried a scroll covered with mystic characters, and in the other a kind of wand. There was an involuntary pause as she approached, and her keen grey eyes seemed to search every countenance, but they finally rested on Sophie, who had been sufficiently indicated to her.

"Pretty youths and maidens," she said in a whining voice, "have ye any mind to try my skill? shew me your palms, and I will tell you truly all the past and future."

Something like a superstitious feeling might be observed on every countenance, as each looked from one to the other, and then upon the wily crone; but Arnold directly proposed that all, in turn, should listen to the wisdom of the sybil.

It was a pretty picture for an artist's pencil,