

less, more innocent, than that sweet confiding girl, depend upon it you will find yourself grievously disappointed—if it had not been for an extraordinary predilection which I entertain for dark eyes, you never should have had the chance to win her, I promise you my friend."

"De Melfort, do not your judgment such wrong; far deeper causes for admiration actuated you in the choice you have made. The moral beauty of Miss Neville's character—her consistent unobtrusive piety, seen not in words, but in every action of her life—her unswerving duty and affection towards her parent, her modest reserve towards our sex, her total absence of affectation, and all those childish arts by which so many seek to win attention. These are charms, my friend, which give promise that as a wife she will indeed prove a blessing—thank God you are deserving of her, as far as man may so be considered, else would I mourn that such a being had been lost to me."

"I never heard you so enthusiastic in your praise of any one before," returned Lord De Melfort, smiling; "yet surely you must allow that Rosetta is a most fascinating creature."

"Fascination is not a favourite term of mine, there is something too evanescent in its nature—it is more formed for the gay world than for home—a fascinating woman abroad may be a shrew in private. I cannot separate my ideas of the word from the character of one totally unworthy to be named in the same breath with so sweet and gentle a creature as Rosetta Neville. With what tenderness and care I would have watched over her, and guided her young mind, it is useless now to think, since she is lost to me forever."

"And why so? Surely you do not mean to condemn her, because her young heart has been caught by the attractions of one whose true character she was too innocent to discover?"

"Certainly not; yet when I said that I hoped she had no secrets from her mother, her answer was 'not now,' and the stress she laid upon the word grated painfully on my ears. The child who could deceive a parent, MIGHT betray the confidence of a husband—they who are not faithful in one relation, may be doubted in another. You smile, De Melfort, and perhaps think me harsh; yet, rest assured, if more caution were used in the choice of a wife, there would be many more happy marriages than I fear there are."

"You are correct, no doubt, Lennox; but positively I think the faults and follies of women may in many cases be laid to our charge. How frequently do we encourage them to do what we never would permit in a wife or a sister whom we loved. While they imagine they are pleasing us, is it not natural they should continue to be the flirts and coquettes they are in society?"

"Aye, my friend, as far as talking, walking,

riding and dancing—such butterflies may please us in a light hour—but in choosing one as a companion for life, *c'est une autre affaire*. No, De Melfort, my opinions, at thirty, are formed, and cannot be changed; the character of Rosetta must be more known to me, ere I dare trust myself again in her winning society. Tomorrow I shall depart for Nice, where I shall remain until you summon me to attend your nuptials; in the meantime, I must request your correspondence on every account, and on none more than your own. I shall be most anxious to learn the result of your trial, as well as to hear all that you may be able to inform me, concerning the only woman who ever had the power to cause me a moment's pain."

Lord De Melfort perceived that his friend was now in earnest, therefore he ceased to rally him; yet while he regretted his decision, he could not but feel its wisdom; and it was with many protestations of regard and esteem, that they parted on the following day.

In ignorance of his intention to leave Woodland so soon, Mr. Neville called there in the course of the morning, to express both his and Lady Neville's grateful sense of the good service he had rendered to Rosetta, when he learnt, with regret and surprise, that he was already gone. From thence the Rector proceeded to E—, where the — regiment was stationed, and inquired for Captain Sidney Forester, to whose quarters he was immediately conducted. He found him with his friend, Major Stapleton, sitting in his dressing gown and slippers, at a late breakfast. An air of great annoyance was perceptible in his manner, on perceiving who was his visitor, while Major Stapleton rose, and casting a glance of burlesque fear towards him, which seemed to say, "you are in for it now, my boy," bowed to Mr. Neville, and retired. But Major Stapleton was mistaken in one sense, and entirely ignorant of the character of the true Evangelist, whose grand distinguishing mark is charity in its extended meaning, and may be expressed in these few words: "he thinketh no evil." None knew better than Mr. Neville, the fiery ordeal through which a young man passes, when once he is launched into life, and that unless he is built up on a sure foundation before he leaves home, he has no shield to hold against the numberless temptations which assail him from that hour—consequently he too often plunges into the vortex of folly and excess, until the power to reflect becomes lost—with him and his companions, no line is drawn between the fanatic and the faithful, rational follower of Christ, who denies nothing which may be indulged without remorse or injury to our best interests—all approaches to piety he denounces as methodistical, while every thing which alienates him yet more from his Creator, is encouraged and pursued—such was at least the case with Captain Forester, and as Mr. Neville