

feel with bitterness unknown before, the evils of her desolate and lonely lot.

To Beaufort, too, the scene came vividly back ; but a review of it awoke in his mind, such strangely blended feelings of pleasure and pain, that he knew not how to analyze them, or rather, dared not trust himself to essay the task. Yet he could not long conceal from his heart that each day heightened the pleasure he felt in Madelaine's society, and rendered him more and more indifferent to that of his betrothed. Still he continued his attentions to Lucia, as unremittingly, if not as fervently as ever. Peace was again re-established between them, and had been so, ever since the day subsequent to the quarrel, which threatened finally to dissolve their engagement. Either fearing it might produce that result, or from some other motive not divulged, Lucia had addressed to her lover a note half of apology, and half of tender reproach, which after a brief internal struggle, had the effect of recalling him to her presence, and producing a reconciliation between them. Nor, according to present symptoms, did there seem the slightest reason to dread any future rupture, at least not through any fault of hers, for she appeared a changed being, so tender, gentle, and forbearing. Resenting not, as formerly, a brief fit of abstraction in her lover, and looking, not angry, but only *sweetly sad*, at the involuntary omission of certain little acts of homage which she had been accustomed to receive and expect from him, as an expression of his entire fealty to her. Nay, she so far overcome the ill-natured jealousy which she had manifested towards Madelaine, as to express much interest in her story, and to commend Beaufort's magnanimity in relinquishing to her the miser's wealth, with which circumstance Doctor Moreland, disregarding the young man's entreaty that he would be silent on the subject, had not failed to make her acquainted. She even spoke of the pleasure to which she looked forward in knowing this young heroine, as she styled her, and apparently forgetting the quondam flower-girl, in the rich heiress, and near relative of her betrothed husband, proposed to Mrs. Dunmore that they should pay her an early visit.

But Beaufort, anxious to avert from Madelaine the pain of meeting those who had so insulted her virtuous poverty, while the remembrance of their treatment was still vivid in her mind, hastened to say, that till Mrs. Dorival removed to her own home, neither she nor her daughter would receive any visitors, and on condition only of their being permitted to live retired, had they been prevailed on to remain for the present beneath Mrs. Calthorpe's roof.

In the mean time preparations for the wedding of Beaufort and Lucia were advancing. It was postponed for a couple of weeks beyond the period first named, on account of Mr. Dunmore's absence, who had been unexpectedly summoned to Philadel-

phia on business, and wished them to await his return. But long before that time arrived, Beaufort had learned to dread its approach, to feel his love for Lucia each day becoming weaker and more languid, till at length the spell was broken, and his disenchanted heart ceased to acknowledge the power which had so long held it in bondage.

The causes which by slow degrees produced this estrangement have been detailed ; but possibly the irrevocable knot might have been tied before he had become aware, to its full extent, of the change which had passed over his affections, had not the contrast daily presented to his contemplation, by Madelaine's lovely and ingenuous character, forced more glaringly upon him, the many faults and foibles of his mistress, and made him shrink with feelings, whose nature he now too well understood, from the union which he viewed as inevitable. For, firmly persuaded of Lucia's devoted attachment to him, which she never had evinced more strikingly than now, he felt called upon, by every principle of honour, to fulfil his engagement with her, choosing rather to sacrifice himself, than build his own happiness on the total ruin of hers.

Still he found it daily more difficult to resist the gentle witcheries of Madelaine, unconsciously as she exerted them,—and there were moments when, as noting his unwonted sadness, she strove with innocent and playful tenderness to cheer and soothe him, that, unable by the mightiest effort to control his feelings, he would rise and flee abruptly from her presence, lest they should break forth and betray the secret that trembled ever on his lip. Mrs. Calthorpe was not long in discovering it, though, as if by mutual consent, the subject was not named between them, each feeling that it would answer no wise purpose to speak of an evil for which there was no remedy.

Nor was her experienced eye, slow in observing that, after a little time, he ceased to suffer alone. She could not mistake the meaning of the quick blush that mantled Madelaine's pure cheek at Edward's approach, the cherished care bestowed upon the flowers he brought her, and the intense interest with which she dwelt on passages which he had read to her, or marked as worthy of her study. He too had begun to read a dangerous meaning in these symptoms ; there was a nameless something in her look, her tone, her air, which ever marks a woman's manner towards the object of her secret choice, a tremor in her hand, if by accident it touched his own, that filled him with delicious joy, and forced upon him the rapturous, yet agonizing conviction, that the young heart, whose every impulse was one of purity and virtue, had voluntarily surrendered to him the inestimable treasure of its first holy and unbought affections. But he dared not dwell upon this thought—it rendered nerveless all his fortitude, silenced the voice of duty, and