

HELEN MACARTNEY.

"Promise me that you will not grow weary, dearest, during the long, long years that must elapse ere I can claim the hand which now trembles in mine," said Horace Medwin to her who had just plighted her faith to him.

"Do not expect too much of me, Horace," was the reply: "I cannot promise that my heart will be patient while years are stealing the brightness from my eye, and the freshness from my feelings."

"Perhaps, you will repent a pledge which must be so tardily redeemed."

"You know me too well to believe so, Horace: I would fain see you content with your present prospects of success, and even at the risk of seeming most unmaidenly in my wishes, I will say that a mere competence with you would be all that I should ask to insure us happiness. Wealth will be dearly purchased by all the terrible anxieties of a long absence; yet since you think its acquisition essential to your comfort, it is not for me to oppose my wishes to your superior judgment. 'They also serve who stand and wait;' and since I can do nothing to aid you in the pursuit of riches, I can at least 'bide the time.'—Go where your sense of duty calls you, Horace, and remember that whether your efforts are crowned with success, or your hopes crushed by misfortunes, this hand is yours whenever you claim my pledge."

"Bless you, bless you, my own sweet Helen; that promise will be my only solace in my exile, and oh! what a stimulus to exertion shall I find in the remembrance of those tears."

Helen Macartney was the child of one of those gifted but unfortunate persons who seem born to ill-luck. Her father's whole life had been a series of mistakes; he had quit college in a fit of pique just as he was fully prepared to receive those high honours which might have been of great service to him in the career of science to which he eventually devoted himself; he abandoned a profession in which perseverance would have made him eminently successful; he failed in mercantile business because he could not tie his thoughts down to the details of commerce; in the lowest ebb of his fortunes he married, not from love but compassion, the proud and penniless daughter of a decayed family, who brought him a dowry of poor relations; and, finally, he wasted his really fine talents, which, if properly exerted, would have secured him at least the comforts of life, upon schemes and projects

which were as idle as Alnaschar's dream. As the eye of the mathematician traces on the blue field of ether the diagram which solves his newly combined problem, so the fancy of the speculative philosopher builds in the vague air his hopes of fame and fortune; but, unlike the man of science, who from his visionary plan deduces a demonstrable truth, the man of schemes is doomed ever to see his fairy fabrics fade, without leaving a wreck behind. The only thing which ever had power to withdraw the thoughts of the projector from his unreal fancies, was his love for his gentle daughter.—He had thoroughly instructed her in all that forms the true foundation of learning, and no expense was spared in the acquisition of those elegant accomplishments which add so great a charm to female society. Helen was a gifted and graceful woman, as well as a fine scholar. Beautiful and gentle, with superior talents, correct taste, and a character which the discipline of circumstances had prematurely strengthened, without impairing the freshness of her feelings, she was a creature worthy to be loved and cherished by some noble heart.—But her life had never been a happy one, for, from her earliest childhood, her mother's wayward indolence, and her father's total want of worldly wisdom, had produced an irregular, scrambling sort of system, in their little household, the discomforts of which had been felt by Helen long before she was capable of understanding or remedying the evil. Leading a very secluded life, and absorbed in those petty cares which engross so much time and thought in a household where there is no wealth to purchase immunity from labour, she felt little disposition to indulge in the gaieties so natural to her age. Conscious of the beauty which her innate perception of all things lovely enabled her to discover in her own sweet face, and perhaps displaying a trace of girlish vanity in the precision with which her dress was always adapted to the fine proportions of her stately figure, she was yet untainted by mere personal vanity. She adorned her person even as she improved her mind, rather for the gratification of her own elegant taste than with the wish to attract the admiration of others.

Among the various pursuits which Mr. Macartney's versatile talents enabled him to adopt, as a means of subsistence, that in which he was most successful was the instruction of youth. Possessing a peculiar talent for simplifying the mysteries of science, he might have reaped a rich harvest from a gift which is perhaps one of the rarest of intellectual endow-