

had made such an impression upon his youthful imagination, and the weeping girl who now supported the form of Mrs. Douglas in her arms, and called her by the name of mother, were the same. Although his heart bounded high, and beat tumultuously with undefined feelings of delight and surprise at this discovery so unexpected, he stayed not to express them, but hurried forth in search of a physician. Fortunately he soon succeeded in his search, and had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Douglas restored to animation and sensibility, and to receive the grateful thanks which Ellen Douglas poured forth to him who had come so opportunely to the assistance of her mother.

When Charles, after having received a favourable report from the medical attendant, retired once more to his study, he found it impossible for his thoughts to resume the same channel in which they had flowed before the incident occurred which had interrupted them. He pondered upon the sudden, unexpected manner in which he had been introduced to her whose image had so frequently haunted his mind, and who, unknown to him, had been since his return an inmate of the same dwelling, though he knew it not. Again he had beheld that face so expressive, so eloquent in its sorrow, and so illumined with joy when in heart-felt words she had poured forth her gratitude for the simple service which he had rendered her, and the more prominently that commanding form and striking face rose to his view, gradually receded the girlish features and gentle countenance of Constance.

In a few days Mrs. Douglas was pronounced out of danger, but her indisposition was such as still to demand the most constant care and assiduity of her daughter. Day and night Ellen tended the pillow of her mother, with all the fond solicitude which love for her only remaining parent inspired. When her mother fell into a slumber Ellen would steal into the parlour for a few minutes daily, to answer the enquiries of Charles concerning the progress of the invalid. Although these interviews lasted only for a brief period, yet every succeeding meeting became more fatal to the peace of mind of Charles. Young and susceptible, alive to impressions, and regardless of consequences, Charles reflected not that the increasing interest he felt in Ellen Douglas, if indulged, must eventually prove disastrous to the happiness, not only of himself but also of one whom he had hitherto loved with all the ardour of his nature, and who, he was aware, returned his affection. But Charles reflected not, calculated not what the result might be, if he thus blindly cherished a growing affection for

another, when he was already bound by every tie of gratitude and love to Constance.

Owing to the reduced circumstances of her mother, Ellen Douglas had been brought up in the utmost seclusion, and although she had lived much in a large and populous city, she had seen no society except those few remaining friends who still adhered to her mother in the days of her adversity. Untutored in the ways of the world, she possessed none of those arts which belong to the votaries of fashion; and, left much to herself, her mind had acquired a tinge of romance which contact with the world had not dispelled. Warm and quick in her affections, enthusiastic, and gifted with a happy, cheerful temper, Ellen Douglas possessed a disposition in which Charles found much that was congenial to his own. That which constituted her greatest fascination, even more than her extraordinary beauty, was the ever-varying, truthful expression of her face, in which the loftiest thoughts and gentlest feelings were alternately mirrored forth. Though stern necessity had compelled her to labour for the support of herself and her mother, the toils which had been imposed upon her were light and easily borne, and she had never yet come in actual contact with that poverty which divests life of its poetry. Her occupations rather tended to heighten the interest which she inspired. Her manner possessed that elasticity which at one moment caused her to appear almost child-like in her gaiety, and the next, as she gave utterance to loftier thoughts, she appeared endowed with a degree of reflection and sensibility even beyond her years. She was one of those bright, happy beings who shed a light around their path, and invest the most trivial occurrences of every-day life with a charm.

The health of Mrs. Douglas was at length sufficiently re-established to permit her to occupy the small but cheerful parlour for a short time each day. As she was not strong enough yet to dispense with the assistance and support of her daughter, Ellen daily accompanied her thither, and seated at her embroidery by the window, worked diligently, while O'Donnell either conversed with Mrs. Douglas or read to her. It was only in the presence of her mother, and during the short period which she daily spent in this apartment, that Charles had an opportunity of seeing Ellen, for she always retired with her mother, and he saw no more of her during the remainder of the day. Brief, however, as these interviews were, they were sufficient to increase, to a high degree, the interest which Ellen already felt in the handsome student, and also to effect a great change in the affections of Charles.