

she murmured something inarticulate in return, and when she ventured to lift her eyes, Fitzroy Glenallan alone stood before her. Oppressed with the suddenness of the interview—overcome by previous agitation—and stung to the heart, Bessie Glenallan burst into tears. Fitzroy had taken her hand, and was endeavouring to soothe her, when Lord Glenallan and George Ashton entered at the same moment. Shall I call the carriage, Lady Glenallan, are you ill? asked the former, as he glanced with a surprised and discontented air from one to another. “If you please,” murmured Bessie, and he went followed by his cousin. Not a word was spoken by the pair who remained, but once when Lady Glenallan looked up, she caught George Ashton’s eye fixed on her with earnest pity: how different from Fitzroy’s smile! thought she, and as she stepped into the carriage, she asked him to call the next day and see her.

The morrow came, and with it came George Ashton. Dispirited and weary, Lady Glenallan complained of Claude Forester’s coldness—of Fitzroy Glenallan’s friendship—of Lord Linton’s attentions—of her husband’s inattention—of Lucy Linton’s health—of the world’s ill-nature—of every thing and every body including the person she addressed, and, having exhausted herself with passionate complaining, sank back to wait his answer. “Bessie,” said he, at length, “I have known you from childhood, and (I may say so now that all is over) I have loved you as well or better than any of your admirers; it is not therefore, a harsh view of your character that prompts me to give the warning I beseech of you to hear patiently. You are listless and weary of the life you are leading, and mortified at Claude Forester’s neglect; but, gracious heaven! what is it you wish? or when will the struggle for pernicious excitement cease in your mind and leave you free to exert your reason?—Suppose Claude Forester to have returned with the same deep devoted love for you which filled his heart, when he left England, and fled from a fascination which he was unable to resist. Suppose him to have urged that passion with all the vehemence of which his nature is capable—would you, indeed, as Lord Glenallan’s wife, listen