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Conducted by W. H. SMITH, Author of the "Canadian Gazetteer," &c. &c.

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## KING HARWOOD.

The good town of Belford swarmed, of course, with single ladies—especially with single ladies of that despised denomination which is commonly known by the title of old maids. For gentlewomen of that description, especially of the less affluent class, (and although such a thing may be found here and there, a rich old maid is much rarer than a poor one,) a provincial town in this protestant country, where nunneries are not, is the natural refuge. A village life, however humble the dwelling, is at once more expensive—since messengers and conveyances, men and horses, of some sort, are in the actual country indispensable,—and more melancholy, for there is a sense of loneliness and insignificance, a solitude within doors and without, which none but an unconnected and unprotected woman can thoroughly understand. And London, without family ties, or personal importance, or engrossing pursuit,—to be poor and elderly, idle and alone in London, is a climax of desolation which everybody can comprehend, because almost every one must, at some time or other, have felt, in a greater or less degree, the humbling sense of individual nothingness—of being but a drop of water in the ocean, a particle of sand on the sea-shore, which so often presses upon the mind amidst the bustling crowds and the splendid gaieties of the great city. To be rich or to be busy is the necessity of London.

The poor and the idle, on the other hand, get on best in a country town. Belford was the paradise of ill-jointed widows and portionless old maids. There they met on the table-land of gentility, passing their mornings in calls at each other's houses, and their evenings in small tea-parties, seasoned with a rubber or a

pool, and garnished with the little quiet gossiping (call it not scandal, gentle reader!) which their habits required. So large a portion of the population consisted of single ladies, that it might almost have been called a maiden town. Indeed, a calculating Cantab, happening to be there for the long vacation, amused his leisure by taking a census of the female householders, beginning with Mrs. Davisons—fine alert old ladies, between 70 and 80, who, being proud of their sprightliness and vigour, were suspected of adding a few more years to their age than would be borne out by the register,—and ending with Miss Letitia Pierce, a damsel on the confines of forty, who was more than suspected of a slight falsification of dates the converse way. I think he made the sum total, in the three parishes, amount to one hundred and seventy-four.

The part of the town in which they chiefly congregated, the lady's *quartier*, was one hilly corner of the parish of St. Nicholas, a sort of highland district, all made up of short rows, and pigmy places, and half-finished crescents, entirely uncontaminated by the vulgarity of shops, ill-paved, worse lighted, and so placed that it seemed to catch all the smoke of the more thickly inhabited part of the town, and was consequently encircled by a wreath of vapour, like Snowden or Skiddaw.

Why the good ladies chose this elevated and inconvenient position, one can hardly tell; perhaps because it was cheap; perhaps, because it was genteel—perhaps, from a mixture of both causes; I can only answer for the fact; and of this favourite spot the most favoured portion was a slender line of houses, tall and slim, known by the name of Warwick-terrace, consisting of a tolerable spacious dwelling

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