

'Catherine,' added I, 'can I see you another's? The thought chokes me! Would you have me behold it?—shall my eyes be withered with the sight! Never! never! Forgive me!—Catherine, forgive me! I have acted rashly, perhaps cruelly: but I would not have spoken as I have done—I would have fled from your presence—I would not have given one pang to your gentle bosom; your father should not have said that he sheltered a scorpion that turned and stung him; but, meeting you as I have done to day, I could no longer suppress the tumultuous feelings that struggled in my bosom. But it is passed. Forgive me—forget me!'

Still memory hears her sighs, as her tears fell upon my bosom, and, wringing her hands in bitterness, she cried—

'Say not *forget* you! If, in compliance with my father's will, I must give my hand to another, and if to him my vows must be plighted, I will keep them sacred—Yet my heart is your's!'

Lewis! I was delirious with joy, as I listened to this confession from her lips. The ecstasy of years was compressed in a moment of deep, speechless, almost painful luxury. We mingled our tears together, and our vows went up to heaven a sacrifice pure as the first that ascended, when the young earth offered up its incense from paradise to the new-born sun.

I remained beneath her father's roof until within three days of the time fixed for her becoming the bride of Sir Peter Blakely.—Day by day I beheld my Catherine move to and fro like a walking corpse—pale, speechless, her eyes fixed and lacking their lustre. Even I seemed unnoticed by her. She neither sighed nor wept. A trance had come over her faculties. She made no arrangements for her bridal; and when I at times whispered to her that '*she should be mine!*' O Lewis! she would then smile—but it was a smile where the light of the soul was not; more dismal, more vacant than the laugh of idiotcy! Think, then, how unlike they were the rainbows of the soul, which I had seen radiate the countenance of my Catherine!

Sir Peter Blakely had gone into Roxburghshire, to make preparations for taking home his bride, and her father had joined you in Edinburgh, relative to the affairs of Prince Charles, in consequence of a letter which he had received from you, and the contents

which might not even be communicated to me.

At any other time, and this lack of confidence would have provoked my resentment, but my thoughts were then of other things, and I heeded it not. Catherine and I were ever together, and for hour succeeding hour we sat silent, gazing on each other. O my friend! could your imagination conjure up our feelings and our thoughts in this hour of trial, you would start, shudder, and think no more. The glance of each was as a pestilence, consuming the other: as the period of her father's return approached, a thousand resolutions crowded within my bosom, some of magnanimity, some of rashness.—But I was a coward—morally I was a coward—though I feared not the drawn sword nor the field of danger more than another man, yet misery compels me to confess what I was. Every hour, every moment, the sacrifice of parting from her became more painful. Oh, a mother might have torn her infant from her breast, dashed it on the earth, trampled on its outstretched hands, and laughed at its dying screams, rather than that I now could have lived to behold my Catherine another's.

Suddenly, the long, the melancholy charm of my silence broke. I fell upon my knee, and clenching my hands together, cried—

'Gracious Heaven!—if I be within the pale of thy mercy, spare me this sight!—let me be crushed as an atom—but let not mine eyes see the day when tongue speaks it, nor mine ears hear the sound that calls her another's.'

I started to my feet, I grasped her hands in frenzy, I exclaimed—'you shall be mine!' I took her hand. 'Catherine,' I added, 'you will not—you shall not give your hand to another! It is mine, and from mine it shall not part!'—and I pressed it to my breast as a mother would her child from the knife of a destroyer.

'It shall be yours!' she replied wildly, and the feeling of life and consciousness again gushed through her heart. But she sank on my breast, and sobbed—

'My father! O my father!'

'Your father is Sir Peter Blakely's friend,' replied I, 'and he will not break the pledge he has given him. With his return, Catherine, my hopes and life perish together. Now only can you save yourself—now only can you save me. Fly with me! and your father's